

2022 MGA candidate questionnaire

Our Revolution Howard County - state delegate & senate endorsement requests

Name *

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Why are you running for state legislature? What have you done in recent years to benefit your district (e.g. civic engagement, testimony, activism, etc.)?

I am running because I have the desire, skills, experiences, and ability to make a positive difference for District 13, the County and the State. In recent years my contributions to the area include:

Community Engagement: I am on the Board of the Arc of Howard County (including Board President from July 2019 thru June 2021), during the pandemic efforts included supporting the Arc in obtaining PPE, working with the Executive Director on issues around changes in how the Arc provided supports to the individuals it serves, and its approach to administering vaccines; OhanaHC: Starting in 2021, I have been involved in OhanaHC a new non-profit in Howard County that both provides mentoring to students identified by their school as having untapped potential as well as building stronger communities of support in the broader school area community, I am both a mentor in the program and an active part of the Volunteer Recruitment committee; Howard County Leadership Essentials Program: This program is for emerging leaders in Howard County and is a partnership of Loyola University Salinger School and Leadership Howard County. During the program, each participant has a leadership/executive coach and I have coached in the program for over 10 years; Howard County Commission for Women: I have been a member of the Commission since late 2020, am currently the Secretary and have been involved in expanding the Commission's awareness of State legislation impacting women and children.

Advocacy: I actively supported Team Howard during the 2018 election cycle, generally volunteering at least 2 times per week. During the 2020 election, I wrote 500+ postcards, both for the presidential election as well as for the Georgia special Senate election. I have also provided oral testimony in Annapolis for bills related to the developmentally disabled community.

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

Good work is being done by many within Maryland on all 6 of OR's platform issues, and Maryland is in the fortunate position of being a leader in protecting and enhancing voter rights, strengthening reproductive rights, and strengthening its goals for climate action and environmental protections. I applaud the good work done in these areas by the most recent General Assembly and will work to continue to ensure the state stays in the forefront of these issues.

In the area of Medicare, working to continue expansion of medicare coverage and eligibility as well as addressing prescription drug prices would be near term objectives. Similarly, oversight of progress on the Criminal Justice Reforms passed in 2021 must be a priority to ensure the objectives of those reforms are being achieved and inform any next steps.

Increasing minimum wage and protecting workers rights is critical to efforts to close the wage gap. The wage gap is contributing to the inability of many hard working people to afford housing, save for their children's college and/or retirement, pay for medical costs (including high deductibles that must be met before insurance kicks in) or have enough to cover an unforeseen expense like a car repair. Higher minimum wage can help with that, as can more and/or stronger unions.

Do you support a bill for public campaign financing? If not, why not? Are you accepting campaign contributions from corporate interests, such as property developers or their associates?

Campaign finance reform is not an issue that I have researched, nor have I seen legislative language. I am not opposed to the idea and the specifics of any legislation will be critical to any voting decision. I have not sought corporate contributions.

Please identify a few serious challenges facing Maryland 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?

I think Maryland, and the rest of the nation, will be facing a serious challenge with regard to teacher shortages (and school staff shortages in general) over the next few years. As a Delegate I will do my best to support efforts to increase Maryland's ability to grow its own teachers since currently more than half of new teachers got their degrees outside of Maryland. I will work to support funding efforts to improve schools, increase salaries and strengthen benefits. As mental health challenges, which have increased significantly due to the pandemic, continue to impact students and teachers, I would also look for ways to improve and expand mental health services and providers in our schools.

As noted above, I believe wage disparities are a core challenge to the country as well as to our states and localities. It is important to take steps to reduce the gaps between the "haves" and the "have nots." Wage increases can help address this, but cannot solve the challenge alone. This is not a problem that can be resolved in a couple years, however steps can be taken and I hope to initiate actions that can help immediately whether through increased access to truly affordable healthcare, expansion of access to career training via grants or free/low costs for certificate or apprentice programs, reduction/elimination of barriers and thresholds to childcare for lower income families, or prompt and successful rollout of Universal PreK. I will work to address current challenges that impact the day to day cash flow of Maryland families.

What changes would you make to state taxes and/or constitutional limits for county taxes?

At all levels of government, tax structures are complex. The complexity is furthered by the increased use of 'fees' which often target example specific segments of the population. Those 'fees' often don't have the same connotation as taxes and yet, by their nature, are a regressive form of taxation. Taxes however are necessary as they generate the funds governments use to provide needed services to constituents. While I have no objection to looking at closing loopholes, increasing taxed on the top X% of Maryland's high earners, or examining exorbitant tax incentives provided to businesses, I do not currently have sufficient knowledge of taxes regulations to suggest real and substantive changes to state tax regulations.

