

Better government

1. What steps do you support for improving the democratic process in Annapolis?

Progress has been made in improving transparency in the General Assembly over the past four years, with greater access to online tools for the public, the posting online of committee votes, and increased audio and video coverage of legislative deliberations. Much still remains to be done, however, including posting of subcommittee votes, committee amendments and votes, and the institution of a system to allow constituents to sign up to testify online the day before a committee hearing so they don't have to spend all day in Annapolis waiting to testify. **Do you support these improvements, and do you have others you'd like to offer? Are you willing to support special elections to fill legislative vacancies? Do you support stripping the party central committees of the power of appointment, which ultimately lies with the Governor?**

I support developments over the past few years at the Maryland General Assembly that have led to greater transparency in the legislature. I am supportive of continuing this trend by:

1. Posting subcommittee votes online.
2. Posting committee amendments and votes online.
3. Permit individuals who wish to testify to sign up to testify up to one week in advance and requiring that these individuals sign in at a computer terminal outside the committee room when they arrive to present their testimony.

I am additionally supportive of utilizing special elections within 6 months of a vacancy arising in the legislature as a means of ensuring that the legislature is chosen by the people of Maryland instead of by a select group of Central Committee members. The added cost of holding special elections is worth the expenditure so that we may have a representative government and not bequeath an incumbent advantage to legislators selected who initially rise to elected office by obtaining a dozen votes of Central Committee members.

2. Do you support combined reporting for corporations doing business in Maryland? Do you support a luxury tax to increase revenue?

Maryland is one of the wealthiest states in the US. Unfortunately, some of our state's wealthiest residents and most successful corporations avoid paying their fair share of taxes. Assessing luxury taxes and requiring that businesses file combined tax reports would generate revenues and help small and local businesses compete. Please explain briefly.

It is my opinion that our State needs new options for driving down costs and increasing revenues. Combined Reporting legislation would certainly move the State in this direction, with projected revenues of between \$80-150 million per year. There are, however, many obstacles that would need to be surmounted before this proposed legislation would pass, and regardless of whether Combined Reporting were to be passed or not, Maryland needs new revenues to afford the services and infrastructure, educational and otherwise, that our communities demand and deserve.

I would propose new vehicles for effective revenue generation for the State. I have proposals to drive down healthcare costs through supporting the Health Services and Cost Review Commission's Medicare Reauthorization Waiver Request, which would begin to shift our healthcare reimbursement

practices away from Fee For Service and towards bundled and global payments for episodes of care and/or through capitation arrangements (i.e. Per Member Per Month). This arrangement would shift healthcare incentives away from volume towards value. I would like to increase enrollment figures in the Health Insurance Exchange, thereby augmenting its purchasing power as a tool for negotiating down prescription drug prices. Such a program could provide greater options for teachers to purchase high value health insurance and would liberate healthcare dollars for spending in other sectors of our economy such as education.

I would also like to focus urban (high-density) development strategies towards Transit-Oriented Development and mixed-use commercial/residential zoning while promoting policies that would grow our tax base through the retention of current businesses and attraction of new businesses. If successful, both of these items would attract the missing Millennial demographic in areas like Bethesda, who would pay income taxes while utilizing fewer government services than other age groups. Such an action would therefore increase the proportion of the population that pays for public services, thus increasing the ability of our state government to afford the services that we rely upon to thrive within our communities.

3.What measures will you propose to improve the criminal justice system?

The juvenile justice scandal in Baltimore raises immediate concerns, and Maryland's prison population has nearly tripled to over 22,000 since 1980. People of color are disproportionately arrested, convicted, and incarcerated. This is a civil rights issue. **Would you advocate for legislation and policies establishing creative approaches to crime and rehabilitation --alternatives to incarceration?**

Please explain briefly.

District 16, and Montgomery County more generally, has a population that is profoundly invested in public affairs and the common good. We understand that history will judge us not by how well the best of us are doing, but by how well we protect those who are most vulnerable among us. An ability to incorporate the prosperity of the entire community into our assessment of our own success is perhaps the greatest measure of our society.

