



Talbot 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 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.
September 28-30 until 8 p.m. on November 3
 - Board of Elections Office, 215 Bay Street, suite 7, Easton, MD 21601
 - Easton Volunteer Fire Department, Bingo Hall, 315 Aurora Park Drive (enter from Creamery Lane), Easton, MD, 21601
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 the designated vote center. 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.

- Easton Volunteer Fire Department, Bingo Hall, 315 Aurora Park Drive (enter from Creamery Lane), Easton, MD, 21601

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 the Early Voting site or any of the additional Vote Centers listed as follows:**

- Easton High School, Cafeteria, 723 Mecklenburg Avenue, Easton, MD, 21601
- St Michael Middle/High School, Gymnasium, 200 Seymour Avenue, St. Michaels, MD, 21663
- Tilghman Volunteer Fire Department, 5996 Tilghman Island Road, Tilghman, MD, 21665

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://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 1

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

Andy Harris

Republican Party

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

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

Campaign Twitter: twitter.com/Harris4Congress

Campaign Email: info@andyharris.com

Campaign Phone: (443) 693-7244

GOALS: I am running for re-election to make sure that everyone in the First District will have a representative in Congress who pays attention to what the people need from the federal government, listens to them, and can provide timely and effective constituent services when problems arise for them with any federal agency, like Social Security, the VA, Medicare, or the IRS.

IMMIGRATION: We need to be sure that we have an adequate supply of temporary foreign workers for industries important to the First District, like the crab picking industry and the tourism industry. I have been a leader on these issues in Washington, since so many small and family-owned businesses in the district depend on those workers, especially when the economy is so good and employees are so hard to find.

HEALTH CARE: We need to make health care more affordable - that was the main problem with the Affordable Care Act. We need to bring down the cost not only of insurance (maintaining coverage for any pre-existing conditions), but of health care itself. We have to bring down the high cost of prescription drugs, and we should have price transparency for all medical services and drugs.

ENVIRONMENT: By encouraging the use of exploration and production of natural gas to replace coal to generate electricity, the federal government brought down CO2 use in America for the third year in a row, exceeding the reduction of many countries in the Paris Climate Accords. We need to encourage the use of clean energy, especially exploring new advances in nuclear power generation which are safe and clean.

GUN SAFETY: Gun crimes must be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. In Baltimore City, where Maryland's strict gun control laws have failed to stem the tide of handgun murders, we should send in federal law enforcement and prosecutors to help find and prosecute everyone who commits a felony with a handgun, and everyone who illegally possesses or attempts to buy a gun. We should enforce current laws.

ECONOMY: The successful economic policies of the Trump administration have resulted in a \$5,000 increase in the median family income in America over the last five years, and the lowest unemployment rate in half a century, with record low unemployment for African-Americans and Hispanics. Strengthening our economy and resisting socialist policies are the best way to increase incomes.

DISCRIMINATION: There are enough laws on the books, but in many countries in the world, there is an increasing problem with religious discrimination, especially against religious minorities like Christians, Jews, and Muslims. I applaud the President's efforts to fight religious discrimination world-wide, and more needs to be done. Congress should be a partner with the administration in these efforts.

STUDENT LOANS: Lower cost higher education alternatives need to be developed. With the new digital age, online education is underutilized. We need to consider a new, less expensive plan for college - such as the first 2 years online, at one-fifth to one-tenth the cost. The last 2 years, and graduate education could still be on a physical campus. We also need to encourage career training in high school.

Mia Mason

Democratic Party

Campaign Website: <http://miadmason.us>

Campaign Facebook: <http://Facebook.com/mia4md>

Campaign Twitter: twitter.com/mia4md

Campaign Instagram: [instagram.com/mia4md](https://www.instagram.com/mia4md)

Campaign Email: vote4miamason@miadmason.us

Campaign Phone: (410) 946-2766

GOALS: I'm running to represent Maryland District One by restoring Accountability, Equality, and Integrity as sworn to the Oath of Office. Our current representation works against our citizen's healthcare concerns, their fundamental civil rights protections, and leads education systems into despair. Therefore, we seek to renew the primary goals of communities to have better education, jobs, & healthcare.

