



Charles County Voters' Guide 2020 General Election

Published by the League of Women Voters of Maryland

About this Voters' Guide

This Voters' Guide is published by the League of Women Voters. The League has a long tradition of publishing the verbatim responses of candidates to questions important to voters. The League offers this Voters' Guide to assist citizens in their decision-making process as they prepare for participation in the general election. **The League of Women Voters does not support or oppose any candidate or political party.**

All candidates were asked to provide biographical information and to respond to a nonpartisan questionnaire. Candidates running for the same office were asked identical questions. Responses from candidates who will appear on the ballot are printed exactly as submitted to the LWV. We did not edit for content, spelling, or grammar. Presidential candidates' responses were limited to 750 characters. All other candidates' responses were limited to 400 characters and any additional material was cut off at that point. If a candidate did not respond by the print deadline, "No response received by deadline" is printed.

Additional information on the candidates is available at www.VOTE411.org, which has any updates received after the deadline. Candidate websites provide additional biographical and policy information. If the candidate submitted a campaign website, it is listed under her/his name.

The League assumes no responsibility for errors and/or omissions.

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Voting by Mail

Applications for Ballots

Every voter on the active voter registration list was mailed an application for a mail-in/absentee ballot at the end of August. If you did not receive an application, you should check your voter registration information at <https://voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/VoterSearch> or call your Board of Elections. The most common reason for being placed in the inactive voter list is moving without notifying the Board of Elections of your new address, so that election mail sent to you is returned to the Board of Elections. If you have questions, call the Board of Elections.

You may request a mail-in ballot by completing the application form or by applying online at https://www.elections.maryland.gov/voter_registration/index.html.

Applications for ballots must be received by the Board of Elections by Tuesday, October 20, 2020.

Receiving Ballots via the Postal Service or the Internet

Maryland offers internet delivery of ballots and an online ballot marking tool. This option is compatible with adaptive technology. It enables those with disabilities to access the internet and should be reserved as much as possible for these voters.

We strongly encourage the large majority of voters to request a paper ballot. Ballots delivered by internet and printed on a home printer cannot be scanned by the scanners in use for elections. When such home-printed ballots are received at the Board of Elections, they must be copied onto standard ballots for scanning. This delays the counting of ballots.

Ballots delivered via the internet must be printed and returned to the Board of Elections. They cannot be emailed.

Returning Ballots

The envelope for returning your ballot will have a place for your signature. Your ballot cannot be counted if you do not sign and date the envelope where indicated. If there is more than one voter in your household, be careful not to mix ballots and envelopes.

You have several options for returning your ballot:

- 1. All ballots must be returned or be postmarked no later than 8 p.m. on Election Day.**
- 2. U.S. Mail:** Your ballot packet will include a postage paid envelope. Ballots must be postmarked no later than 8 p.m. on Tuesday, November 3. You may also use a private delivery service, but your ballot still must be sent no later than 8 p.m. on Tuesday, November 3.
- 3. Ballot drop boxes:** Drop boxes will be available at the locations listed in the section titled Drop Box and Voting Locations beginning at the date indicated and available until 8 p.m. on Election Day. A list of these locations will also come with your ballot. Board of Elections staff will empty the drop boxes multiple times each day.
- 4. Vote centers:** Ballots may be returned inside any vote center during Early Voting or on Election Day.
- 5. Board of Elections:** Ballots may be returned to the Board of Elections.

Note: *If you request a mail-in ballot, you will not be permitted to cast an ordinary ballot during Early Voting or on Election Day. You will be provided a provisional ballot that will be counted only if your absentee ballot is not received.*

Voting in Person

Early Voting: 7 a.m. - 8 p.m., October 26-November 2

Early voting will be available at designated vote centers; these locations are listed in the section titled Drop Box and Voting Locations. Voters may use any Early Vote Center in their county. Voter registration will be available, as will marking devices for use by voters who would have difficulty reading and/or marking a paper ballot. Voters who did not receive a ballot in the mail and voters who cannot use the ballot they received should also go to an Early Voting Center.

