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2018 Questionnaire

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:

_Ferguson_____

Candidate First Name:

_Bill_____

Office Seeking:

_State Senate (46th Dist)_____

District:

46 _____

Party:

Democratic _____

Campaign Contact Information

Committee Name:

Citizens for Bill Ferguson _____

Street Address:

PO Box 25984 _____

City:

Baltimore _____

Zip Code:

21224 _____

Business Phone:

410-929-3374 _____

Fax:

Campaign Website:

<http://www.billforbaltimore.com> _____

Candidate Contact Information

Cell Phone:

410-929-3374

Email Address:

bill@billforbaltimore.com

Treasurer Contact Information

Treasurer Name:

Scott Wilson

Street Address:

PO Box 25984

City:

Baltimore

Zip Code:

21224

Phone:

443-977-0887

Candidate History

Previous Elected Offices:

State Senate (46th Dist) - elected in 2010, reelected 2014

Which Years Did You Serve:

2011 to present

Have you ever received an endorsement from Progressive Maryland?

YES or NO

If Yes, when:

2014 election cycle

Have you ever assisted Progressive Maryland in achieving its goals?

YES or NO

Describe:

DREAM Act

Marriage Equality

Minimum Wage Increase

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

MD Sierra Club, League of Conservation Voters

Issue Questions

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

Yes

No

Comments:

Money should not determine whether or not someone is free before trial. The money-based bail system disadvantages those in the lowest socioeconomic situations, who are already overrepresented in our criminal justice system.

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 was proud to support the last minimum wage increase to \$10.10 and support raising it again to \$15 per hour. I believe that increases in the minimum wage are best done at the state or regional level, and would support indexing the wage to keep up with the rate of inflation.

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:

Corporations and large donors currently have too much power in our political system. Public financing would help to alleviate the influence tied to financial support. I was a member of the last campaign finance reform commission and was the lead senate sponsor and floor leader for that bill. One of the major accomplishments of that legislation was extending public financing to local government for pilot projects, and we are now seeing that play out in Montgomery County.

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

No

Comments:

Yes, I generally support initiatives focused on fairness for wage workers. I do believe we must be mindful to implement tailored policies based on industries, as the employment market across Maryland is incredibly diverse.

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 No

Comments:

All employees should be free to organize in both the private and public sectors. Unions were a critical means of building a middle class in the United States through the power of organized labor. I have consistently supported the right to collectively bargain in both the public and private sector throughout my tenure in the Maryland Senate.

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 No

Comments:

Legislation ensuring parity between men and women in the workplace is appropriate. I am supportive of equal pay, anti-harassment, and paid maternity leave legislation. This Session I am introducing paid maternity and paternity leave for state workers - 12 weeks for the birth of a child or an adoption. Maryland is well behind other developed countries as we approach leave policies for families.

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:

Reasonable accommodations for employees and applicants who have limitations due to conditions related to pregnancy and childbirth is another means of ensuring parity between men and women in the workforce.

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:

Each of these issues is best determined and decided by a mother with her health care professional. I believe women have a fundamental right to privacy as it relates to childbirth and pregnancy.

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:

Maryland already has an all-payer health care system, which has saved the state millions of dollars. Moving to single-payer is an important next step which would likely lead to additional savings. We will have to be extremely thoughtful in how we approach this initiative given the challenges presented at the federal level. We should be monitoring the work in Nevada very closely to see whether a single-payer Medicaid expansion option can lead to a first step towards universal single-payer in Maryland.

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:

This is long overdue.

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

Support

Oppose

Comments:

When implemented correctly, charter schools can provide additional supports and services to students. I believe the charter vs. traditional school debate is a false dichotomy that has been unduly influenced by national politics. Maryland's charter school law is significantly different than many other states and creates parity between charter schools and traditional schools. We should be focused on how best to create great schools for all kids, not focus unnecessarily political attention on charter vs. traditional structures. Regardless, there must be strong oversight and accountability to ensure all schools are held to high standards.

12. Do you support or oppose school vouchers that would allow public school students, K-12, to attend a private school instead of their local public school? Please explain your support or opposition.

Support

Oppose

Comments:

All students should have access to an excellent school and our public school system should be the means by which we achieve this standard. However, I consistently voted against the BOOST voucher program this last term at each occasion because I believe the current program insufficiently protects students' and educators' civil rights.

13. Will you support making state colleges and universities free for all in-state students?

Yes

No

Comments:

In concept, I agree with this value and believe we should be striving to reach this objective. However, I believe we also need to be expanding access to universal pre-k and early learning opportunities. In a world of limited resources, we will have to be thoughtful as to which public education opportunities we seek to expand and in what order so as to have the biggest impact on Maryland working families.

14. Will you support the Trust Act?

Yes

No

Comments:

Protecting Maryland's immigrant community is imperative. I was supportive of the Trust Act in the last legislative session and will do so again this Session.

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:

I strongly support a major overhaul to our tax system in Maryland. I believe we must tackle reforms to our sales tax in Maryland, as the current tax framework is failing to achieve revenues we have traditionally expected from this tax. As the economy has changed dramatically, our tax code has not. We take up this issue in earnest next term in order to truly embrace initiatives like the Kirwan Commission and health care reform.

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:

District 46 is home to a large portion of the Chesapeake Bay watershed and cleaning our environment has been a key motivator in why I ran for office. I plan to work closely with the environmental community moving forward to advance environmental protection efforts in 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:

Mitigating the damage being done by the Trump administration and Republican Congress is a top priority. I supported the legislature's decision to give Attorney General Frosh the autonomy to sue the Trump administration last session and will continue advocating and voting for the AG's office to receive the appropriations it needs to do so. We must also pass legislation at the state level for regulations which have been repealed at the national level, like the individual mandate for health care.

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

Yes

No

Comments:

While I would enjoy learning about progressive policies in Maryland through a progressive caucus process, I'm not sure that spending effort establishing a caucus is the most worthwhile endeavor for the next term.

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

For any policy answer in this section, I would have to review and understand the details of the particular pieces of legislation introduced.

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

Would depend on the circumstances of the organizing effort to fully commit to attending an organizing drive. I am open to attending future events, but would have to know the context of the event.