IMMIGRATION: Families need a legal pathway system to help represent those at trial or for those who seeking immigration rather than deportation. We're looking to reduce costs for families who are separated and burdened with little regard for those who are actual citizens. We do not believe in deportation for small infractions, only those with felonies as major crimes. We're a nation of immigrants since 1607.

HEALTH CARE: We seek to expand ACA to Medicare for All. Our Goals are ensuring providers meet all standards of Medicare for all, with expansion to all ages. We are protecting pre-existing conditions & ending exclusions that allow discrimination of care or denial of treatment and medicines. Private insurers & employers should be in compliance to have healthier workers by 2030. Thus, you can keep your plan too.

ENVIRONMENT: First, we must sign to Paris Accords again. Then enact legislation to have our Federal EPA comply with protecting our environment, and not delegate responsibilities to private sectors. We must fund our Chesapeake Bay protection fund to assist our communities, councils best, and companies to reward their efforts in protecting our Bay, State, and Planet in Solar, Wind, and Energy Storage utilities.

GUN SAFETY: We would propose adding all weapons permits, training, and carry status on the back of driver license or Real ID for easy reading. License additions shall include your guns as authorized to carry by type, a designation of your training certification for those weapons, and any FFL Status. Doing this provides a reduction of paperwork, additional permits, & can allow joint multi-state authorizations.

ECONOMY: For Education, we support the Kirwan commission reporting and seek to support the state from a federal level as needed. For Infrastructure, we would seek innovation companies, manufacturers, and small businesses to keep our twelve Counties thriving. For Wages, we would co-sponsor House Bill 582 Raise the Wage Act and seek passage of Senate Bill 150 for a federal minimum wage of \$15.00 per hour.

DISCRIMINATION: Currently, 38 states support the Equal Rights Amendment. Therefore, I would sponsor a bill to our House of Representatives to introduce the Constitutional Amendment again. We seek to protect all our Civil Rights Act of 1964. As a member of the LGBTQ community, we seek to protect everyone for their national origin, race, gender identification, sexual orientation, religion, disability, or religion.

STUDENT LOANS: For student loans, we seek to reduce interest rates to be no higher than ten percent ever for private loans to for-profit schools. Forgive those loans of our veterans and communities who are applying for assistance. Ensure the Department of Education holds any and all colleges accountable. DOE should also seek to provide a pathway to make non-profit colleges tuition-free for all our communities.

Judge, Court of Appeals, Circuit 1

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

Brynja M. Booth

Judicial

No response received by deadline.

Judge, Court of Special Appeals

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?

Court of Special Appeals At Large

Candidate

Vote YES or NO for continuance in office

E. Gregory Wells

Judicial

No response received by deadline.

Court of Special Appeals, Circuit 1

Candidate

Vote YES or NO for continuance in office

Christopher B. Kehoe

Judicial

QUALIFICATIONS: I've had the honor and privilege of serving as the Eastern Shore's representative on the Court of Special Appeals for 11 years. Before that, I was a lawyer on the Eastern Shore for 30 years. For 40 years plus, my wife and I have lived on the Shore and have raised our family here. I'm asking to continue to serve the Eastern Shore and the State to the best of my abilities. Thank you.

COURT NEEDS: Short term: Adjusting court operations in light of COVID-19. Long term: Improving public confidence in the courts by treating all people with dignity and respect, listening to both sides of each case, knowing the law and applying it fairly, and always keeping in mind that our decisions affect real people. On the whole, Maryland judges do these things well but we must always strive to do better.

REPEAT OFFENDERS: Expand problem-solving courts like veterans and mental health courts. These give people the help they need to get out of and stay out of the criminal justice system. In 2016, Governor Hogan approved the Justice Reinvestment Act to reduce some prison sentences, avoid incarceration in some cases, and use the savings to fund recidivism-reduction programs. Courts play a critical role in this effort.

