

# 2022 HoCo candidate questionnaire

Our Revolution Howard County - county council & executive endorsement requests

Name \*

Deb Jung

Campaign Website

votedebjung.com

Why are you running for county office? What have you done in recent years to benefit Howard County (e.g. civic engagement, testimony, activism, etc.)?

I am here seeking your support for my re-election effort. I am running for re-election because I love Howard County, I have more to contribute and there is unfinished business to complete. While sometimes the politics have been frustrating, my time on the Council has also been very gratifying – particularly when I can make a difference and help people.

Having lived in Hickory Ridge for nearly 34 years, I have very deep roots in our community and know the history, neighborhoods and schools in District 4 and throughout the County. I have raised my family here and my daughter attended Howard County schools at every level. Before being elected to the County Council in 2018, I was very involved in the schools as a parent and as a volunteer. I also served on the County Human Rights Commission and the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Commission, Co-chaired the Howard County Sesquicentennial and started an arts foundation to raise money for Howard County artists. My commitment to our community has been long-standing over more than three decades.

Since winning election to the County Council in 2018, my priorities have been:

- Keeping Howard County's public schools as well funded as possible, to preserve the school system's continued success;
- Ensuring that Howard County's growth management system is sensible, without loopholes, and complies with the County's adequate public facilities ordinance;
- Strengthening environmental and natural resource protections, as well as efforts to combat climate change and airplane noise reduction;
- Improving the availability of affordable housing in a manner that does not result in an over-concentration of poverty in schools;
- Assisting our seniors' ability to stay-in-place through expansion of an existing tax credit;
- Supporting measures to promote racial, economic, and immigrant justice and opposing those with the opposite effect; and,
- Promoting good government by insisting on accountability, transparency, accessibility, and greater citizen involvement, particularly in land-use processes.

I will continue to pursue these priorities if I am reelected.

What actions would your office take on any of OR's 6 platform issues? <https://ourrev.us/Platform2022>

1) Defend Democracy: Protect Voting Rights & Get Money Out of Politics

I have and will continue to support the Voting Rights Act.

I was the first candidate for local office in Howard County to announce my use of the Citizens' Election Fund and the first to qualify for a distribution of matching funds. I appreciate the support of many members from Our Revolution who helped me secure those matching funds. Your voice was critical to ensuring the success of the program. Preserving democracy at the local level can require vigilance and action. Our Revolution proved that it is capable of both. I strongly believe that people-powered campaigns should be the standard for all seeking election to a public office.

2) Medicare for All

I support Medicare for All but there is very little I can do on this issue at the local level. While the national problem continues, I have consistently supported funding for local non-profits that provide assistance to struggling families in Howard County.

3) Climate Action: Keep Fossil Fuels in the Ground

Climate change is looming over everything we do. In order to ensure the health of our earth and a future for people who live on this planet, we must address this issue at every level. Protecting our natural environment and cutting greenhouse emissions must be a priority. We must have a Climate Action Plan in the County but we must be more aggressive and incorporate community efforts more fully.

4) Fight for \$15 and a Union

The Council recently passed a bill that accelerates the timing of the increase in the minimum wage for Howard County employees.

5) Criminal Justice Reform

Criminal justice reform is critical in this country but is generally a state or federal issue. I will support reasonable criminal justice reform efforts at those levels. I also support a professionalized police force that implements best practices. I voted in favor of the County's body worn camera program to improve policing locally and to end the County's detention contract with ICE (US Immigration and Customs Enforcement).

6) Protect Reproductive Rights

I have been an abortion rights proponent my entire life. My litmus test in voting for a candidate is whether that person supports a woman's right to make her own reproductive choices. Again, there is not much of a role for the County Council on this topic locally but I have supported the state legislators' efforts to secure this right

Are you using the Citizen's Election Fund (CEF) for financing? If not, why not? Are you accepting campaign contributions from corporate interests, such as property developers or their associates?

I am using the CEF and will not be accepting campaign contributions from developers.

Please identify a few serious challenges facing Howard County that your office would address over the next two years. What steps would you take, what obstacles do you anticipate, and how can we overcome them?

Climate change can be addressed at the local level through responsible growth management and support for alternative sources of power. Continued focus is needed in developing a climate action plan that is implemented strategically. I will continue to conduct outreach to the community on this issue.

Funding our schools at a level that provides an equitable education for all students is critical to a fair and just society and in giving marginalized communities the tools to achieve success.

Ensuring that we look at initiatives through a racial equity lens and provide supports for our most vulnerable residents is an ongoing concern that should be addressed now. Securing funding for such initiatives will continue to be a priority for me.