Having experience volunteering in Green Haven Maximum Security Prison, and having mentored a Baltimore City youth whose only parent was incarcerated, I have gained some insight into the need for criminal justice reform. I have identified three priority action items that could reduce recidivism and offer taxpayers greater value from the criminal justice system upon implementation: 1) Bring state agencies into prisons to facilitate the procurement of 3 essential documents prior to parole: a) social security card, b) birth certificate, c) state-issued ID; 2) identify hiring employers to match with incarcerated persons prior to release, who in turn should be provided with skills training to match the vocation; 3) Bring the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene into the prison to coordinate continuity of care into the post-release life of former inmates. Recidivism has been shown to be reduced when formerly incarcerated persons are provided with housing, shelter, and employment upon release. Education has been shown to decrease recidivism and improve reintegration into society, in part because it increases their marketability for employment.

I would also like to bring educational programs into prisons, because these programs have been shown to be effective at reducing recidivism, and additionally tone down the war on drugs by supporting measures to decriminalize non-violent, minor possession of marijuana.

4.Do you support expanding same day voter registration to Election Day?

In 2013, the General Assembly passed a law providing for same day voter registration, but only during the early voting period. The State Administrator of the Board of Elections objected to providing same day registration on Election Day itself, when the vast majority of votes are cast, claiming that it was not feasible. **Do you support expanding same day voter registration to Election Day, and if so, what steps would you take to see it become law?**

I am supportive of permitting same day voter registration if such measures can be validated as being secure from tampering and abuse, i.e. if voters are able to produce multiple forms of identification including a government issued ID and valid proof of residence within the district in which they wish to cast their vote.

5. Do you support enacting state campaign finance reforms?

Currently, there is too much corporate influence on elections. **Do you support voluntary public financing of campaigns for state office in a manner that would allow candidates to receive funding after demonstrating significant community support?**

I am supportive of creating a limited campaign matching funds program for all candidates for the Maryland General Assembly that is built to mirror the public campaign finance system that currently applies only to gubernatorial candidates. I would permit public financing to begin matching a candidate's fundraised dollars once that candidate is able to raise funds from 500 individuals who reside within the district that the candidate wishes to represent.

Human Rights

6 Do you support a comprehensive gender identity law for Maryland, including public accommodations protections?

The transgender community has been fighting to be included in statewide civil rights protections since 2007. While there are ordinances in Montgomery, Howard and Baltimore counties, as well as Baltimore city, there is no statewide law (as there is in 17 states, DC and Puerto Rico) to go along with the sexual orientation anti-discrimination law passed here in 2001. **Will you actively lobby the legislative leadership to make it happen?**

Every Marylander has the right to live freely and publicly with his or her identity, whether that identity be based upon ethnic, racial, religious, disability, sexual-orientation, or gender-identity. I believe that Maryland is heading in the direction of supporting such legislation and I would actively support such legislation once elected to the legislature.

7. Would you support legislation and policies to begin a transition to a publicly-financed health care system for Maryland?

After the passage of federal legislation (ACA aka Obamacare), it falls to the Maryland State government to establish "exchanges" to provide healthcare to people in our state. **Do you agree that Healthcare is a Human Right? How would you lead efforts to improve healthcare in Maryland?** Please explain briefly.

I agree that every Marylander deserves access to high-value healthcare. I additionally would contend that among the most efficient healthcare delivery system is the Single Payer Model. I would support the creation of a public option health insurance plan for all Marylanders to opt into within the Health Insurance Exchange.

Maryland is at a crossroads, and as a legislator, my top priority is getting healthcare right. As our nation emerges from this Great Recession, our state is afforded the unique opportunity to implement the Affordable Care Act (affectionately known as “ObamaCare”) the right way from the get-go. The nation’s eyes are upon Maryland as an early implementer of healthcare reform. Our actions over the coming years will affect not only the health and well-being of our population and our economy, but will set a national example for how to achieve low cost, high quality healthcare.

