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2018 Questionnaire for State Senate

Progressive Maryland is a grassroots community organization that acts for social and economic justice by developing civic leaders and cultivating allies in order to advance economic, racial, and environmental equity, and to change our economic system for the benefit of all people in Maryland. Learn more at www.ProgressiveMaryland.org

Progressive Maryland supports candidates who will work to build a society and economy that works for all Marylanders, with special emphasis on traditionally marginalized groups—low and moderate income residents, people of color, women, LGBTQ+, and all oppressed and exploited people. Elections can have an enormous impact on our work to reduce inequity and to improve the lives of residents all over the state. It is our responsibility not only to advocate for residents but also to empower them to engage in the political process at every level, from member-led canvasses to trainings for our members who wish to run for office.

To be considered for Progressive Maryland's endorsement, please return the completed questionnaire to our Policy and Legislative Director Jennifer Dwyer at Jennifer@progressivemaryland.org **no later than 5 P.M. on Friday, January 26, 2018**. Your responses will be available to the public at www.ProgressiveMaryland.org

Candidate Information

Candidate Last Name: Holt

Candidate First Name: Chrissy

Office Seeking: Senate

District: 30

Party: Democrat

Campaign Contact Information

Committee Name: Friends of Chrissy Holt

Street Address: P.O. Box 3046

City: Annapolis

Zip Code: 21403

Business Phone: 410-570-0242

Fax: N/A

Campaign Website: www.chrissyholt.com

Candidate Contact Information

Cell Phone: 410-570-0242

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Treasurer Contact Information

Treasurer Name: Nancy Williamson

Street Address: 808 Chesapeake Avenue

City: Annapolis

Zip Code: 21403

Phone: 443-994-1344

C. Holt 20180331

Candidate History

Previous Elected Offices: None

Which Years Did You Serve:

Have you ever received an endorsement from Progressive Maryland?

YES _____ or NO _____

If Yes, when:

Have you ever assisted Progressive Maryland in achieving its goals?

YES _____ or NO _____

Describe:

In 2018 Legislative Session I testified on a panel with National Nurses United for the Healthy Maryland Act and for other legislation related to addiction in line with Progressive Maryland's goals and legislative agenda. In November 2017 I joined a Progressive Maryland team to meet with Senator Ben Cardin's office to advocate for single payer, universal healthcare. For 20 years I have advocated with the Hemophilia Foundation of Maryland and the National Hemophilia Foundation for adequate health care access. I routinely educate people on the shortfalls of our current healthcare system at public events. I have attended Progressive MD meetings facilitated by Claire Miller as well as actions, rallies, and Progressive Maryland Candidate Training in December 2017.

Major Endorsements (Elected Officials/Organizations/Opinion Leaders):

None currently. I am in process of applying for several endorsements and waiting to hear back from others. The MSEA and Sierra Club endorsed my opponent before I filed as a candidate, and therefore, I was not able to apply and interview for consideration. I learned that several leaders of the League of Conservation Voters had already donated to my opponent and then endorsed her. Also prior to entering the race, my opponent was endorsed by Speaker Busch in junction with Senator Astle's mayoral campaign.

Issue Questions

1. Do you support ending the money-based bail system?

Yes

No

Comments:

The bail system, enshrined in the Bill of Rights, is meant to ensure that all defendants, presumed innocent before trial, get a shot at freedom and return to court. But allowing people to pay for their release has proved unfair to people with lower income. These individuals are far more likely to be unable to pay for the bail obligations, making them far more likely to remain detained, resulting in greater vulnerability to discipline or termination from their employer, as well as losing custody of their children. This often results in pressuring individuals into unfair/unjust plea deals, regardless of their guilt or innocence. Therefore, they have to accept serving time as the only option available to them and suffer the lifelong consequences of a criminal conviction. Additionally, of those that elect to borrow from a bail bondsman face fees that put them into crippling, ongoing debt.