DISCRIMINATION: It's impossible to address this complex issue in 50 words. Judges try their best to be fair. Implicit bias causes decisions to be influenced by ingrained assumptions, often about race and gender. Maryland judges are aware of how bias affects judicial decisions and receive training to address it but there is always room for improvement. Diversity among judges can decrease implicit bias.

Talbot County Board of Education

DUTIES: The Board establishes specific policies that govern school system operations and has authority over fiscal year budgets, curriculum materials, textbooks, personnel appointments, capital improvements, land acquisitions, grant applications, and other policy decisions. In addition to selecting and appointing the Superintendent of Schools, the Board also employs legal counsel and external auditors.

BASE SALARY: \$3,200

TERM: Four years.

HOW ELECTED: This is a non-partisan position. During gubernatorial elections (both primary and general), registered voters may vote for one candidate for their district of residence. Only contested races (more than two candidates) appear on the primary ballot.

Issues

BACKGROUND: Please describe how your training and experience prepare you for the duties of this office.

SCHOOL SAFETY: What policies are in place or should be added to address student bullying and violence directed against other students and/or against teachers?

SCHOOL READINESS: How do you propose to support pre-school education to prepare our children for success in first grade?

COLLEGE ALTERNATIVES: What programs will you support to prepare students for employment, particularly for those not planning to attend college?

CITIZENSHIP: What steps do our schools need to take to ensure that our children grow to become civic-minded adults who participate, understand and support the foundational principles of our democracy?

PRIORITIES: What are the top three education needs that should be addressed by the School Board over the next four years?

Board of Education District 2

Candidate

Vote for 1

Candace Henry

Nonpartisan

Campaign Email: candacenhenny1@gmail.com

Campaign Phone: (410) 934-0147

BACKGROUND: I am a proud Talbot County Public School alumni and the mother of 2 young children in the Talbot County school system. I have an M.A. in Counseling and a B.A. in Psychology from Grambling State University. I am the Director of the Disability Resource Center at Salisbury University, with over 15 years of experience advocating with and for individuals with disabilities throughout Maryland.

SCHOOL SAFETY: School safety is vital to the development and success of our students and staff. I will support policies that promote ongoing diversity awareness/sensitivity training for students and staff. I will also promote policies that include inclusive hiring/retention practices on all levels of administration, and strengthen the language of our current policies to broaden the definition of "diversity".

SCHOOL READINESS: To aid in school readiness, I will encourage continued support of community partners such as the Judy Center, Head Start, and local libraries to increase programming directly related to the first five years of life. Advocating for all-day Pre-K and P3 in all elementary schools as well as increased support for English Language Learner (ELL) county-wide.

COLLEGE ALTERNATIVES: I will support the continued growth and ingenuity of our Career & Technology Education (CTE) programs. I will also support continued partnerships with the local business community to enhance and increase internships, job-shadowing, and on-the-job training opportunities for students.

CITIZENSHIP: I would take steps to incorporate civic engagement practical learning strategies through student government/related student groups. I would also encourage social-emotional learning strategies that emphasize a "future-oriented" approach to civility, through restorative practices, dialogue amongst diverse learners, and civic-minded co-curricular activities.

PRIORITIES: My top priorities are broadening inclusion through protections from discrimination for all students and staff. Ensuring equitable access to opportunities and resources that promote the physical, mental, academic, and social well-being of our current and future students. Empowering teachers and education support professionals to protect classroom instructional time from "over-testing".

Board of Education District 5

Candidate

Vote for 1

Susan Delean-Botkin

Nonpartisan

Campaign Facebook: <http://Susan Delean-Botkin>

BACKGROUND: School Board Members are charged with administering the operation of the schools.. The local board carries out all three of the "primary functions in the American system of government, executive, legislative and judicial." (Maryland School Law Book). Having run a successful business, served on numerous non-profit, and government boards, drafted legislation, I have experience in all of these.