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

We need both more affordable housing and more housing in general. This is a complex problem with many challenges including: supply and demand - there is not enough supply to meet current demand, the impacts of wage stagnation and wage disparity, zoning ordinances, environmental concerns, and the residual (and current) impacts of red lining to name a few. There are no easy or quick answers. Identifying, working with communities, community partners, local and state governments, non-profits (Like Enterprise Community Partners) and others to plan and build thriving, integrated and inclusive communities is hard but necessary for the creation of more affordable housing.

How would you improve transportation and reduce traffic congestion in an equitable and sustainable manner? What are your views on public-private partnerships in transportation, such as variably-priced toll lanes?

To do this well, public transit needs to be more responsive and resilient to riders. I support re-looking at the Red Line as a method of reaching this goal for Baltimore residents - current and future - living and working in the City. I support Smart Street initiatives and would look to ways to scale them appropriately across the state. This among other things supports increased use of bicycles - traditional and electric - and walking for commuting or running errands. On the sustainability side of this question, I support transitioning public transit and school buses to electric-powered ones. I believe any and all public-private partnership - like any contractual agreement - must be structured very clearly and carefully with regard to the goals, objectives, and consequences for not meeting objectives of the agreement, in both the short term and longer term. With regard to variably-priced toll lanes, data collection and analysis on the efficacy of such measures is necessary to ensure the objectives are being met.

How would you increase police accountability, decrease racial disparities in policing, and maintain public safety? Do you support full LEOBR repeal?

I believe accountability is increased when the people, specifically police officers in this case, are held accountable. A good portion of my career has been spent in organizational development and change management. And I know that change must start at and continually come from the top. Therefore, racially disparate treatment will be reduced and public safety strengthened when all levels of leadership within a department consistently model awareness of implicit bias, point it out in themselves and others, lead by example in addressing it promptly and appropriately, and provide consistent training around bias, systemic racism, crisis de-escalation, and restorative justice.

How would you engage racially and economically marginalized communities to address inequity in our society? How would you ensure more impacted communities have a voice in state government?

Engaging with marginalized communities is essential to the change process. Whether that is participating in community efforts (I have been involved with Courageous Conversations on Race and Religion for 5 years and Ohana HC for over a year), or knocking on doors of district members who could be considered marginalized, or serving on the Board of the Arc to advocate for a community that isn't always able to advocate for itself I have experience in engaging and addressing inequities. I will strive to be cognizant of and listen to both individuals and communities and bring their inputs to Annapolis. I would also like to see some of Assembly's pandemic-related changes (e.g., hearings that are live streamed) made permanent.

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

The state plays a large role in this effort and one of the major things it can do is ensure the public school system is the best it can be. Funding the Blueprint will be a critical component of the school system's success. Ensuring appropriate levels of funding to improve, renovate and build new schools and educate future teachers is also critical. Quality school systems not only entices businesses to come to and stay in Maryland, it also ensure a quality work force in the future. Similarly, building resiliency around climate change and addressing environmental social justice challenges will assist the state in meeting this objective.

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

There are several things the state can do or continue to do including: maintain and expand access to medicare, continue and expand access to tele-medicine, strengthen local public health departments, and lower the costs of prescription drugs, particularly for seniors.

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

I am open to learning more about the pros and cons of various voting methods. Given the current levels of concern and disinformation about voting security, I have concerns about changing methods at this point in time as it could provide fodder to the far right as another attempt to "steal" elections.

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

Top priorities would include continued efforts to reduce green house gas emissions and continued progress towards to net-zero; transition to electric powered buses for schools and public transit; expansion of community solar programs; more focus on statewide planning for sea level rise resilience and remediation; and support for increased funding for state parks and forest preservation.

What changes would you make to state minimum wage law, including tipped and agricultural workers?

As noted I support increases to the minimum wage and I believe all workers should be being compensated for their efforts at least at that level, meaning, for example, that tipped workers paychecks should reflect income that is at least consistent with minimum wage.

Would you support legislation to enable public workers to have the right to form a union and bargain collectively for contracts statewide?

Yes

How would you change cannabis policy, including retail sales, distribution, and past criminal convictions?

I am supportive of the expansion to recreational use. I support efforts to ensure diversity of ownership at all levels of the cannabis industry (growing, processing, distributing). I believe the history of the cannabis-related criminalization of minorities must be acknowledged and the records of people with lower level, non-violent offenses should be expunged.

Do you support legislation to require special elections instead of appointments for vacancies in elective offices?

Yes

What should the state do regarding insurrectionists and conspirators against our democracy?

In general I believe this issue is a federal one. I am aware that there are efforts in several states to disqualify elected officials who took part in the January 6th riot at the US Capitol from running for re-election, but it appears the majority of those are being handled through the federal court system.

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