



Wicomico 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
 - Wicomico County Youth and Civic Center, 500 Glen Avenue, Salisbury, MD 21801
 - Wicomico County Board of Elections, 345 Snow Hill Road, Salisbury, MD 21804**October 15-17 until 8 p.m. on November 3**
 - Pittsville Volunteer Fire, 7442 Gumboro Rd, Pittsville, MD 21850
 - Wicomico Tourism Center, N. Salisbury Boulevard, MD 21875
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.

- Wicomico County Youth and Civic Center, 500 Glen Ave, Salisbury, MD 21804

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.**

- Beaver Run Elementary School, 31481 Old Ocean City Road, Salisbury, MD, 21804
- Bennett Middle School, 532 S Division Street, Fruitland, MD, 21826
- James M Bennett High School, 300 E College Avenue, Salisbury, MD 21804
- Mardela Middle/High School, 24940 Delmar Road, Mardela Springs, MD, 21837
- Pemberton Elementary School, 1300 Pemberton Drive, Salisbury, MD, 21801
- Salisbury Middle School, 607 Morris Street, Salisbury, MD 21801
- Westside Intermediate School, 8000 Quantico Rd, Hebron, MD, 21830
- Willards Elementary School, 36161 Richland Rd, Willards, MD, 21874

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 as follows. 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.

Wicomico County Council District 2

DUTIES: The seven-member County Council is composed of two at large members and five district members. The members are the legislative body of the county and are vested with all the law-making powers.

SALARY: \$16,000.

TERM: 4 years, no term limit.

HOW ELECTED: The County is divided into five councilmanic districts. Each district is represented by one council member who must reside in that district. In addition, there are two council members who may live anywhere in the county and are elected at large. Voters may vote for one candidate from their district and for two candidates running at large.

Issues

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

BUDGET: What programs within the county's budget should be increased or decreased?

DEVELOPMENT AND LAND USE: What changes, if any, are needed in the county's land use policies?

EDUCATION: What steps will you take to improve support for the public schools?

EMPLOYMENT/ JOBS: What steps should the county government take to encourage economic development and job growth?

AFFORDABLE HOUSING: What steps would you take to increase the availability of affordable housing for county residents?

INFRASTRUCTURE: How would you address issues such as traffic congestion, transportation needs, and improvements to public facilities in the county?

Candidates

Vote for 1

Nicole Acle

Republican Party

Campaign Instagram:

No response received by deadline.

Alexander Scott

Democratic Party

Campaign Website: <http://scottforwicomico@gmail.com>

Campaign Instagram:

No response received by deadline.

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.

Wicomico County Board of Education

DUTIES: The Board of Education is responsible for the supervision of the public schools, including the selection of a Superintendent, approval of the annual budget, and establishing general policies governing the school system.

TERM: 4 years, no term limits.

HOW ELECTED: This is the first election in which the members of the Board of Education will be elected rather than appointed. The Board is comprised of six members, one elected at large and one from each of the Council districts.

Issues

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

BUDGET PRIORITIES: How would you rank the priorities of education needs, including teacher retention, class size, and school buildings?

STANDARDS AND TESTING: How should the national and state standards be used to ensure a quality education for each child in the county?

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

SCHOOL SAFETY: How will you address school safety issues such as gangs, bullying, and substance abuse?

PARTNERSHIPS: How will you promote partnerships with businesses and community organizations to improve the educational experience of our students?

PRIORITIES: In addition to the issues you described in the other questions, what are your priorities for this office?

Board of Education District 3

Candidate

Vote for 1

Tonya Laird Lewis

Nonpartisan

Campaign Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/tonya.lairdlewis>

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.

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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.

Phone: 410-269-0232
Mail: 121 Cathedral Street, Suite 2B
Annapolis MD 21401
Email: info@lwvmd.org
Website: <http://www.lwvmd.org>
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