SCHOOL SAFETY: Talbot County has worked diligently to open communication for students, parents, teachers and staff to discuss diversity, bullying, harassment, and unfortunate violence in the schools. We have worked to put diversity training in place, to provide support for students and families who are struggling, and engage in inappropriate behavior. There is zero tolerance for bullying

SCHOOL READINESS: At this time, children are included in school readiness programs from infancy. Outreach to those children who need special help or assistance is offered. Our Superintendent and staff have worked to secure additional funding, partnerships in the community, and better understanding of situations which impede readiness for kindergarten and first grade. As a Board member, I support these efforts

COLLEGE ALTERNATIVES: Every young person who graduates from Talbot County schools should be prepared to enter the work force, or continue on to college. In these Covid-19 times this has become more of a challenge. We are working with our community partners, the community college and others to continue to provide alternative programs SAFELY. These program are the backbone of the work force.

CITIZENSHIP: What I love about being a Board Member is access to the schools. I attended the concerts, the plays, the musicals, the sporting events. I taught Character Counts for the 4th grade, delivered meals, collected school supplies and watched in awe as our teachers, staff, parents, transportation workers, custodians all worked together as good citizens, who respect each other, and LIVE democracy.

PRIORITIES: FUNDING, FUNDING-FUNDING- we must fight to retain our funding so we can pay our teachers, maintain our programs, support our students. Covid-19 has challenged all of us to do more with less, more creatively. We support our Superintendent and staff in the very difficult task of pivoting rapidly to achieve our clearly stated goals - KIDS FIRST.

Board of Education District 6

Candidate

Vote for 1

Mary E. Wheeler

Nonpartisan

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.

Local Ballot Questions

Talbot County Question A

Charter Amendment

Waiver of Residency Requirement for Certain County Employees

Add new Section 407 to the Talbot County Charter which would:

Waive the residency requirement for the County Attorney, County Planning Officer and County Engineer by an affirmative vote of four-fifths of the full Council.

Origin of the ballot question: At the May 26, 2020 Talbot Council meeting, the Council acknowledged the difficulties some of the County department heads have faced in finding a home in and relocating their families to Talbot County. To provide the Council the ability to waive the residency requirements for certain employees, the full Council introduced Resolution 285. On July 21, 2020, by unanimous vote, the Council agreed to place a question on the ballot at the November 2020 general election to add a section to the Talbot County Charter to allow the County Council the flexibility to waive residency requirements for certain employees. A resolution to change the Charter does not take effect unless it is approved by a majority of the voters at the next general election. Should this proposed amendment be approved by the voters, it would take effect on December 3, 2020.

Current Law: The Charter currently requires the County Attorney, County Planning Officer, and County Engineer to reside within Talbot County.

Proposed Change: The proposed change would add a new Section to the Charter, Section 407, Residency Waiver, as follows: "The requirement that the County Attorney, County Planning Officer and County Engineer be residents of Talbot County may be waived by the County Council by an affirmative vote of four-fifths of the full Council." This change would allow the County Council the flexibility to waive the residency requirement for these employees either to hire or retain the best candidate for the job if they were to live in another county. This would require a super majority of the Council (four-fifths of the full Council) to vote in favor of the waiver in order for it to take effect.

Arguments in Favor:

- The cost and limited availability of housing in Talbot County make it difficult for county employees to live within the County. The ability to make an exception to the residency requirements would allow the County the flexibility to hire or retain the best candidate for the job.

- The best candidate may not be living within Talbot County and may not be able to find appropriate housing here given the cost and limited availability of housing.
- Candidates may not wish to relocate from a near-by county in order to accept the position.
- These employees may need to relocate outside the County for personal or family reasons.
- Given the general similarities among counties in the mid-shore region and their proximity to Talbot County, it may not make a material difference in job performance if these employees were to reside outside the physical boundaries of the County.
- Any waiver of the residency requirement would require at least four-fifths of the full Council to vote in favor of the waiver, thus weighting the decision toward consensus of the Council.

Arguments Against:

- Local residents have a better opportunity to understand the way of life in Talbot County and to bring that understanding to their jobs, giving them a head-start over other candidates.
- This restriction provides the County the opportunity to grow local talent instead of seeking outside the County.