Election Day: 7 a.m. - 8 p.m., Tuesday, November 3

Due to Covid-19 precautions, the usual precinct polling places will not be open for the November 3, 2020 general election. Instead, voters can use any Vote Center in their county. Voter registration will be available, as will marking devices for use by voters who would have difficulty reading and/or marking a paper ballot. Voters who did not receive a ballot in the mail and voters who cannot use the ballot they received should also go to a Vote Center. **On Election Day, voters may use any of the sites used for Early Voting or any of the additional Vote Centers listed in the section titled Drop Box and Voting Locations.**

Drop Box and Voting Locations

Drop Box Locations

September 30 until 8 p.m. on November 3

- Sacred Heart Church Friendship Hall, 201 St. Mary's Avenue, La Plata, MD, 20646
- St. Charles High School, Gymnasium, 5305 Piney Church Road, Waldorf, MD, 20602
- Charles County Board of Elections, 201 E. Charles Street, La Plata, MD 20646

October 15-17 until 8 p.m. on November 3

- Henry E. Lackey High School, Cafeteria, 3000 Chicamuxen Road, Indian Head, MD, 20640
- SMECO Hughesville Customer Service Center, 15065 Burnt Store Road, Hughesville, MD 20637
- Westlake High School , Gymnasium, 3300 Middletown Road, Waldorf, MD, 20603

Early Voting Sites

7 a.m. - 8 p.m., October 26-November 2

- Sacred Heart Church Friendship Hall, 201 St. Mary's Avenue, La Plata, MD, 20646
- St. Charles High School, Gymnasium, 5305 Piney Church Road, Waldorf, MD, 20602

Additional Voting Sites on Election Day

7 a.m. - 8 p.m., Tuesday, November 3

- Henry E. Lackey High School, Cafeteria, 3000 Chicamuxen Road, Indian Head, MD, 20640
- La Plata High School, Common's Area, 6035 Radio Station Road, La Plata, MD, 20646
- Maurice J. McDough High School, Gymnasium, 7165 Marshall Corner Road, Pomfret, MD, 20675
- North Point High School, Gymnasium, 2500 Davis Road, Waldorf, MD, 20601
- Piccowaxen Middle School, 12834 Rock Point Road, Newburg, MD, 20664
- Thomas Stone High School, Cafeteria, 3785 Leonardtown Road, Waldorf, MD, 20601
- Westlake High School , Gymnasium, 3300 Middletown Road, Waldorf, MD, 20603

President and Vice President of the United States

DUTIES: The President is: the head of state of the United States of America; the Chief Executive Officer; and, the Commander in Chief of all military forces. The powers of the President are prescribed in the Constitution and federal law. The President appoints the members of the Cabinet, ambassadors to other nations and the United Nations, Supreme Court Justices, and federal judges, subject to Senate approval. The President, along with the Cabinet and its agencies, is responsible for carrying out and enforcing the laws of the United States. The President may also recommend legislation to the United States Congress.

TERM: Four years. Limit of two terms.

BASE SALARY: \$400,000 per year.

Criteria for Participation in VOTE411.org: All presidential candidates who will appear on Maryland's ballot are listed. Additional write-in candidates appear on the Maryland State Board of Elections website

(https://elections.maryland.gov/elections/2020/general_candidates/index.html). The League of Women Voters of the United States, through the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF), established criteria to determine which candidates to invite to respond to questions for the Voters' Guide.

Candidates qualified for invitations from LWVEF to provide responses to specific questions if they met the following criteria:

- 1) The candidate must have made a public announcement of her/his intention to run for President
- 2) The candidate must meet the Presidential Election Campaign Fund Act's minimum contribution threshold requirements for qualifying for matching funds, based on the most recent data publicly available on the FEC website by the date of publication
- 3) The candidate must qualify for the ballot in enough states to win a majority of electoral votes

Additional information on the candidates may be available on [VOTE411.org](https://www.vote411.org).