Adoption of the General Plan and the associated comprehensive rezoning will be important and controversial because it will require balancing competing public needs such as school capacity, affordable housing and preservation of open space. I will attempt to find consensus but I strongly believe that adequate public infrastructure must accompany new development.

What changes would you make to Howard County taxes?

At present, none. Last year, Howard County's revenues were \$108 million over what was budgeted. This year, the County's revenues are \$214 million over the budgeted projections. We have the funds to pay for many initiatives, it is just a matter of priorities.

What would you do to make housing more affordable for low-income residents?

I would incentivize missing middle housing initiatives and use housing funds to help low income residents purchase homes, allowing them to build the generational wealth they have been excluded from.

How would you improve transportation and reduce traffic congestion in the county in an equitable and sustainable manner? Please identify priorities and funding mechanisms.

We must improve public transit options, from Bus Rapid Transit to light rail. We will need significant state funding to be successful in this arena. We must also look more closely at how new development is impacting traffic in our County and, if necessary, require greater developer contributions to fund more infrastructure improvements.

How would you increase police accountability, decrease racial disparities in policing, and maintain public safety? Do you support a reallocation of resources to medical or social services as front-line responders?

I would, and did, offer amendments to the Police Accountability bill to strengthen the transparency of the process. Some of the amendments were successful, others failed. I don't believe that we need a reallocation of resources at a time when crime has increased throughout the County, but I think it is important that we ensure our front-line responders have the medical and social services they need to respond appropriately to any crisis. If that means we need to enhance funding in this area, then we should.

How would you engage racially and economically marginalized communities to address equitable community policies? How would you ensure more impacted communities have a voice in county commissions?

The best way to create engagement in these communities is to hold localized events that are easy to attend. Given the constraints of COVID for more than 2 years, this has been difficult to do. Direct outreach to marginalized communities through events and face-to-face meetings is the best way to reach members of these communities and to recruit them to be more involved on county commissions and boards. We do hear directly from constituents who have problems that arise from being economically disadvantaged and we do our best to resolve their concerns.

I have been an advocate for racially and economically marginalized communities on a number of issues

including the siting of a fire station next to Harpers Choice Middle School and the maintenance of an exclusive housing community (Doughoregan) through a special agreement with the County. These issues arise in a variety of contexts and require advocacy to bring the issues to the forefront.

What should county government do to promote sustainable and equitable economic growth and job opportunities?

Training is always critical when this topic arises. The public schools are trying to offer more opportunities to students from all backgrounds to be trained in areas that don't necessarily require a college degree. Cybersecurity is a good example and high school students, as well as HCC students, are now able to receive training in this area at HCC. This area offers well-paying jobs that are sustainable and economically competitive.

What should the county do to improve healthcare beyond what the state and federal government does, in the short-run and long-run?

I support the County Executive's initiatives that include:

**Maternal Health Initiative:** The FY23 budget contains \$1.3 million to support underinsured and uninsured mothers to access quality prenatal care, significantly reducing systemic barriers to care, and promoting favorable health outcomes for mothers and babies.

**Mental Health Supports:** In the County Health Department, funding is included for a behavioral health navigator position to address increased demand for behavioral health services (\$83,000) and a behavioral health grant monitor position to seek new grant opportunities and help manage a growing number of grants (\$63,000). Funding is also included for a licensed mental health provider/contractor for bi-annual mental health screenings of all police officers (\$80,000).

Do you support changes to county voting methods, such as ranked choice, approval voting, or proportional representation?

I don't have an opinion on whether these voting methods should be implemented in Howard County. However, implementation would require state legislation and should be applied uniformly throughout Maryland.

What are your top priorities to address environmental justice, sustainability, and nature conservation?

From my perspective, the greatest environmental injustice in this County is the FAA's NextGen flight paths. The implementation of Next Gen created a narrow band of airplanes flying 24/7 over designated neighborhoods; it has been an environmental disaster for those of us living under this highway in the sky. The highway crosses over all of the County's most financially challenged neighborhoods, including Long Reach, Oakland Mills, Hammond and Wilde Lake. Both the noise and air pollution is a daily occurrence and has a deleterious impact on those who live under this siege by plane.

Revising our forest conservation bill and promoting legislation to save large trees in the course of the development process have also been and will continue to be among my priorities for the preservation of the natural environment.

Do you support eliminating natural gas in new household construction?

Yes, but only after we have ensured that the public and homebuilders fully understand the issue and its importance to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

How would you address electric car recharging stations in the county?

I fully support a reliable EV charging network that would enable people to feel confident when purchasing electric vehicles. Such a system will lead to a reduction in emissions. The County should develop a detailed, comprehensive plan and dedicate additional County funds to this purpose sooner rather later. We should work with surrounding counties and make this regional effort.

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms