

Our Revolution Maryland 2022 Congressional Candidate Questionnaire

Responses to Questions will be made Public

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ECOLOGICAL/CLIMATE CRISIS

We face multiple existential threats: a climate crisis with the unprecedented levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, an environmental pollution crisis caused by our extraction and consumption practices, and the limits to growth on a finite planet. There are so many crises in the world, but the threats to the environment and our climate are the most grave. So we begin here.

Our Revolution has endorsed the framework of the Green New Deal, with the twin goals of a transformation to renewable energy and promoting environmental justice and economic equity. Will you support the Green New Deal and any implementing legislation in the upcoming Congress? Describe your vision for moving to renewable energy and transitioning away from fossil fuels. What commitments can you make now to voters, to demand action in Congress where we have seen none for decades? *

Throughout my career, I have been a tireless advocate for protecting our environment, cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay, and creating a clean energy economy that will spur innovation, increase prosperity, and create jobs in Maryland and across the country. I know we must immediately take the bold action needed to address the climate crisis, like investing in sustainable infrastructure to meet the energy demands of the 21st century, with a path to 100% clean energy sources which will help to lower energy prices and create good-paying union jobs.

In the face of a lack of Congressional action, and the Supreme Court now revisiting EPA authority, will you join Our Revolution in calling on President Biden to declare a climate emergency to take actions at the executive level? *

Yes

Are there policies you would favor to move to more sustainable levels of consumption and less environmentally devastating practices and products? *

I support policies that incentivize people to live green, like using our tax structure to create and reward more local growers for food production and rewarding recycling. We can also use those same tax policies to penalize over packaging of products. We should not ignore the power of example of leaders to promote things like discouraging single use containers, plastic bags, extra paper and encouraging reusable water bottles and coffee cups and embracing second-hand and vintage. There are a lot of things we can do as individuals with good leaders who lead by example. Systemic change can happen policy with carrots and sticks.

Besides anthropogenic global warming, what other environmental crises are we facing and how do you propose addressing them? *

Too many low-income communities and communities of color throughout the 4th District have borne more than their share of environmental degradation, and suffer from much higher asthma rates, cancer clusters, and other diseases as a result of polluters' misdeeds and a political system that lets them get away with it. In Congress, I will focus federal dollars from the Bipartisan Infrastructure and Jobs Act to clean up these areas and hold polluters accountable. Maryland has the fourth-longest tidal coastline and is the third most vulnerable state to rising sea levels. During my time in Congress, I fought to protect Maryland's environmental future from the restoration of Poplar Island to the investments to protect the Chesapeake Bay's oyster population and the Anacostia River Restoration project. By working with members of the Maryland Delegation and other states that comprise the Bay's watershed, I helped fund programs to reduce pollutant run-off and restore the blue crab and oyster populations that are so critical to our region's tourism industry and economic livelihood.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Will you commit to voting for passage of an increase in the federal minimum wage to at least \$15/hour now (indexed to inflation)? *

Yes. In Congress, I will use my seniority to fight to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and include annual automatic cost-of-living adjustments to ensure that the gains of a recovering economy will be felt by all our workers, I will also work to eliminate the tipped wage that leaves so many workers in poverty.

What is your plan for addressing the homelessness crisis? What are your ideas for addressing the crisis in the cost of housing which has many Americans paying more than half their income for housing? *

There are three areas we can help address the homelessness crisis. First, too many veterans are living without housing— a policy failure on some many levels. Second, too many young people who have aged out of the foster care system find themselves without support. We must do more to make the transition easier. Finally, we need to expand access to low-income housing tax credits and credits for affordable housing for seniors, the disabled and others living on fixed income. It is often a relatively small amount of money or one bad month that thrusts people into homelessness. We need more affordable workforce housing to avert this disaster for people who go to work everyday but just need an affordable home.

Do you agree that wealth and income inequality are among the most significant problems we face? If so, why do you believe this is happening, and what specific steps would you take to redress this? Would you support changes in tax laws or rate changes? What other policy changes would you advocate for? Please be specific as possible here. *

I'm running because our families and workers are getting left further behind. In Congress, I will fight to make the ultra-wealthy and big corporations finally pay their fair share, especially wealthy corporations that have used loopholes to pay zero in taxes, to help reduce prices and the cost of living for the rest of us.

I know that because the ultrawealthy and wealthy corporations are not paying their fair share we can't make the investments we need into our communities. In Congress, I will lead the fight to pass President Biden's plan to ensure that no one earning less than \$400,000 per year would pay a penny more in taxes and work to end loopholes to ensure that all income whether from wages or investment is treated fairly, provide for a minimum corporate tax, and guarantee that corporations do not escape tax obligations by moving their operations overseas.

What new or repealed laws or regulations would you impose or reinstate on the investment and commercial banking sectors? *

I support legislation to impose a tax on every trade that occurs in investment banking in order to curb micro trading and decrease the speculative trading that can have large ripples on the market. There is no need for anyone to be able to trade a million times a second. Imposing regulations to limit the number of transactions in a minute would help stabilize our market and reduce the role of computer programming in our market. I would also like to investigate the ability for minority business owners' access to credit. Equal credit laws should apply to both individuals and small businesses. Additionally, we must have a new, 21st Century Glass-Steagall law to restore the lines between commercial and investment banking – this will better protect consumers and taxpayers.