Issues

COVID-19 RECOVERY: What actions would you take to balance public health and economic recovery in the US, both in light of COVID-19 and for the long term?

TOP PRIORITY: What is the most important issue facing our country and how do you plan to address it during your first 100 days in office?

RACIAL INJUSTICE: How will you address racial injustice in our country on day one of your administration?

IMMIGRATION: What aspects of our current immigration policy will your administration address first?

HEALTHCARE: What will you do over the long term to ensure access to quality healthcare for all?

Candidates

Vote for 1 pair

Donald. J. Trump and Michael Pence

Republican

Campaign Website: www.donaldjtrump.com

Campaign Facebook: facebook.com/DonaldTrump

Campaign Twitter: twitter.com/realdonaldtrump

Campaign Instagram: instagram.com/realdonaldtrump

No response received by print deadline. See VOTE411.org.

Joe Biden and Kamala Harris

Democrat

Campaign Website: <http://joebiden.com/>

Campaign Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/joebiden/>

Campaign Twitter: twitter.com/JoeBiden

Campaign Instagram: <http://www.instagram.com/joebiden/>

Campaign YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/joebiden>

COVID-19 RECOVERY: It's a false choice to think we have to choose between our public health and economy; they're linked. On Day One, I'll implement the COVID strategy I've laid out since March – surging testing and protective gear; distributing vaccines safely and free of politics; helping schools and small businesses cover costs; and getting state and local governments resources to keep educators, cops, and firefighters on the job. I'll respect science and tell the truth, period. And I'll build our economy back better, creating millions of good-paying jobs. I'll revitalize manufacturing, build a clean energy economy, and boost caregiving – easing the squeeze on working families, providing paid leave, and getting caregivers the respect and pay they deserve.

TOP PRIORITY: Pandemic. Recession. Racial injustice. Climate change. We're facing historic crises; we have to tackle them all at once. Character and experience count. I'll listen to scientists, tell the truth, and make sure we're never so unprepared for a pandemic again. I'll expand the Affordable Care Act, lowering costs and making health care a right for all. I'll build our economy back better, and make racial equity central to recovery. In these crises, we have an enormous opportunity, if we come together. As President, I'll draw on the best of us, not the worst. I'll work as hard for those who don't support me as for those who do. That's a president's job: to represent us all. To take responsibility. To protect the nation. To unite and to heal.

RACIAL INJUSTICE: America is at an inflection point. It's past time to end our inequities and deal with the denial of our nation's promise to too many for too long. I'll fight to end the health inequities that COVID-19 amplifies; and give every child the same strong start in life by offering universal Pre-K, tripling funding for Title I schools, and making public college debt-free for most families. I'll make racial equity central to our recovery, closing the racial wealth and income gaps, boosting home ownership, and investing in communities and entrepreneurs of color – building a stronger, more inclusive middle class for the future. And,

I'll work for real police reform and invest in shifting our criminal justice focus from incarceration to prevention.

IMMIGRATION: My immigration policy is built around keeping families together. It's past time to reform our broken system, restoring family unification and diversity as its core pillars. As President, I'll reverse Trump's assault on our values on Day One, ending his cruel border policies that rip children from their mothers' arms. I'll act immediately to protect Dreamers and their families, and invest real political capital in finally delivering legislative immigration reform, with a roadmap to citizenship for the nearly 11 million undocumented people who already do so much to make our communities strong. We have to enforce our laws, but in a way that's humane, respects due process, honors our values, and sees the big picture.

HEALTHCARE: This pandemic makes clear: All Americans need access to quality, affordable health insurance. That's why I'll protect and build on the Affordable Care Act. I helped to secure the final key votes to pass that landmark law, protecting 100 million Americans who can no longer be turned away or denied coverage for pre-existing conditions, and bringing coverage to 20 million more. As President, I'll build on that progress with a public option and lower health care and prescription drug costs. I'll make all COVID-19 testing, treatment, and vaccines free; double funding for community health centers that are so often on the frontlines of care; and much more.