Healthcare is the single greatest driver of both the Federal and Maryland budgets, accounting for the greatest percentage of government spending when compared to any other sector of the economy. Our budgets, and indeed our very lives, depend upon the delivery of high value care in Maryland. As such, healthcare reform must be executed by trained, knowledgeable, and experienced legislators who are ready to hit the ground running. I have contributed to the implementation of the ACA at the federal level, have training from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and have worked on health policy in the Maryland General Assembly. With this background, I am uniquely positioned to help Maryland meet the challenges of implementing healthcare reform over the coming decade.

Maryland is an early implementer of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA, aka, Health Care Reform), and we only have one chance to get this right the first time. We must ensure that our health policy leaders in Annapolis have the experience and training to usher in the transition from volume to value in healthcare.

Regardless of your health insurance status, there is much at stake as Maryland implements the ACA. We must strive to reduce rates of hospital-acquired infections, which afflict patients irrespective of their insurance coverage. We must align financial incentives to reward physicians for providing appropriate levels of care. The current Fee for Service model of reimbursement has, perversely, incentivized the systemic overuse of diagnostics and therapeutic treatments. There is much work to be done, and with your help in the Democratic Primary Election on June 24, 2014, I’ll work with our political leadership to advance the cause of high value health care reform.

Legislative Action Items:

- Ensure that the Maryland Health Benefits Exchange (HIX) publicly reports cost AND quality data in addition to a consumer-friendly aggregate value indicator (e.g. 5 star evaluation).
- Require Essential Health Benefits in the HIX marketplace to include mental, dental, and long-term care benefits, and explore financial mechanisms to fund these mandates.
- Require Qualified Health Plans in the HIX marketplace to meet cost and quality criteria.
- Explore the potential effects of increasing the employer penalty for ‘dumping’ employees into the individual HIX marketplace.
- Authorize the State to use its purchasing power to drive down prescription drug prices for Medicaid beneficiaries and State employees, thereby bending the health care cost-curve and making Maryland’s budget growth more sustainable.

- Extend the Health Services and Cost Review Commission's All Payer Single Rate Setting authority to all ambulatory and outpatient settings so as to realize the proven cost-saving and disparity-reducing benefits that have been found in the inpatient setting.
- Explore the potential of offering a public insurance option in the HIX.
- Promote the Meaningful Use of interoperable Health Information Technology Electronic Health Records in the Health Information Exchange (HIE).
- Standardize insurance forms and health care services pricing, creating a transparent chargemaster list, and regulate cost-sharing variability within health insurance plans.
- Introduce tort reform measures that limit non-economic damages and begin to address defensive medicine practices by tying a physician's adherence to established medical best-practices guidelines to his liability under law.

8. Will you support the decriminalization of possession of small amounts of marijuana?

In 2013, a bill to decriminalize the possession of small amounts of marijuana passed the State Senate with 30 votes. The chair of the House Judiciary Committee did not allow the bill to be voted on either in committee or on the floor of the House of Delegates. **Will you support decriminalization, and, if so, what specific actions will you take to ensure the bill's passage in the General Assembly?**

I do support the decriminalization of the possession of small amounts of marijuana.

9. Do you support an increase in the minimum wage, and if so, what is the hourly wage that you would recommend that the General Assembly adopt?

Maryland's minimum wage, currently tied to the federal minimum wage, is \$7.25/hour. Economic analysts across the political spectrum agree that, it is extremely difficult for a family to survive on this level of income. In 2013, a bill to raise the minimum wage failed to pass a House committee vote. **Additionally, will you support indexing that wage level to obviate the need to keep returning to this fight in the future?**

I support an increase to Maryland's minimum wage that would be tied to either an inflation index or a Cost of Living Adjustment index. I would support an increase in the wage to an amount that would not leave anyone beneath the Federal Poverty Line who is working 40 hours per week for 52 straight weeks.