Like many other sectors of our society, this has been commodified into an industry that serves neither the interests of justice, the legal system, or the individuals involved. It has been allowed to become a progressively predatory practice that runs counter to its goal of ensuring that an individual is available to be present at their court hearing and instead only serves to increase the profits of those businesses that collect and transfer the fees to the courts.

I agree with Attorney General Brian Frosh's opinion in October 2016 that Maryland's existing cash bail system is likely unconstitutional. I also agree with the Office of the Public Defender's assessment in their November 2016 publication *The High Cost of Bail* that "the money bail system has a disproportionate impact on racial minorities: over five years, black defendants were charged premiums of at least \$181 million, while defendants of all other races combined were charged \$75 million." I therefore support any effort towards creating new metrics for better assessing the risk of releasing defendants and providing judges with more alternatives to detention that enable defendants to appear in court.

I understand through the data provided through the research of several judicial review groups that unsecured bonds are as effective as secured bonds at preventing defendants' failure to appear, without the costs of

pretrial detention and non-refundable bail bond premiums. I would also support the recommendations of the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform for:

1. "increased use of citations in lieu of arrest;"
2. "prompt prosecutorial screening especially for cases involving pretrial detention;"
3. "expediting 'technical' violation of probation cases to avoid delays;"
4. "[diversion](#) programs to redirect appropriate individuals to mental health, substance abuse, [mediation](#), and 'restorative justice' programs as available."

2. Will you support a \$15 per hour minimum wage for all Maryland workers? If yes, over what time period would you suggest implementing it? Do you support including an indexing provision?

Yes No

Comments: I support a \$15 per hour minimum wage for all Maryland workers. I support the Fight for Fifteen and Senate Bill SB-644. All workers need to be treated with dignity. That starts with providing each with a wage in which they can earn an adequate income to afford all of the basic necessities needed for their families and themselves. As the National Low Income Housing Coalition recently highlighted in their annual "Out of Reach" report, the hourly wage needed to afford just a modest two bedroom rental here in the State of Maryland is \$28.27. With that knowledge alone the urgency to implement a \$15 per hour minimum as of today cannot be more apparent. States are being pressed into action on this. When businesses pay their employees less than that with which they can sustain themselves, businesses are, in effect, externalizing their costs onto the states and taking advantage of an indirect subsidy. That indirect subsidy comes in the form of the public assistance their employees are often forced to seek out despite the fact they work a full time 40 hour plus work week. Raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour is a move towards restoring workers' rights to be treated with dignity.

With that being said, I understand the economics of putting into place such a change without some sort of a phase in period could result in some potential market reactions and unintended negative impacts, not the least of which is either the reduction of hours for or a narrowing of jobs available to individuals employed in those fields. I support what has been currently put forth in SB-644: beginning on July 2018 and starting at a rate of \$10.10 per hour, the minimum wage will increase annually based on the annual growth in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for All Urban Consumers for the Washington-Baltimore metropolitan area until it reaches the rate of \$15.00 by July 2023, or earlier, and that it will thereafter continue to increase concurrently with increases in the CPI.

Maryland can follow the examples of municipalities such as the city of Seattle which passed and implemented a phase in towards a \$15 minimum wage. Several studies have supported that the increase in mandatory wages had, at the very least, contributed no detrimental effect to the economic boons these municipalities were experiencing, and more than likely, were helping to sustain them.

3. Do you support public financing of State Senate and Delegate races similar to systems enacted in Montgomery County and Howard County?

Yes No

Comments: I support public financing of State Senate and Delegate races. Getting the influence of big money out of politics is one of the most crucial components of saving our democracy and restoring people's trust in

our government. Addressing the issue of campaign finance will empower us to fix all of the other problems with accountability in our republic. I am happy that the House has passed HJ11, the Democracy Amendment Resolution, and will support public campaign finance legislation using the framework of the American Anti-Corruption Act on the state level until this is addressed on the federal level.

I will not take any donations, directly or indirectly (PACs, etc...), from large corporations including the Pharmaceutical, Prison, Fossil Fuel, Insurance, and any other industries that have undue influence in our democracy.