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Jo Jorgensen and Jeremy Spike Cohen **Libertarian**

Campaign Website: www.Jo20.com

Campaign Facebook: facebook.com/JoJorgensen2020

Campaign Twitter: @Jorgensen4Potus

This candidate did not meet the criteria for an invitation to participate.

Howie Gresham Hawkins and Angela Walker **Green**

Campaign Website: www.howiehawkins.us

Campaign Facebook: facebook.com/runhowierun2020

Campaign Twitter: @howiehawkins

This candidate did not meet the criteria for an invitation to participate.

Jerome M. Segal and John de Graaf **Bread and Roses**

Campaign Website: www.segalforpresident.org

This candidate did not meet the criteria for an invitation to participate.

Representative in Congress District 5

DUTIES: Representatives make laws along with the members of the Senate, and may conduct investigations on issues of national importance. Laws that impose taxes always begin in the House of Representatives. Representatives can recommend that the Senate remove from office a public official accused of a crime.

TERM: Two years

BASE SALARY: \$174,000

HOW ELECTED: Elected by voters in each congressional district. Maryland has eight of the 435 Representatives, based on the state's population in the 2010 Census.

WEBSITE www.house.gov

Issues

GOALS: Why are you running for this office?

IMMIGRATION: What, if anything, would you change regarding immigration policy?

HEALTH CARE: Would you vote to continue the Affordable Care Act as it is, expand it, or eliminate it? Please explain.

ENVIRONMENT: What should be the federal government's role in addressing national and global environmental concerns?

GUN SAFETY: What policies do you propose to reduce gun violence?

ECONOMY: How would you address the growing income gap in our society?

DISCRIMINATION: What initiatives would you propose to address bias based on race, gender identification, sexual orientation, religion, or disability?

STUDENT LOANS: What actions would you support to reduce burdensome student loan debt?

Candidates

Vote for 1

Chris Palombi

Republican Party

Campaign Website: <http://www.chrispalombi.com>

Campaign Facebook: <http://facebook.com/palombiforcongress>

Campaign Twitter: twitter.com/chrispalombi

Campaign Email: chris@chrispalombi.com

GOALS: The divisive politics in our nation's capital has led to the lack of preservation of individual rights and freedoms for all citizens, as well as reckless spending of taxpayers' money. For too long the constituents have been ignored and taken for granted and it is time for a change. We need fresh and invigorating representation not hampered by special interests and national political aspirations.

IMMIGRATION: Congress needs to act on improving conditions at our border, to know who is coming in, and to better streamline the process to allow those who wish to enter our nation legally. We live in the greatest nation on Earth. It's no wonder why so many wish to immigrate here seeking the American Dream and a better life. Legal immigration is a huge benefit to our nation.

HEALTH CARE: Since passing of the ACA, over regulation has led to sky rocketing costs and lack of options for health insurance coverage. Consumers should have choice in health insurance. Pre-existing conditions need to be covered. Transparency in health care costs will open a competitive market; increasing quality of care while lowering costs will benefit consumers.

ENVIRONMENT: The Chesapeake Bay and other local waterways are a huge economic and environmental benefit to our area that we need to ensure are protected. It's no secret that a lot of the Bay's pollution comes from surrounding states and needs to be addressed at a federal level. We need innovative approaches (like carbon capture technology) and reasonable trade deals to assist lowering emissions globally.

GUN SAFETY: Every American has the right to protect and defend themselves. The right to bear arms shall not be infringed. There are many factors that contribute to gun violence. We need to address mental health as a nation to combat violence. We need to question these medications and side effects.

ECONOMY: I am an advocate for free market principles and stand with pro-growth policies. It is the free market that will better promote a healthy competitive economy, and empower individuals to more opportunities and jobs.

