

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? *

I strongly support the Green New Deal. Environmental justice and economic equity are twin pillars in my campaign; we cannot have one without the other. I support the full slate of climate legislation that seeks to decarbonize our economy on a timeline that will be effective in ameliorating climate change while also in a manner that empowers working class people. Specifically, I commit to fighting for a 100% carbon free economy, decarbonizing our transportation system, and a just transition for the workers in the fossil fuel industry.

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? *

The threat of climate change is here and now; we can no longer afford to wait. We need all three branches of government to take action against the climate emergency and that means President Biden needs to use the power of his office to take immediate action.

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

Yes. I favor the expansion of a green transportation system. That means moving away from oil and gas fueled cars and towards a future of both electric vehicles, and, more importantly, green public transportation including high speed rail, local commuter rails, and other forms of mass transit that do not rely on oil and gas.

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

We have a clean water and air crisis, especially in my district. For too long, poor communities of color have been saddled with power plants and industrial facilities that pollute the air and water. Aside from decarbonizing these facilities, we need to ensure that they are built in safer areas and that the communities that live and work by them are given the economic and medical support they need to keep safe.

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. The working class needs a raise. In fact, \$15/hour was appropriate in 2015. It's now 2022, the minimum wage should be higher than \$15.

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? *

I support and have proposed a comprehensive homes for all agenda. That includes building more social housing, implementing nation-wide rent control, ending discrimination in both the sale and rental market, and moving towards decommodifying housing.

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. *

Wealth and income inequality are some of the most significant problems we face and are often the causes of other problems we face. To fix this we need to re-empower the labor movement and establish a national social welfare fund that redistributes corporate profits back to working class people. We also need to raise the tax rate on corporations and the wealthy so that they pay their fair share and so that their stranglehold on politics is weakened and eventually eliminated.

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

We need to reimpose the regulations of Glass-Steagall that helped prevent a recession and depression for 70 years. We also need to strengthen our antitrust laws so that financial monopolies cannot sink the economy with their gambling.

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? *

The labor movement is the backbone of the working class. I support the FULL PRO Act. We need to repeal all of Taft-Hartley and let working people take power in their workplaces. Beyond the PRO Act we need to implement card check recognition and move towards sectoral bargaining, especially in key industries.

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) *

America needs to rethink its trade policy. The results of NAFTA have been the loss of good jobs in America, the depression of labor standards in Mexico, and a trade system that is not under democratic control. Instead we need to create a trade system that works with and for organized labor to achieve economic and climate justice. That means empowering the parties to a trade deal to ensure that the working class of all countries have the power to fight multinational corporations that would abuse them.

HEALTHCARE/RETIREMENT

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

I would expand Social Security to all people, remove the cap on social security taxes that favor the wealthy, and make sure Social Security checks can't be garnished by debt collectors. Regarding Medicare, I support a comprehensive, free at the point of service, Medicare for All system.

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. For-profit medical insurance must be eliminated.

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

Yes. A better future is possible. Medicare for All would ensure that Americans can go to their doctor without worrying about high bills or red tape. It would mean that individuals, families, and even the state and federal governments would save millions of dollars on health care by reducing administrative waste, investing in prevention and early medical intervention, and bringing stability to the health service industry. COVID-19 has made clear that we cannot wait and that the time is now.

LEGAL REFORM

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

Yes. The criminalization of marijuana is a lasting policy of the racist War on Drugs. I have been a victim of this racist War as I was arrested for marijuana possession. I was arrested because I am Black. I say this because we know that White people and Black people use marijuana at about the same rates, but Black people are far more likely to be incarcerated for it.

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 *

Structural racism and white supremacy plague law enforcement in this country, from the prison industrial complex to police brutality. Our criminal punishment system ravages our most vulnerable communities while for-profit prison executives get rich off cheap prison labor. Families are driven to financial ruin by exorbitant cash bail requirements, and many low-income Americans are pressured into taking unjust plea deals because they don't have the resources to adequately defend themselves in court. I support defunding the police budgets and reallocating those funds to services that actually meet the needs of the community. We also need to move to a system of decarceration. No longer should police be in schools, issuing parking tickets, or responding to mental health crises. Enough is enough.

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? *

The right wing federal judiciary has made clear that the rights of regular people are subservient to the profits of corporations. We need full scale court reform, from packing the Supreme Court, to expanding the federal judiciary. We also need to expand the reach of the Alien Tort Statute and other similar laws so that US corporations can simply offshore their violations to avoid justice.

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? *

As noted above I support expanding the Supreme Court and federal judiciary to dilute the power of these ideologues. We also need to expand the resources of the IRS and the DOL so that they can fully investigate these corporations for corporate fraud. We know that these shell corporations are just papers designed to escape liability. They are not immutable laws of nature. We can and should change them.

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 support a pathway to citizenship for all immigrants who want it; regardless if they are currently documented or not. Immigrant communities should be able to live, work, and attend school free of fear. That reality is impossible as long as ICE roams our communities tearing families apart, border officials put young children in cages, and millions of undocumented Americans are forced to live in the shadows. For decades, cruelty toward immigrants has been a matter of bipartisan consensus. We must abolish ICE, put a moratorium on deportations, and decriminalize border crossings.

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? *

I support the end of the military industrial complex. The United States' aggressive military adventurism has been a complete failure. The federal government has poured trillions of dollars into wars which only serve to starve domestic social programs and cause human misery abroad. Instead of an arrogant and shortsighted foreign policy, we need an anti-imperialist foreign policy based on peace and cooperation. Among other things, I support a new Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) that severely curtails the president's ability to start military engagements without congressional approval; and redirecting at least \$200 billion in defense funding toward foreign aid and domestic social programs.

ELECTION & PARTY REFORM

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

Yes. As a 100% grassroots candidate I know that corporate candidates will always be able to rig the system with dark money. By replacing our current system with a publicly financed one, we can ensure that every election is free and fair.

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? *

The revolving door is a mainstay of Washington and a huge source of its corruption. Politicians are public servants and need to maintain the public's trust. They cannot be allowed to cash out to the highest bidder. We can fight these front-groups by overturning Citizens United and making sure there is no more dark money in our government.

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? *

It is impossible to live in the dark about our past and hope to brighten our future. We must reckon with where we are coming from and then use that knowledge to ensure that the evil's our country has committed never happen again. The way to do that is to empower those with the least among us. Minority groups are routinely used a scapegoat by right-wing movements for societal issues which are actually caused by the consolidation of economic and political power by large corporations and the ultrawealthy. It's important to combat these political talking points to articulate a clear, positive message of a multi-racial, working-class movement. That's what I'm running to do.

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