



2022 Endorsement Questionnaire – Maryland General Assembly
[All Responses Will be Made Public]

1. How do your life and work experience qualify you for this position?

I'm a lifelong resident of Maryland's 23rd District and a proud product of our public schools. I first ran for office as an 18-year-old college student, campaigning against big money and power from my local political establishment, in the hopes of bringing substantial social change to problematic governmental systems and structures. After winning the primary election but losing the general election, I came back four years later and won with 32,000+ votes, thanks to strong grassroots organizing and support from community members.

Since then, I've had the honor and pleasure of serving as our elected county school board member for 5 years, championing reforms in mental health, budget, infrastructure, curriculum, transparency, and diversity and inclusion. Professionally, I've made a national footprint advancing voting rights, democracy, racial justice and immigration reform, and have been featured in multiple media outlets for leadership and service, including CNN, ELLE Magazine, NBC, FOX, The Washington Post, and The Baltimore Sun.

Earlier this year, I made the decision to once again challenge the status quo by running for Maryland State Senate, District 23. And while this is a challenging race, I know it is a fight worth having. Our community deserves a vocal progressive advocate that stands up to money, power, and politicians and fights for what's right. That's who I am.

Over the course of my campaigns and board service, I have gone door-to-door to 15,000 homes and attended 500+ events to better understand the needs of our community. As our next State Senator, I will work even harder to be the advocate our district deserves.

- 2. Do you identify as a progressive candidate? Yes. If so, what specifically makes you a progressive candidate for this political office?** I strongly believe in community power and collective success. I believe that the plight and desires of people should drive our society, that power shouldn't be maintained by the rich, and that everyone deserves a

good quality of life that does not revolve around working themselves to exhaustion (all to profit corporations and certain industries). **Can you name three areas where enacting progressive legislation will make a large difference.** There are so many! **Please elaborate.** My progressive platform prioritizes educational equity, strengthening our democracy, universal healthcare, environmental justice, affordable housing, corporate accountability, worker rights, and criminal justice and immigration reform. Specifics can be found at www.raaheela.com

3. **Where are you getting money for your campaign?** The vast majority of funds raised for this race have come from individual donors. The rest is from union organizations or candidate committees of young and/or progressive-minded candidates who I am working with to change our community for the better.
 - a. **Do you accept PAC money and if yes, which PACs have contributed to you?** I have not accepted any PAC money in this race to date. In the past, and in the future, I may accept funds from the PAC arms of unions or progressive non-profit organizations. I have not accepted, nor do I intend to accept, corporate PAC money in this race.
 - b. **Do you accept money from developers, lobbyists or liquor store owners?** No
4. **Twenty five states hold special elections to fill vacancies in their state legislatures. Maryland does not. Maryland's appointment process provides the advantage of incumbency to appointed members and has resulted in thirty percent of the current Senate and twenty-five percent of the current House having started their legislative careers as appointees. Will you support a constitutional amendment bill that eliminates the recommendation by the Central Committee and the appointment by the Governor to fill a vacancy in the General Assembly and replaces it with a special election?** Yes, supporting special elections in lieu of appointments is specifically on my platform at www.raaheela.com
5. **Do you support a public financing system for delegates and senators?** Yes, supporting public financing is specifically on my platform at www.raaheela.com **Can you offer a reason why bills in the General Assembly for this program have not moved?** I do not conclusively know why, but I assume public financing of elections would yield a very real threat to incumbents in power that benefit from the current campaign finance system. **What can the community do and what can rank and file General Assembly members do to advance a public financing system?** The community should continue to advocate for public financing on all levels, and rank and file General Assembly members should support legislation that is brought forward to make it happen.
6. **Do you support expanding the gubernatorial small-donor public financing system to the Comptroller and AG races?** Yes.
7. **State enabling legislation currently permits public financing to be implemented for county executive and council races in every county. Do you support expanding this**

enabling legislation to cover all local races? Yes. A bill to expand enabling legislation has been in the House for two years with no opposition and no movement. Please comment. It's unfortunate that there has been no movement on this enabling legislation. Localities should be allowed the opportunity to conduct public financing of any elected positions they deem fit.

8. **Our Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) provides subsidies paid by Maryland rate payers to many dirty technologies – trash incineration, for example – under the guise that they are renewable. Environmental groups and activists have tried to clean up the RPS for the last decade and have still not succeeded largely due to the power of lobbyists and the leadership in the General Assembly and the fragmentation of environmental groups. What are your thoughts on how we cut through this quagmire and what hope do you think we have to creating the real changes we need to address global warming?** Our elected officials must support legislation that cleans up the RPS, and enact legislation with strong goals to address climate change. I have a track record of that. As a school board member for Prince George's County, I supported a resolution to establish 100% clean energy in our public organization by 2040. Additionally, because of my strong environmental stances and vision for the state, I am proudly the endorsed candidate of the Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club in this race. **Do you support the language in HB 11 introduced in 2022.** Yes, I support HB11.
9. **Do you support single-payer health care? Yes**
If elected,
 - a. **will you lobby our elected members in Congress to support single-payer healthcare bill?** Yes, I am willing to do this.
 - b. **commit to ask for a legislative study or create an executive agency study of the feasibility of implementing single-payer health coverage in Maryland?** Yes, I am willing to do this.
 - c. **Connecticut has shown that when a state administers Medicaid, administrative costs are slashed. Will you join us in asking the Governor to request a federal CMS waiver to remove MCOs from our Medicaid program and have the State administer the program?** Yes, I am willing to do this.
10. **In 2021, members of the public were able to submit written testimony on bills online and provide oral testimony on bills remotely. Prior to 2021, members of the public had to travel to Annapolis, sign up an hour or two before the hearing, submit 40 copies of written testimony and wait for hours to speak for a couple of minutes at a committee hearing. Obviously, most members of the working public never attempted this feat but the General Assembly was chock filled with paid lobbyists. After having established the technological feasibility of remote oral testimony, the General Assembly took it away in 2022 and permitted only in-person oral testimony despite the protests of over 100 organizations. Do you support this removal of public access? I do not support this rollback. What does this say to you about how the General Assembly is run and how can it be changed?** To me, this says that "business as usual" is

preferred to enhanced community engagement. It brings to question who legislators are really listening to, and fighting for.