DISCRIMINATION: I am all for equality of opportunity. If we want to battle discrimination, we need to embrace what Dr. MLK Jr said and judge each individual "by the content of their character" and not put individuals into arbitrary groups. Federal non-discrimination laws should always take into account religious and liberty protections. Liberty for all.

STUDENT LOANS: One of the factors that contributes to the skyrocketing costs of higher education and student debt is how federal financial aid has been exploited by Colleges to their benefit. It has contributed to continued raising costs and that's something that needs to be looked into. Regarding college debt forgiveness, and the federal debt at \$23 trillion dollars, we have to ask, 'is it affordable?'

Steny H. Hoyer

Democratic Party

Campaign Website: <http://www.hoyerforcongress.com>

Campaign Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/hoyerforcongress>

Campaign Twitter: twitter.com/stenyhoyer

Campaign Email: info@hoyerforcongress.com

Campaign Phone: (301) 464-5710

GOALS: President Trump threatens the basic values and principles of our country. I have been and continue strong opponent of many of his policies. Next Congress, I will continue to work to lower the cost of health care and prescription drugs, act to combat climate change, invest in infrastructure and create good-paying jobs.

IMMIGRATION: I support comprehensive immigration reform. I was proud to support legislation to provide a solution for individuals in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Temporary Protected Status (TPS), and Deferred Enforced Departure (DED). We must also hold the Trump Administration accountable for their xenophobic immigration policies.

HEALTH CARE: I was a leader in passing the Affordable Care Act, which has expanded health care coverage to 17 million Americans. I will continue to fight for universal coverage including a public option in the ACA marketplaces, as well as expanding opportunities for those under 65 to buy into existing health programs, such as Medicare. I brought to the Floor legislation to lower the cost of prescription drugs.

ENVIRONMENT: Climate change is a the most critical crisis we confront. It demands an immediate and global response. I was pleased to bring to the House Floor the Climate Action Now Act, which prohibits funds from being used to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Agreement. We must address the role of climate impact as we legislate in many areas, including energy, transportation, housing, and taxes.

GUN SAFETY: After countless tragedies, including shootings at the Navy Yard, Great Mills High School, and the Capital Gazette, I was proud to bring to the Floor of the House legislation to provide comprehensive background checks and close loopholes on gun purchases. I also support red flag laws, magazine limits, outlawing bump stops, and other steps to make our communities safer.

ECONOMY: This Congress, I voted to raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 per hour. I was also proud to support legislation that ensures women are paid the same as men when they are doing the same job. I also supported legislation to strengthen labor unions who help to raise wages and benefits for all in our communities, and am fighting to bring down the costs of health care and post-secondary education.

DISCRIMINATION: Throughout my career, I have supported legislation that ends discrimination including leading the fight for the Americans with Disability Act. This Congress I supported legislation to address criminal justice reform and to ensure LGBT Americans are protected under our civil rights laws. I am an original member of the Black Maternal Health Caucus to address health disparities for women of color.

STUDENT LOANS: I support the College Affordability Act, that will provide relief to current borrowers by allowing lower monthly and total repayments, placing distressed borrowers in income-based repayment plans, letting borrower's default be removed from credit scores,

and strengthening oversight of loan servicing. This bill also strengthens the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program and broadens eligibility.

Judge of the Circuit Court, Circuit 7

DUTIES: Judges preside in the Circuit Court, which is a trial court that hears major civil cases and more serious criminal cases, such as those requiring a jury trial. Circuit Courts also may decide appeals from the District Court and certain administrative agencies.

SALARY: \$174,433, effective July 1, 2021

TERM: Fifteen years, no term limit. Mandatory retirement age of 70 years.

HOW ELECTED: The state is divided into 8 Judicial Circuits. The General Assembly determines the number of judges in each circuit and county. When there is a vacancy, the Governor appoints a qualified person to fill the office. Each newly appointed Circuit Court judge then must stand for office at the first election that occurs at least one year after the vacancy happened. One or more other qualified members of the bar may also run to fill the vacancy. All candidates run on both the Democratic and Republican primary ballots.