What steps would you take to protect workers who are trying to organize a union? Do you support the Pro Act? Does it go far enough in your view? If not, what else must we do? *

I support the immediate passage of the PRO Act.

Would you support or oppose the Congressional Progressive Caucus' plan to create fairer trade deals? (Read more here: https://progressives.house.gov/_cache/files/d/0/d06e29b1-a19e-48e5-8eba-7ca61b0bba94/D363B2756F3792BAEEC7A33B795604EA.cpc-fair-trade-agenda.pdf) *

Support, I believe that our nation should enter trade agreements that promote fair trade. These agreements should protect workers' rights domestically and abroad, advance global environmental justice, and ensure that strict consumer protection standards are maintained. I am proud of the work that I did in Congress to lead "Buy American" efforts in the Trade Caucus and to secure legislation on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to add "Buy American" provisions to water resources and transportation bills. I was proud to be among the leaders who steadfastly opposed the Trans-Pacific Partnership, eventually seeing it to its end. I will continue to oppose trade agreements with other nations until they are fair to our workers and businesses, protect the environment, respect our laws, provide adequate consumer protection, and also extend important protections to foreign workers and businesses.

HEALTHCARE/RETIREMENT

What steps do you support to strengthen Social Security and Medicare? *

I believe we must expand Medicare to expand benefits to include dental, vision, and hearing coverage, along with comprehensive primary care, women's health, emergency room care, mental health care, behavioral services, and affordable prescription drug coverage.

Will you join in support of Rep. Jayapal's petition effort to end the Trump/Biden program allowing Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to move Medicare enrollees to for-profit Direct Contracting Entities? *

Yes

Do you support single-payer healthcare - Medicare For All? Please explain your answer. *

Yes, during my time in Congress I was an original co-sponsor of Medicare for All and will use my seniority to lead the fight to pass it when I return to Congress.

LEGAL REFORM

Do you support legalizing marijuana? Why or why not? *

Yes, I support legalizing and regulating marijuana at the federal level and the immediate release of individuals who are incarcerated for nonviolent marijuana-related crimes, and the expungement of marijuana-related convictions from their records. I think it is imperative to create a mechanism for this new and growing industry to participate in the interstate banking system.

The United States has 5% of the world's population, but 25% of those incarcerated worldwide. Roughly 90% of those in prison have taken plea deals, and even those who get new evidence later are unable to get hearings or convictions overturned. Private prisons further incentivize arrests and incarceration. What steps do you support to reform our Criminal Justice system - police, prosecutors, courts, jails and prisons *

In Congress, I will use my experience to lead the fight to pass the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act to hold law enforcement accountable and keep our communities – especially our communities of color – safe.

When I served previously, I helped pass critical pieces of criminal justice reform like the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 as a first step towards addressing fairness standards in our sentencing laws. I have been a strong advocate for the elimination of cash bail, fines, and other penalties that prey upon low-income individuals and undermine the best interests of our communities. I support legislation to “ban the box,” removing questions about past felony convictions for those seeking employment or higher education, as well as a Second Chance Act that would allow people who have made mistakes in the past, and paid for them, to put those mistakes fully behind them and move on in their lives - including the expungement of convictions for charges that are no longer considered criminal under current criminal code.

I believe that the surest way to prevent re-incarceration is through education. This is why I sponsored legislation to reinstate Pell Grant eligibility to incarcerated persons. I was instrumental in getting federal funding for an education program at Jessup Prison in Maryland. I also support ending private prisons, eliminating mandatory minimum sentences, the use of treatment and diversion programs as opposed to incarceration, and reducing our incarcerated population overall.

Our Revolution Maryland has advocated for justice for the human rights attorney Steven Donziger, who is being persecuted by oil and gas 'Goliath' Chevron through the federal court system. See this link for a discussion of the timeline of events in his case:

<https://www.freedonziger.org/timeline-of-the-case>. What steps will you take to rebalance the scales of justice so that 'Davids' like Steven Donziger can bring suit against mega-corporations to seek redress for victims of corporate misconduct, without risking their own freedom? With respect to Donziger, in particular, do you support Congressional hearings and/or Justice Department investigation into possible corruption of process in the Southern District of New York? *

Yes

The federal judiciary is largely composed of pro-corporate/anti-consumer and labor judges appointed by Presidents from both parties. We see this in recent bankruptcy decisions allowing profitable corporations to claw back pension funds from employees and retirees. There are also high-profile abuses of bankruptcy protections, such as the 'Texas Two-Step' to shield assets of billionaire owners and Fortune 500 companies from deserving plaintiffs and claimants. What reforms and court oversight would you support to prevent predatory corporations from abusing judicial process to evade responsibility for egregious conduct injuring thousands and even millions of Americans? *

While Congress clamped down on personal, consumer bankruptcy with the misguided passage of the anti-consumer Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Act of 2005, they let abusive corporate bankruptcy go unchecked. I would repeal BAPCA and put provisions in place to curb corporations playing shell games with their assets and dumping pension obligations. I would require full funding under the Pension Guaranty Fund so that pension obligations will be met first in line. The best protections in the courts for consumers is strong, clear legislative guidance as to the treatment of certain classes of assets, giving judges no wiggle room.