4. Do you support increased protections for workers in terms of scheduling practices? In particular, will you support requiring employers to give 3 weeks' notice to employees of their shift schedule, requiring employers who call employees into work only to send them home before the end of their shift to provide a certain percentage of the pay that the employee would have made that day, and prohibiting employers from scheduling an employee to work back-to-back shifts or shifts scheduled only a few hours apart without the employee's consent?

Yes x No

Comments: Yes, when elected, for example, I will support legislation similar to the Secure Scheduling Ordinance passed in 2016 by the City of Seattle, Washington. This is tied into a multi-pronged effort along with last year's success in passing Earned Paid Sick Leave protections for all employees and the already mentioned Fight for 15 campaign to ensure that workers are able to work with dignity and given protections that are equitable and provide them a means to moving out of financial distress instead of entrenching them in it.

Many of the same workers affected by the effort to raise the minimum wage often find themselves in industries where it is the common practice of management to request of their employees to be extremely flexible in with their schedules without offering the same flexibility in return. Often, these employees are given notice of the requirement to report to work within a few hours of when the shift is to start and risk termination if they fail to report promptly on time. It is more than a minor inconvenience and comes at a higher cost to those that have to make arrangements for child care or transportation on short notice. This unpredictability in scheduling also precludes an employee from pursuing education or making any other commitments outside of their employment, including opportunities to supplement their income from other sources. It is for the same reason that when an employee is called into work on a less than a days notice that they should be guaranteed a minimum hours of work or a percentage of their day's pay, at the least, to offset those costs that allowed them to be available to work. In other words, it is not just the loss in pay from the shorter hours but the additional costs they have to absorb to arrange childcare and/or transportation in order to report.

And yes, I fully support prohibiting an employer scheduling an employee to work back-to-back shifts or shifts with a few hours off scheduled between them without the employee's consent. Not only is this inhumane but it is also poor management. I know this as an experienced professional in staff management best practices. It becomes an issue of lower productivity as well as a safety concern both to the employer and the employee. When employees' needs are meet, I have seen, and study after study supports, that it increases productivity, reduces the cost associated with training and turnover, increasing quality and customer satisfaction, fueling recurring business for the employer. These are common sense rules where **everyone benefits**. The State of Maryland should not be enabling poor management practices.

In short, I will always support increased protections for workers and believe that all workers should have the same legal protections and an enforced minimum requirement of benefits that help them lead healthy and safe economic lives for themselves and their families.

5. Do you support workers' rights to organize in the private and public sectors? Will you make it a priority that all public employees be covered by a public employees' relations act, similar to the National Labor Relations Act, which has governed work in the private sector for over 80 years?

Yes x No

Comments: Yes, I support workers' rights to organize in the private and public sectors. The right to organize is a **fundamental** right for all workers regardless of who is their employer or the field they work in. Even in the case where the employer is the State, and by extension, the public at large, the employed will still have interests that are distinct from those who are employing them. They need to be given the right to organize collectively so that those interests are always represented and equitably addressed. When we as a state facilitate workers coming together to demand what they need then there is less waste, more productivity, and a better return on the dollar -- public and private. I believe that the weakening of unions and workers' organizations has been detrimental to our state and the decline of the middle class across America.

When our public servants are given the right to organize we are giving all our children a chance for a brighter future. Government agencies that treat their employees better are more successful. But managers waste resources trying to guess what their employees need most. For example, in Anne Arundel County where I live, I have seen the detriment of the current County and State Administrations denying salary step increases to our teachers for seven years, resulting in our County falling behind what neighboring counties offer and a loss of experienced educators. At the same time, we are seeing the incredible power of the collective strike in West Virginia of teachers, and that they are finding success in their collective bargaining.

6. We believe that the financial security of women is integral to the health of our economy. Do you feel that legislation ensuring the equal treatment of men and women in the workplace is appropriate? If so, what legislation will you support as a member of the General Assembly to bring women to parity with their male colleagues?