A vote FOR the charter amendment means the Talbot County Charter would be amended and the County Council would have the flexibility to waive the residency requirements for the County Attorney, the County Planning Officer, or the County Engineer should that become advisable but only if four-fifths of the Council agreed to a request for waiver.

A vote AGAINST the charter amendment means that the County Attorney, the County Planning Officer, and the County Engineer must live within Talbot County.

Talbot County Question B

Charter Amendment

Clarifying that Constant Yield Applies

Section 614 of the Talbot County Charter establishes a cap on the amount of revenue the County can derive from taxes levied on real estate. In order to apply the cap, the County must identify which properties are to be included in the calculation. Section 614 currently specifies the properties as those "existing on the County real property tax rolls at the commencement of the County fiscal year." However, this is not an accurate description of the properties the County actually uses. The County's source for identifying properties is the Constant Yield Tax Rate Certification prepared by the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation. The Charter Amendment clarifies that to identify properties for revenue cap purposes, the County will use the Constant Yield Tax Rate Certification prepared by the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation.

Origin of the ballot question: The Talbot County Council established a Property Tax Referendum Committee in 2019 whose purpose was to review the County's current property tax revenue cap and make recommendations to the County Council for possible amendment. The committee recommended that Article 614 Tax Levy and Balanced Budget of the Charter be changed to reflect the actual reference for identifying real estate properties subject to the cap on tax revenue; it is the State, not the County, which maintains property tax rolls. On May 12, 2020, the County Council discussed this recommendation and accepted it. Resolution 287 was drafted, and it was introduced at the May 26, 2020 Council meeting by the full Council. On July 21, 2020, the Talbot County Council enacted Resolution 286 by unanimous vote to place the proposed question on the ballot at the November 2020 general election. A resolution to change the Charter does not

take effect unless it is approved by a majority of the voters at the next general election. Should this proposed amendment be approved by the voters, it would take effect on December 3, 2020.

Current Law: The Charter currently says that "... from and after July 1, 1997, revenues derived from taxes on properties existing on the County real property tax rolls at the commencement of the County fiscal year shall not increase..."

Proposed Change: The proposed change would delete the phrase "existing on the County real property tax rolls at the commencement of the County fiscal year" and replace it with "included in the Constant Yield Tax Rate Certification prepared by the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation." It also would change the date to July 1, 2021 as the start of the next fiscal year to which this amendment would begin to apply.

Arguments in Favor: The 1997 amendment of Section 614 of the Charter was proposed by the Talbot County Taxpayer's Association and passed by the voters of Talbot County in 1996. The wording of the amendment did not reflect the role of the State in the setting of property tax rates nor how the Talbot County Finance Department computed property taxes under their existing tax revenue cap. This lack of understanding effectively meant that the Finance Department could not comply with the new wording of the Charter if the County were to be able to propose a budget for the new fiscal year. To be able to manage the setting of property taxes that will not exceed their mandated tax revenue, the Department uses the Constant Yield Tax Rate Certification supplied by the State. The proposed change would allow the County to comply with any cap on tax revenue by using the resources supplied by the State.

Arguments Against: None. This proposed change does not change the intent of the cap on tax revenue; rather, it makes clear how the Finance Department can compute the county tax rate in order to comply with the intent of the cap on tax revenue.

A vote FOR the Charter amendment means the Talbot County Charter would be amended to clarify that the County would use the Constant Yield Tax Rate Certification supplied by the State when determining the property tax rate to be used in the new fiscal year.

A vote AGAINST the Charter amendment means that the inaccurate wording would remain in the Charter.

Talbot County Question C

Charter Amendment

Eliminating Consumer Price Index-Urban

Section 614 of the Talbot County Charter establishes a cap on the amount of revenue the County can derive from taxes levied on real estate. The cap on revenue is two percent (2%) compared to the previous year, or Consumer Price Index-Urban (CPI-U), whichever is less. CPI-U, however, is not an accurate measure because it represents the increase in the cost of a basket of consumer goods in urban areas, not rural areas, like Talbot County. The Charter Amendment eliminates the reference to CPI-U in Section 614 while leaving the 2% cap on revenue in place.