IMMIGRATION

If you support a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants in our country today, please set forth your vision briefly. What other reforms to our immigration system would you advocate going forward? *

I believe in a comprehensive approach to immigration that respects human dignity and places those who have been in the country for years, paying taxes, growing businesses, and making positive contributions, on a pathway to citizenship. In Congress, I fought to make the DREAM Act a reality for all our families to fulfill the hopes and promises of our young people to pursue their education, contribute to their communities, and dream for opportunities for themselves and their families. When Republicans blocked it in the Senate, I joined with statewide stakeholders to pass a ballot initiative to make the DREAM Act available for Maryland families. I support continued temporary protected status (TPS) for those who have been displaced due to war and natural disasters and am committed to ensuring that those seeking asylum are heard in a timely manner and have adequate counsel to present their claims. I also know that the by-product of a broken immigration system is that too many families are left in the shadows, denied fair wages, affordable housing, and an education that prepares them for a 21st-century economy. This broken system depresses wages and opportunities for all of us. In Congress, I will use my seniority to fight for comprehensive immigration reform, and for the investments that Maryland's immigrant communities deserve.

FOREIGN POLICY

The United States spends more on its military than the next 10 countries combined. That enormous expenditure incentivizes conflict over diplomacy and lobbying by our military-industrial complex to maintain the status quo. In Congress, would you work to reduce our annual military spending? *

Yes, we should spend what is necessary and important to meet our security obligations, but I would start by eliminating old weapons systems that are beloved by defense contractors but unnecessary to meet 21st Century threats. Also, we have to change both contracting practices and ethics rules that shut down the revolving door that contributes significantly to the way costs escalate often with expensive, long-term, no-bid contracts. I believe that democracies are under threat around the world. U.S. foreign policy should promote democracy, human rights, and peacebuilding. I value international institutions to resolve conflicts through diplomacy and support rebuilding the nation's diplomatic corps that was hollowed out by former President Trump. I believe that Congress cannot abdicate its constitutional authority when a president seeks military intervention and Congress must debate and authorize the use of force before our Nation does so.

ELECTION & PARTY REFORM

Do you support public financing for every election? Why or why not? *

Yes, I first started working on public financing as an advocate for Public Citizen. In the mid-90's I helped to run and then fund state ballot initiative to institute public financing and low-donor systems in localities and states. In my opinion, the Supreme Court's decision in Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission was one of the most disastrous rulings to our nation's democracy, opening the spigots of dark money we see today. I introduced the first constitutional amendment to repeal Citizens United. The American people deserve action on policies like prescription drug prices, climate, banking reform, and health care. I understand the toxic connection between special interest money and inaction on important policy when special interests control the process. If we don't own our elections, then corporate special interests will.

Do you support or oppose ending the revolving door for elected officials and staffers becoming lobbyists? What will you do about the influence of fossil fuel executives and other industry front-groups on policy-making and elections? *

Yes, I support ending this revolving door, imposing a significantly longer window from government service into industry and vice-versa. It is imperative that Congress consider legislative and constitutional remedies to close the door to unlimited corporate and individual spending in our elections and on lobbying. Only by giving specific authority to Congress to regulate corporate expenditures on political activity will we be able to remove corporate influence on political activity. We must also pursue every legislative avenue to reduce unfettered spending, bring more transparency to the process, and ensure our public policy is protected from undue influence.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Two decades into the 21st Century, intolerance and discrimination are still plaguing us, and now, incredibly to many of us, activists on the right are trying to purge our schools of any books or curriculum which would involve an honest accounting of our troubled history of social, racial and ethnic strife, prejudice and even exploitation and genocide. Can we address disparate treatment and intolerance without openly confronting our troubled history and persistent injustices? Looking at the 2021 election in Virginia, it seems that GOP's main electoral talking point this year will continue to be a refusal to even discuss racial inequities, as well as creating new forms of oppression of women and LGBTQ people. As a society and as progressives, how should we formulate a response to these political talking points, and going forward to ensure we can equip each generation to discuss difference and discrimination? *

Racism and its ugly history and real whether the GOP admit it or not, as is true for antisemitism, sexism, homophobia etc. We must always speak truth to power and continue to confront the troubled legacies that have created an unequal society today. We must always call out these toxic and harmful behaviors when we see them and organize our communities to stand up against them. We must continue to enable our educators to give their students the broadest base of knowledge to develop a next generation of critical thinkers.

And, we have to elect different people. Democrats are notorious at paying attention only to national and federal elections – those who hate do not. I have spent six years since my service in Congress is advising c3 and c4 funders in directing millions in resources to long-term, state-based organizing focused on engaging voters year around and recruiting and training candidates to run at every level to reclaim state legislatures, school boards and city and county councils. Progressive leaders have to join forces to reclaim the justice narrative.

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