Yes x No

Comments: Maryland needs to support federal legislation like H.R.1869: The Paycheck Fairness Act. Women have been oppressed in western society for centuries. I will fight for equality for women. As an experienced professional woman and mother I know what it means to be paid less, harrassed, and bullied by unconscious corporate leadership. Legislation that goes to the heart of the matter will help Maryland women thrive. And when Maryland women thrive, everyone benefits.

I absolutely believe that ensuring equal treatment of men and women in the workplace is essential. In my 20 years in business I have been told personally that my pay is behind that of my male counterparts doing the same job. At times I was a single mother and trying to support a family on a salary below those of my male peers. It is essential that we have equality in the workplace and I will introduce and co-sponsor legislation with the help of experts in the progressive community that will make this a reality in Maryland in the very near future.

7. Do you believe that employers should be required to make reasonable accommodations for employees and applicants for employment who have known limitations due to conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth?

Yes No

Comments: Pregnancy discrimination laws need to be publicized, enforced, and kept relevant to all employment situations. The Maryland Pregnancy Accommodation law provides many protections for pregnant workers. As Senator, I will make sure workers are aware of their rights and employers are held accountable when it comes to pregnancy and childbirth laws. I will work with pregnancy rights advocacy groups to keep and improve legislation that continues to protect all pregnant workers and new parents.

I absolutely believe that we need to have laws requiring reasonable accommodations for employees and applicants who have known limitations due to childbirth or pregnancy conditions. As a mother who experienced a tragedy of losing a son days after his birth, and giving birth to a second son with severe health problems, I know very well how important that it is for employers to respect and accommodate the needs of pregnant employees.

8. Are there any instances in which the state should place restrictions on a patient seeking abortion care, such as stage of pregnancy, access based on age, or the type of abortion care that state funding should cover?

Yes No

Comments: The courts have repeatedly ruled that this is a private decision between an individual and their medical provider and the state should not be involved. No one has the right to dictate what happens to another person's body. Maryland has required that the parent of a minor must be notified before an abortion is provided; health professionals have been allowed to waive parental involvement in limited circumstances. This brings to light the importance of healthy people and healthy families. I believe women should have access to the full range of comprehensive reproductive health care options available.

9. Will you support single-payer health care in Maryland? If so, how would you pass it and how would you pay for it?

Yes No

Comments: Ideally, a single payer system would work most effectively if implemented on a federal level. This is because of the amount of Federal waivers involved as well as coordinating a state plan with Medicare and Medicaid funding, Federal Employees' plans, TriCare and the Veterans Administration system. However, given the current lack of support for it on the Federal level, Maryland should certainly instead work towards achieving this on the state level and ensuring everyone has universal, affordable access to healthcare by the simple virtue of being residents of the State of Maryland. First I would facilitate the passing of legislation by helping educate other legislators and Marylanders on the benefits of a true universal, publicly funded healthcare system, how it makes sense financially and how it is a fundamental human right, which would build support both in the legislature and in communities. It would have to be passed as a plan that would require all Maryland based businesses and employers to forgo their current plans and be placed into the publicly funded state plan. I anticipate that most would welcome this change as it would remove a significant operational cost and burden as well as equaling the playing field for small to mid-sized businesses who, by virtue of the smaller

risk pools offered by their smaller workforce, were paying for higher premiums for their group plans than their larger counterparts. Some work would have to be done to opt-in multi-state employers, however, who operate in but are based outside of Maryland. (Federal law has so far been used to prevent states from requiring an outside employer operating over state lines from purchasing their plans from a specified single provider.) For cost controls, providers would have to collectively negotiate for reimbursement rates and pharmaceutical and medical device costs not unlike an expanded version of the all-payer plan currently adopted in Maryland. There would also need to be a public advisory board to review these costs as well as the formularies. Such a board would have to include patient advocacy groups so that individuals with long term, chronic care needs were not unintentionally denied access to critical drugs, or forced to ration, because of costs. I anticipate that providers in the state will welcome an opt-in to this new publicly funded system as it will help to reduce their administrative burden by only having the one state entity plus federal payers through which to process claims.