10. Will you support legislation to require employers to provide at least seven days of sick leave per year?

A bill requiring employers to provide at least seven days of sick leave per year received an unfavorable report in the House Economic Matters Committee in 2013. Do you support this bill?

Will you support legislation to extend employees' rights to unpaid leave to all Maryland workers?

Federal law currently requires that employees be given as much as 13 weeks of unpaid leave in case of illness or other conditions of the employee or a close family member. Federal law, however, only applies to employers with more than 50 employees. Half of Maryland businesses meet this

requirement, so the other half of Maryland workers get no family leave protection at all. In 2013, a bill to provide six weeks of unpaid family leave to employees of Maryland businesses with at least 15 employees did not pass. **Do you support this legislation?**

Having worked for the National Partnership for Women and Families, which played a significant role in drafting the Family and Medical Leave Act, I am supportive of ensuring that every Marylander benefits from having both medical leave and leave to seek judicial recourse (i.e. seek a protection order in a situation of domestic abuse). I am additionally supportive of a Paid FMLA for Maryland.

The Environment and Transportation

11. Do you believe we should prioritize fracking or spend our resources on developing green energy sources?

There is a nationwide boom in hydraulic fracking in America today, giving us a greater degree of energy independence than we've seen in years. However, there are serious environmental consequences to such drilling, and there has been a moratorium on fracking in Maryland to give the government time to study the current state of the art. **What are your thoughts about fracking in Maryland, in anticipation of the government study? How serious must the environmental degradation be for you to ban fracking? Are you concerned about the future of western Maryland's tourist and farming industries if fracking is permitted?**

The greatest danger posed by fracking in Maryland is the threat it poses to the quality of our water. Until fracking technology evolves such that it can ensure against the pollution of local water sources, and it is my understanding that this is not currently possible, I would oppose lifting the current moratorium on fracking in Maryland.

12. What is your vision for an efficient, environmentally friendly, regional transportation plan for the 21st century?

A recent editorial in The New York Times related to their mayoral campaign, and focused on public transportation, said, "Few things more directly affect the quality of a day, the stability and prosperity of a life, than the ability to get to work. And few are more vital to the larger economy — of the city and region — than the transportation system that makes it possible. Veins and arteries: everybody needs them." Clearly this statement applies to Maryland as well, primarily to both Baltimore and the DC suburbs. **What are your plans, now that the gas tax has been raised, to prioritize public transportation projects such as the Purple Line, CCT and Baltimore Red Line? Do you support plans to extend Metro to BWI as it is being extended to Dulles? Do you have any thoughts on the institution of high-speed or next-generation maglev rail in the northeast corridor?**

I would like to propose a 3 point transportation plan as my vision for a 21st century regional transportation plan that is centered around Smart Growth:

Maintain Investments in Our Current Infrastructure

- a. **Metro:** Fix flooding on the Metro Red Line, and prevent single-tracking. My priority with Metro is to improve its reliability with investments in its current infrastructure before I would consider plans to expand upon Metro. For the time being,

BWI will continue being served by I-95, the MARC train, and a light rail line to Baltimore City.

- b. **WMATA:** Keep buses running on-time all the time.
- c. **Roads:** Maintain roads, highways and bridges before crises develop.

Invest in New Modes of Public Transportation Infrastructure

- a. **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT):** Support the implementation of a BRT line along MD Rt. 355, north of the new transit node at the south entrance of the Bethesda Metro station (connecting Metro's Purple and Red Lines) and extending toward Rockville.
 - i. Allows passengers to see business windows with above ground transit, unlike Metro, promoting economic development.
 - ii. Best for mixed-use commercial, residential zoning with high population density.
 - iii. Will take cars off the road, will enable residents to commute without cars, and will not generally reduce the number of vehicle travel lanes.
- b. **Metro Purple Line:** Secure federal funding for this east-west light rail project.
- c. **Capital Bikeshare:** Expand bike sharing facilities to even more stations throughout Montgomery County.