Issues

QUALIFICATIONS: How does your experience prepare you for the duties of this office?

COURT NEEDS: What are the greatest challenges facing Maryland's court system and how can these be addressed?

REPEAT OFFENDERS: What can the courts do to reduce recidivism?

DISCRIMINATION: What steps can the courts take to reduce the risk that bias will influence the outcome of legal proceedings?

Candidates

Vote for 1

Patrick Devine

Judicial

Campaign Website: <http://www.keepjudgepatrickdevine.com>

Campaign Facebook: <http://facebook.com/keepjudgedevine>

Campaign Twitter: twitter.com/keepjudgedevine

Campaign Instagram: @keepjudgedevine

Campaign Email: keepjudgedevine@gmail.com

Campaign Phone: (301) 752-0836

QUALIFICATIONS: I have been trying cases before juries in the Circuit Court for Charles County for the past 30 years; 5 years as a prosecutor and 25 years as a criminal defense attorney and for the Public Defender's office. I have also handled divorce, custody and visitation cases for the past 15 years. I served in the U.S. Naval Reserves and have extensive community service in Charles County.

COURT NEEDS: There is a need for additional funding of specialty courts to deal with drug and mental health issues. Southern Maryland also lacks sufficient resources such as inpatient programs to address the co-dependency of drug addiction and mental illness. As a result, a judge's ability to address these issues at sentencing is severely limited.

REPEAT OFFENDERS: Recidivism rates have been historically high in America as a result of a lack of job opportunities on release from prison and individuals' continuing issues with drug addiction. The courts need additional resources to help with the drug addiction issue and probation agents need to return to helping individuals transition back into society versus just monitoring them.

DISCRIMINATION: The issue of discrimination can best be addressed by monitoring the criminal justice system from arrest, charging, to sentencing. The courts collect information on age, race, criminal charge, criminal history, juvenile records and sentences received. This information should be compiled and made public so that a judge's conduct at sentencing can be monitored for explicit or implicit bias.

Makeba Gibbs

Judicial

Campaign Website: <http://www.electmakebagibbs.com>

Campaign Facebook: <http://fb.me/electmakebagibbs>

Campaign Instagram: Instagram@electmakebagibbs

No response received by deadline.

Judge, Court of Appeals Circuit 5

DUTIES: The Court of Appeals is the highest court in the State (commonly called the Supreme Court in other states and at the federal level). In most cases the court may choose whether or not to hear an appeal from a lower court, but it is required by law to hear cases involving the death penalty, legislative redistricting, removal of certain officers, and certifications of questions of law. The Court is composed of seven judges, with one elected from each of seven judicial circuits.

SALARY: \$191,433, annual base.

TERM: Ten years, no term limit. Mandatory retirement age of 70 years.

HOW ELECTED: Members of the Court are initially appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. Subsequently, they run for office on their records, unopposed. If voters reject a judge's retention in office or there is a tie vote, the office becomes vacant and must be filled by a new appointment. Otherwise, the incumbent judge remains in office for a ten-year term.

Issues

QUALIFICATIONS: How does your experience prepare you for the duties of this office?

COURT NEEDS: What are the greatest challenges facing Maryland's court system and how can these be addressed?

REPEAT OFFENDERS: What can the courts do to reduce recidivism?

DISCRIMINATION: What steps can the courts take to reduce the risk that bias will influence the outcome of legal proceedings?

Candidate

Vote YES or NO for continuance in office

Jonathan Biran

No response received by deadline.

Judge, Court of Special Appeals At-Large

DUTIES: Judges preside in the Court of Special Appeals, the intermediate appellate court in Maryland. The Court reviews the actions and decisions of the Circuit Court and of the Orphans' Court in cases brought before it. The Court, usually sitting in panels of three judges, decides if the trial judge followed the law and legal precedent. The Court is composed of 15 judges: eight at large and one each from seven appellate judicial districts.