Funding is the big question when it comes to implementing a universal publicly funded state care plan as we have seen in the examples of Vermont and California. Most importantly, savings are realized by eliminating costs due to profits, excessive salaries, and administrative redundancies related to insurance companies. I would fund any remaining shortfall primarily through a payroll tax in combination with a levy on non-wage income including capital gains, profits, rents, dividends, and interest as was proposed in the Healthy Maryland Act introduced by Senator Paul Pinsky. Maryland could also explore supplementing in part with a modest increase in the consumption tax as they have done in Canada. This ensures individuals residing outside of the states have their costs covered should they need emergency medical treatment while here. I am familiar with the Economic Review that Dr. Gerald Friedman did in support for past legislation for the Maryland General Assembly in past years and am in agreement with his recommendations. Primarily funding a universal, publicly funded healthcare system through a payroll tax would see a significant increase in most Marylanders' taxes but those increases would be significantly offset by the savings they would receive by no longer having to pay an insurer. The increase in tax would still be significantly less than what most are paying in premiums to an insurer today. Again, it is a common sense change where Marylanders receive a cheaper cost for their healthcare while, at the same time and most importantly, everyone has the universal access to the healthcare that they need. With regular preventive care, fewer expensive treatments and procedures are necessary. The state budget will benefit from more tax revenues as a result of more time on the job. At the end of the day, health is a basic fundamental right that must be ensured to all.

10. Will you support instituting transparency rules for Pharmacy Benefit Managers and drug corporations as well as creating a drug cost review commission for high cost drugs?

Yes No

Comments: I support SB-169 Public Health - Prescription Drug and Medical Supply Access and Affordability Workgroup Requiring the Secretary of Health to convene a workgroup to study the advisability of the State forming a generic drugs and medical supplies purchasing cooperative and establishing Maryland as an open formulary State; requiring the workgroup to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before January 1, 2019; terminating the Act after June 30, 2019.

11. In general, do you support or oppose charter schools?

Support Oppose

I do feel the SAFE Act falls short in that it has no language about 287g agreements. I support working with affected communities to craft legislation that best addresses their problems and needs, people will inform us what they need and what will help them if we are willing to listen.

We also do not want to get into a position where Maryland residents are racially profiled, or that immigrants are not given due process and are arrested for the purpose of filling prison beds for ICE.

15. Will you support closing corporate tax loopholes by requiring combined reporting, as most other states have done? Will you support bringing back Maryland's 6.25 % tax rate on income of more than \$1 million to allow upper income residents to contribute more to Maryland?

Yes No

Comments:

Corporations receiving State and Federal tax relief either in the form of tax cuts or other subsidies at the expense of working families needs to stop for the growth and welfare of our communities. Healthcare including recovery from addiction and mental health services, the public education system, proactive and reactive environmental stewardship measures, overall infrastructure, public transportation and basic government functions have decayed while Corporations hoard cash and use stock buyback strategies to thin out balance sheets. It is time for corporations and organizations, in return for access to American consumerism, to supply living wages, predictable work hours, and benefits that allow people to take care of their families.

I do support combined reporting for large corporations in Maryland that have offshore and out of state subsidiaries. We lose an enormous amount of tax revenue due to this structure not being in place. I believe increasing the tax rate on income of more than \$1 million by a small percentage could help the state and I would consider such proposals.

16. Do you plan to introduce or support legislation to provide protection for the Potomac, Chesapeake or other shared environments that have had federal funding for protection removed?

Yes No

Comments: I support strengthening the state's Forest Conservation Act (FCA) Maryland Critical Area Commission, a ban on the Potomac Pipeline, and The Clean Energy Jobs Act. I also support the proposed ban on expanded polystyrene (Styrofoam®) food service containers. They are harmful to the environment and there are many good alternatives. I also believe that we need to continue to protect pollinators and do more to protect our environment and food sources from toxins.