Support Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

- a. **Bikes:** Expand Capital Bikeshare and create new bike lanes.
- b. **Pedestrians:** Build sidewalks at a distance from roads; construct pedestrian malls and squares; maintain crosswalks, with adequate crossing times and traffic signals.
- c. **Zoning and Development:** Build walkable, mixed-use urban "downtowns" that integrate seamlessly with public transportation.
 - i. Develop downtowns around "transit nodes".

13. Will you be supportive of legislation requiring labeling all genetically modified products (GMO's) so that consumers know what they are eating?

Several states are considering passage of a GMO labeling bill which would mandate the labeling of products containing genetically modified ingredients.

I would require more information about this proposal before I could take a stance on the issue.

14. Will you actively support legislation to save the Chesapeake Bay?

Recently, after a series of public hearings, Takoma Park, MD's City Council (as well as the Washington Adventist Hospital in Takoma Park) passed regulations prohibiting cosmetic use of pesticides on lawns and landscapes. Since the use of pesticides is

directly linked to several forms of cancer, as well as endocrine disruption, and is detrimental to the fish and wildlife in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, **will you support and advocate for:**

a. the elimination of cosmetic use of pesticides on state public land, schools, highways, parks and other government facilities? Not at this time, as I would require more information on this topic.

b. Encourage Maryland county and municipal governments to follow the example of Takoma Park and ban its use? Not at this time, as I would require more information on this topic.

Begin a public education campaign to discourage the routine cosmetic use of pesticides around homes and gardens. Not at this time, as I would require more information on this topic.

I am committed to preserving the health and safety of our natural environment, and will be an advocate in Annapolis for the sensible regulation of environmentally harmful practices that secure our planet for future generations.

- **Global Climate Change:** Climate change is real and it is being driven by our consumption of fossil fuel. The deleterious effects of climate change are many, and their implications for Maryland's economy are real. Left unaddressed, Maryland will see rising sea levels claim our communities and will see increasingly frequent and violent storms batter her coast. That is why I support major efforts to tackle this problem at the state level.
- **Renewable Energy:** Thankfully, alternative technologies like wind and solar are becoming increasingly available, cost-effective, and viable in a wide array of markets; we must continue to incentivize the development and innovation of these technologies in the private sector, while also requiring that public utility companies provide a guaranteed market for renewable energy by increasing the proportion of total energy consumption derived from renewable resources.
 - **Strategic Energy Investment Fund:** I support full funding of this important program.
 - I support the current Climate Action Plan's call for increasing the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) to 25% by 2020.
 - I support 'community renewable' legislation, designed to reduce barriers and increase support for local-distributed solar and other renewable energy projects.
- **The Chesapeake Bay:** The Chesapeake Bay is not only an important source of economic vitality and place of recreation for Maryland, it is above all a national treasure. Current efforts to protect and restore the Bay must be maintained and enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations of Marylanders.
 - In particular, I support efforts to strengthen legislation and regulation to achieve Maryland's Watershed Implementation Plan in order to reach our Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) responsibilities.
- **Water Quality Improvement Act (WQIA):** I support the repeal of provisions of the WQIA which deny universities, research institutions, and the general public access to farm pollution records.

- **Sustainable Development:** I am a vocal supporter of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and mixed-use commercial/residential zoning. Our communities are expanding, and Montgomery County's population now exceeds 1 million. We must accommodate this growing population while making investments in public transit infrastructure that will facilitate movement without personal automobiles (which are increasingly unaffordable for the Millennial generation, contribute to carbon emissions & climate change, as well as to some of the worst traffic congestion in the nation.)