SALARY: \$178,633 annual base.

TERM: Ten years, no term limit. Mandatory retirement age of 70 years.

HOW ELECTED: When there is a vacancy on the Court of Special Appeals, the governor appoints a qualified person to fill the office, with the consent of the State Senate. Once appointed, the appellate judge holds the office until the first election that occurs at least one year after the vacancy happened. At that time, the judge runs for an uncontested election for a ten-year term on their record (yes or no for continuance in office). No one is permitted to file against them. If the incumbent judge is approved, the judge faces another "retention election" every ten years to continue in office. If the incumbent judge is rejected by the voters, the post becomes vacant, and the governor makes a new appointment.

Issues

QUALIFICATIONS: How does your experience prepare you for the duties of this office?

COURT NEEDS: What are the greatest challenges facing Maryland's court system and how can these be addressed?

REPEAT OFFENDERS: What can the courts do to reduce recidivism?

DISCRIMINATION: What steps can the courts take to reduce the risk that bias will influence the outcome of legal proceedings?

Candidate

Vote YES or NO for continuation in office

E. Gregory Wells

Judicial

No response received by deadline.

State Ballot Questions

Maryland State Question 1

Constitutional Amendment (Ch. 645 of the 2020 Legislative Session) State Budget Process

(Amending Article II Section 17 and Article III Section 14 and 52 of the Maryland Constitution)

The proposed amendment authorizes the General Assembly, in enacting a balanced budget bill for fiscal year 2024 and each fiscal year thereafter, to increase, diminish, or add items, provided that the General Assembly may not exceed the total proposed budget as submitted by the Governor.

- **For the Constitutional Amendment**
- **Against the Constitutional Amendment**

Origin of the ballot question: The 2020 session of the General Assembly passed legislation (SB 1028) proposing a constitutional amendment to increase the authority of the General Assembly in the budget process. A bill that amends the Maryland Constitution requires a three/fifth vote in each chamber (Maryland Senate and House of Delegates) and approval by a majority of voters at the next general election.

Present Practice: The Maryland Constitution prohibits the General Assembly from increasing any budget item or adding any new items to the Governor's proposed budget for any of the government agencies except the Judicial branch and the operations of the General Assembly itself. The one exception is that it may add to the budget if it enacts a new revenue source to fund additional items. This is a rare occurrence. In addition, it cannot move funds from one agency to another. Therefore, in practice, the General Assembly can only recommend cuts to state agency budgets recommended by the Governor. Once a budget passes the Senate and House, it becomes law and cannot be changed or vetoed by the Governor.

Proposed Change: If passed, the General Assembly could move spending in the budget proposed by the Governor from one agency to another as long as the total amount of the budget does not exceed the total amount in Governor's proposed budget. The General Assembly could also add spending to a new item, as long as other item(s) of the budget are reduced to pay for the new expenditure. This change would begin with the 2024 Budget bill which is presented to the General Assembly in 2023. At that time, the Governor would be given the authority to veto items added or items increased by the General Assembly.

Arguments in Favor:

- The Maryland Legislature has less power in the budget process than any other legislature in the United States.
- Members of the public might have more ability to influence funding for programs of importance to them because they have more opportunities to interact with legislators

during the General Assembly Session personally and during committee hearings, than they do to influence the Governor or the state agencies when the budget details are negotiated and finalized for presentation.

- For decades, Republican and Democratic legislators have proposed this change while Governors from both major parties have been in power. The provisions of this bill will not take effect until the election of a new Governor and members of the General Assembly are elected.
- This Constitutional Amendment would not change the current requirement that the General Assembly must pass a balanced budget.

Arguments Against:

- Because the Governor would have the power to enact line item vetoes, there may be more Special Sessions to override those vetoes. Special Sessions come with a cost.
- Because the public will be advocating for new or increased funding for particular programs, legislators could be swayed to support programs that the Governor did not feel should be funded at that level.
- It could take longer to pass a budget.
- Legislators may have more concern about programs that affect their constituents, while the Governor may have a more statewide perspective.