Origin of the ballot question: Talbot County has a balanced budget requirement and operates under revenue restrictions which make it hard for the County to fund all its operational and capital needs. To address a chronic revenue shortfall, the Talbot County Council established a Property Tax Referendum Committee in 2019 whose purpose was to review the County's current property tax revenue cap and make recommendations to the County Council for possible amendment. The committee recommended that Article 614 Tax Levy and Balanced Budget of the Charter be changed to remove the CPI-Urban as a reference for determining a cap on tax revenue. On May 12, 2020, the County Council

discussed this recommendation and accepted it. Resolution 287 was drafted, and it was introduced at the May 26, 2020 Council meeting by the full Council. On July 21, 2020, the County Council enacted Resolution 287 by unanimous vote to place the proposed question on the ballot at the November 2020 general election. A resolution to change the Charter does not take effect unless it is approved by a majority of the voters at the next general election. Should this proposed amendment be approved by the voters, it would take effect on December 3, 2020.

Current Law: The Charter currently states "... from and after July 1, 1997, revenues derived from taxes on properties existing on the County real property tax rolls at the commencement of the County fiscal year shall not increase, compared with the previous year, by more than two percent, or by the Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers (CPI-U) percentage of change for the latest calendar year, determined by the U.S. Department of Labor, whichever is the lesser."

Proposed Change: The proposed change would delete all of the text after "by more than two percent" leaving the cap on revenue as being limited to no more than a 2% increase over the prior year's tax revenue. It also would update the date to July 1, 2021 as the start of the next fiscal year to which this amendment would begin to apply.

Arguments in Favor:

- The Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers (CPI-U) measures the percentage of change in the price of a basket of goods and services consumed by urban households. It is an inflation index for items purchased by a typical consumer, e.g., housing, utilities, food, etc, Governments generally do not purchase these items; instead, they provide services and purchase service equipment, e.g., ambulances, police vehicles, roads equipment, etc., which are not accounted for within the CPI-U
- The use of two reference points for determining the cap on tax revenue with the requirement of using the lesser of the two effectively means that tax revenues will either be the same as or lower than the national rate of inflation. This type of structure makes it difficult to raise sufficient revenue to fund both operating costs and capital expenditures. Since 1997, when this tax structure was voted in, it has held needed tax revenue below the 2% alternate cap nine times, averaging only a 1.0% increase; and it has held the rate of increase at 2% 15 times when the CPI-U has been above 2%, with the average of those higher increases being 2.78%. This means that nine times the revenue cap has kept pace with the yearly national rate of inflation, but it has also been less than the national rate of inflation 15 times. This resulting constriction of tax revenue leaves the County with insufficient revenue to fund all of the budget requests from County departments. While County services have continued to be funded, funding has not addressed all of the needs of the County and has left County departments with unfunded needs. Eliminating the CPI-U alternative would help County services over the long term keep pace with fixed costs and growing needs.
 - County salaries and benefits, especially for public safety and emergency services employees, are not competitive with surrounding counties causing Talbot County the loss of valuable, trained personnel to those jurisdictions. For example, Talbot County loses several deputies every year, and it costs the County \$97,482 for the first year of a newly trained deputy.
 - Talbot County has a balanced-budget requirement; when revenues do not cover all budget needs, the County supplements any budget shortfall with funds from County reserves. Even so, to maintain reserves, many department needs have remained unfunded for years.
 - Eliminating the CPI-U as an alternative for the cap would simplify the computation of the revenue cap.

Arguments Against: Eliminating the CPI-U as an alternate to the 2% cap on tax revenue would increase the amount people would pay in property taxes when the national rate of inflation is below 2%.

A vote FOR the Charter amendment means the Talbot County Charter would be amended to eliminate the use of the CPI-U as an alternate to the 2% cap on tax revenue, leaving the cap on tax revenue at 2% going forward.

A vote AGAINST the Charter amendment means that the CPI-U would continue as an alternate to the 2% cap on tax revenue.