I have testified in front of the Montgomery County Council in favor of Bus Rapid Transit starting from Bethesda heading north towards Rockville, and have testified in favor of TOD and mixed-use C/R zoning before the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. As the President of the Luxmanor Citizens Association, I have held hearings with MCDOT and Council member Berliner's office about the County's FY2015 CIP sidewalk project along Tuckerman Lane, which resulted in widespread community input and consensus-building. I strongly support the presence of Capital Bikeshare in Montgomery County, as well as the continued focus on development of walkable, live-able, and bike-able communities.

- **Waste Mitigation and Control:** The promotion of advanced recycling programs, waste reduction, composting, and other measures as alternatives to incinerators and landfills across the state would benefit all, conserve resources, and reduce our impact on the environment. Programs such as the 'bag tax' in Montgomery County have been successful at both reducing pollution of our waterways, e.g. Rock Creek Park, and have proven to be business-friendly as well, specifically by reducing the overhead costs to businesses that no longer need to purchase as many plastic bags as they had to prior to the implementation of this fee.

15. Do you favor extending the Montgomery County "bag tax" statewide and implementing a 5 cent deposit on bottles?

Montgomery County enacted legislation in 2011 that placed a five-cent charge on each paper or plastic carryout bag provided by retail establishments to customers at the point of sale, pickup or delivery. Retailers retain 1 cent of each five-cent for the bags they sell. The revenues from this charge are deposited into the County's Water Quality Protection Charge fund. This effectively shifts the burden of litter clean up costs from taxpayers to consumers, who have a choice to avoid the 5-cent charge by bringing reusable bags. An industry consortium led by Owens-Illinois (glass) and Alcoa (aluminum) and major state environmental organizations e.g. the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Maryland League of Conservation Voters, strongly favors a Maryland "bottle bill," legislation which generally requires a 5 cent deposit on sealed metal, glass or plastic containers.

Enactment of this legislation would reduce litter, create recycling jobs and supplement ongoing recycling programs. **Do you favor enactment of a 5 cent per container "bottle bill" in Maryland?**

I do favor enacting a 5 cent bag tag across Maryland, as it has proven its effectiveness in Montgomery County at both reducing waste and business overhead costs for businesses. I would need more information on the bottle bill before I can take a stance on it.

Education and the Economy

16 What approaches would you support to maintain education excellence in Maryland and address the education achievement gap?

To address crushing higher education costs for students, the Oregon legislature recently unanimously enacted “Pay it Forward, Pay it Back” higher education funding legislation. The Oregon legislation directs the state’s education commission to develop a plan for consideration by the legislature in 2015 under which students would pay nothing for tuition while attending college, paying instead 3% of their income each year for the next two decades or so to cover the costs of future students. Education loans from big banks would no longer be necessary. **Do you favor similar legislation Maryland? If not, what other approaches to reducing higher education costs for Maryland students do you favor? Despite an award-winning public education system, Maryland faces an achievement gap. Please explain your ideas to overcome this problem.**

While the traditional focus of public education has been K-12 education, I would seek to make pre-K education more affordable and accessible, especially to indigent populations in Maryland. Pre-K is key to closing the Achievement Gap that both perpetuates and reflects institutionalized race and class-based inequities across our society. Further, I would seek to identify solutions to the prohibitive cost of higher education through such pioneering models as the Universities at Shady Grove, which attempt to redefine what is necessary and what is possible for Maryland students in pursuit of a 4-year degree. Because success in these ventures would be gradual, metrics should be viewed within the context of longitudinal trends in matriculation, graduation, successful job placement, and a gradual narrowing of the ever-persistent Achievement Gap.

The Pay it Forward, Pay it Back model is an interesting model that is worthy of serious consideration.

17. Do you support the concept of a state bank in Maryland? Inspired by the Bank of North Dakota, legislators in several states, including Maryland, have proposed the creation of a state bank. In North Dakota, the nine-decade old bank serves as a depository for all state tax collection and fees, and deposits are reinvested in North Dakota in the form of loans, thereby enhancing the availability of credit in the state.

I would need more information before I could answer this question.