A vote FOR the constitutional amendment means the legislature will be able to adjust spending in the Governor’s budget by reducing some items and increasing others as long as the total amount of spending does not exceed the amount of spending proposed by the Governor.

A vote AGAINST the constitutional amendment means current law would remain in place and the legislature will only be able to reduce the expenditures within the budget proposed by the Governor.

Maryland State Question 2

Commercial Gaming Expansion Referendum (Ch. 492 of the 2020 Legislative Session)

Expansion of Commercial Gaming-Sports and Event Wagering

Do you approve the expansion of commercial gaming in the State of Maryland to authorize sports and events betting for the primary purpose of raising revenue for education?

- **For the referred law.**
- **Against the referred law.**

Origin of the ballot question: In 2007, the Maryland Constitution was amended to say that the General Assembly may only authorize additional forms or expansion of commercial gambling if approved through a referendum by a majority of the voters in a general election. In 2020 the General Assembly passed SB 04 that would authorize it to pass laws to establish a program of sports wagering and event wagering in the State if approved by voters in the next General Election. The bill also stated that the primary purpose of this expansion of gambling would be to raise revenue for education.

Present Practice: In 2008 Maryland voters first approved gambling via video lottery terminals (slot machines.) In 2012, voters approved expanding the allowable number of video lottery terminals and authorized table games in casinos. Wagering on a contest, event, game, or match between individuals or teams sponsored by a professional league or association or hosted by a college or university is currently illegal in Maryland.

Proposed Change: If the referendum is approved, the General Assembly would then need to pass legislation that authorizes the State Lottery and Gaming Control Commission to issue licenses for sports and event wagering in the State. The legislation must include the criteria for eligible applications for a licensee and specify the permissible forms, means of conducting, and locations where sports wagering would take place. The bill that sent this

question to the voters also requires a study by the General Assembly to evaluate whether there is reason to assist minorities and women in the sports and event wagering industry and market. This study is to be completed by October 1, 2020 so any recommendations that result can be considered when the General Assembly establishes criteria for licenses (assuming the referendum passes.)

Arguments in Favor:

- Allowing sports betting in Maryland would enable the state to compete with the fourteen states that are already raising revenue this way.
- Illegal sports betting already takes place. Maryland should provide a legal way to place such bets to tap into that market and thereby reduce criminal activity.
- Depending on how it is implemented, Maryland could raise as much as \$20 million a year that could be invested in education which could yield long term benefits for Maryland residents.

Arguments Against:

- Maryland already has legalized a lottery, slot machines and casinos with various gambling table games. This would add another way to raise money from people who may not be able to afford it and may become addicted to gambling.
- If sports betting is implemented in a similar manner to casino gambling, most of the revenue raised will likely go to the gambling venues with only a small portion going to education.
- Sports betting could have an impact on how fans watch games because they could be more interested in making money than appreciating the sport. It could impact the game for players as well, especially if wagering is allowed on college sports.

A vote FOR the referred law means the General Assembly will be able to pass legislation to establish a program of sports wagering and event wagering in Maryland with a portion of the revenue going to support public education.

A vote AGAINST the referred law means that commercial wagering on sporting events will remain illegal in Maryland.

Matching Gift Challenge

We invite you to help the League continue to serve Maryland citizens with the *Voters' Guide* and similar educational efforts.

A member of the League has promised to match each contribution received by November 30, 2020, up to a limit of \$5,000. These contributions are tax-deductible. You may contribute online or by mailing a check.

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We also invite you to join the League and be directly involved in shaping the important issues in our state. Membership in the League is open to men and women of all ages. With 100 years of experience, Leagues in every state, and local Leagues in 16 of Maryland's counties, the League of Women Voters is one of America's most trusted grassroots organizations.

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