Talbot County Question D

Charter Amendment

Allowing Temporary Increase of One Cent (1¢) per One Hundred Dollars of Assessed Value

Section 614 of the Talbot County Charter establishes a cap on the amount of revenue the County can derive from taxes levied on real estate. The cap on revenue is two percent (2%) compared to the previous year, or Consumer Price Index-Urban (CPI-U), whichever is less. Talbot County's revenue cap is one of the most restrictive in the State of Maryland, making it extremely difficult for the County to raise sufficient revenue to fund certain initiatives, including key public safety projects, such as a new facility for the Talbot County Sheriff; additional equipment and personnel for the Talbot County Department of Emergency Services; and, a new facility to house the Talbot County Health Department. The County Council is, therefore, asking the voters to give the Council authority to increase revenues above the revenue cap, but only temporarily and with a limit of up to one cent (1¢) per one hundred dollars of assessed value. The Charter Amendment would authorize the County Council to raise revenues above the revenue cap by up to one cent (1¢) per one hundred dollars of assessed value for five years only.

Origin of the ballot question: Talbot County has a balanced budget requirement and operates under revenue restrictions which make it hard for the County to fund all its operational and capital needs. To address a chronic revenue shortfall, the Talbot County Council established a Property Tax Referendum Committee in 2019 whose purpose was to review the County's current property tax revenue cap and make recommendations to the County Council for possible amendment. The committee recommended that Article 614 Tax Levy and Balanced Budget of the Charter be changed to allow the Council to add an additional cent (1¢) to the property tax rate each year for the next five fiscal years. The purpose of this increase is to fund capital projects. On May 12, 2020, the County Council discussed this option, and proposed to limit such an increase to up to one cent (1¢) per \$100 of assessed value; this proposal was approved. Resolution 288 was drafted, and it was introduced at the May 26, 2020 Council meeting. On July 21, 2020, the County Council enacted Resolution 288 by unanimous vote to place the proposed question on the ballot at the November 2020 general election. A resolution to change the Charter does not take effect unless it is approved by a majority of the voters at the next general election. Should this proposed amendment be approved by the voters, it would take effect on December 3, 2020.

Current Law: The Charter currently states "... from and after July 1, 1997, revenues derived from taxes on properties existing on the County real property tax rolls at the commencement of the County fiscal year shall not increase, compared with the previous year, by more than two percent, or by the Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers (CPI-U) percentage of change for the latest calendar year, determined by the U.S. Department of Labor, whichever is the lesser."

Proposed Change: The proposed change would replace the period after the word "lesser" with a comma and append the following: "except that revenues derived from such taxes may increase above the revenue cap limit by up to one cent per one hundred dollars of assessed value in each of the five fiscal years beginning July 1, 2021. Any increase above the revenue cap limit authorized in this Section shall be in addition to, and not in lieu of,

any increases above such limit authorized by State law.” The option to exercise this authority would expire June 2026; any increase in property tax revenue above the revenue cap limit would be in addition to any other exceptions authorized by State law.

Arguments in Favor: County tax revenues have not kept pace with the rise in County costs to fund the full functioning of all County departmental needs, nor to remain competitive with other counties in our region in attracting and retaining employees. This means there are fewer dollars available to fund capital projects that this ballot question is meant to address.

- The ability to increase revenues temporarily above the revenue cap would allow the County Council to fund costs anticipated for near-future capital expenses, including the new Sheriff and Health Department buildings and equipment for emergency services. Any temporary rise in tax revenue above the cap would go toward these projects.
- Increasing revenue now would reduce the cost of borrowing money to fund these needs.

Arguments Against: This measure is almost sure to be used by the County Council over the next five fiscal years resulting in property taxes that are higher than 2% over the previous year.

A vote FOR the Charter amendment means the Talbot County Charter would be amended to allow the Council the option of generating revenues above the revenue cap by up to one cent (1¢) per \$100 of assessed valuation for the next five fiscal years.

A vote AGAINST the Charter amendment means that the Charter would not be amended to allow an exception to the cap on tax revenue beyond the limit specified in the Charter.

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