I plan to introduce and support environmental legislation to protect water quality and the watershed in Maryland and to strengthen our critical area laws. While Federal funding and protections for the Chesapeake are under attack we must protect our restoration progress along with our scientific monitoring that proves this progress. We must pay for the protections and programs for the Chesapeake watershed to fill any gaps created by loss of federal funding.

For example, federal funds provide approximately 20% of the enforcement budget of Maryland and 30% nationwide. If these EPA funds are slashed by the administration, Maryland must find funding for enforcement and verification of conservation practices. I would also explore innovative ways to meet our enforcement and verification obligations like privatizing some of the functions if that proves to be the best option.

Also, it's past time to start the conversation and examination of whether current size requirements for stormwater practices are adequate to meet the increased intensity and frequency of storms occurring because of climate change. Stormwater is the only pollution load to the Bay that is increasing. Therefore, I will protect use of the unencumbered balance of the Bay Restoration Fund to support local stormwater practices. The portion of the funds that are not used to pay off bonds taken on to upgrade Maryland's 67 major wastewater treatment plants to decrease pollution can already be used for local stormwater programs but new bills are always introduced to chip away at the funds and allow other uses for it. Stormwater is expensive, paid for mostly on the local level, and must be reduced to meet our pollution reduction goals and deliver clean water for people, environment and the economy of Maryland.

17. What legislation and regulations can Maryland state government enact to protect our residents from the damage inflicted by Trump's federal government?

Comments:

Trump's federal government strategy is two-fold: to reduce the government's functionality nationally and to offload overall governance of citizens to the States. The execution of this strategy will pass the burden of significant oversight and entitlement programs back to the States and likely without the Federal funding. If the federal government is going to cut services and taxes AND people expect the same services and programs, then State taxes will likely need to be affected. Now more than ever, the Governor's and State legislators' roles are vital to ensuring the exceptional quality of life in Maryland.

Some immediate actions to protect all Marylanders include and not limited to the following: ensuring our public healthcare programs will be publicly funded if federal funds are cut and ideally passing state universal health care legislation; shoring up education funds; passing the SAFE Act; banning offshore drilling along the Maryland coastline; banning bump-stocks; enforcing net neutrality for Internet carriers operating in Maryland; support and work with the gun safety lobbies such as Moms Demand Action, Everytown and others to ban bump-stocks, remove firearms from domestic abusers, pass a solid assault weapons ban; ensuring funding and enforcement of programs that protect the ecosystem of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. (Note: see above example on EPA environmental enforcement funds.)

I believe that Maryland can be a shining example of progressive political responses to the Trump administration. As District 30 Maryland State Senator I will work with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to ensure that we pass legislation to protect the rights and well being of all Marylanders. I am the most qualified candidate with 25 years of business experience, 20 years of advocacy on Capitol Hill and MD General Assembly, and raising my family in MD. I know how much work there is to do to counter these actions.

18. Do you support the creation of a progressive caucus in the state legislature?

Yes x No

Comments:

Great idea! The power of a caucus to move forward common interests and enact legislation is without parallel and a Progressive Caucus of Senators and Delegates would help ensure the interests of Marylanders would be served in a just and equitable manner.

I am currently connecting with other candidates who have very progressive platforms, such as Ben Jealous and Wala Blegay from Prince George's County. I will work hard to continue to build the Progressive Caucus and Coalition in the Senate.

19. For the measures above that you have agreed to support would you be willing to:

- Co-sponsor legislation? YES or NO
- Work with our Policy and Legislative Director to help pass a bill? YES or NO
- Testify at a hearing in support of legislation? YES or NO
- Speak at public events in support of legislation? YES or NO
- Write a letter in support of legislation? YES or NO
- Write an op-ed in support of legislation? YES or NO

20. Would you be willing to engage with Progressive Maryland members and their communities by:

- Speaking at Progressive Maryland events? YES or NO
- Meeting with our membership annually to report on the progress of our shared priorities and answer questions from our members? YES or NO
- Writing a letter to unorganized workers endorsing an organizing drive by a labor union? YES or NO