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2018 Questionnaire for the House of Delegates

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:

Cullison

Candidate First Name:

Bonnie

Office Seeking:

Delegate

District:

19

Party:

Democratic

Campaign Contact Information

Committee Name:

Friends of Bonnie Cullison

Street Address:

3404 Beret Lane

City:

Silver Spring

Zip Code:

20906

Business Phone:

240-464-4007

Fax:

None

Campaign Website:

www.CullisonforMaryland.com

Candidate Contact Information

Cell Phone:

240-464-4007

Email Address:

delcullison@gmail.com

Treasurer Contact Information

Treasurer Name:

Rachel Hickson

Street Address:

3404 Beret Lane

City:

Silver Spring

Zip Code:

20906

Candidate History
Previous Elected Offices: Maryland House of Delegates President, Montgomery County Education Association

Which Years Did You Serve:

Maryland House of Delegates, 2010—2014 and 2014—2018

President, Montgomery County Education Association, 2003--2009

Have you ever received an endorsement from Progressive Maryland?

YES or NO

If Yes, when:

2010 and 2014

Have you ever assisted Progressive Maryland in achieving its goals?

YES or NO

Describe:

The Montgomery County Education Association was one of the founding members of PMD when I was vice president of the organization. We continued to have representative on the Board through my presidency.

I have participated in marches, rallies and canvases.

I have lobbied legislators, both before my election and since, on the issues that are important to PMD.

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

As you know, the endorsement processes are in progress.

I am seeking the endorsement of organizations which share the values and commitments of PMD. Those I have received thus far are

- Maryland State Education Association
- Sierra Club
- League of Conservation Voters

Issue Questions

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

Yes

Comments:

The money-based bail system actively discriminates against economically vulnerable populations. This practice is in direct contradiction to the concept of “innocent before proven guilty” and I would strongly support ending it.

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

Comments:

The reason our economy has not bounced back from the great recession is wage stagnation, especially in those jobs paid a minimum wage. In addition to being the right thing to do—pay people enough to live—or at least closer to a living wage—raising the minimum will benefit the overall economy by putting more money directly in the community. I am also committed to maintaining an environment which sustains and grows small businesses, so I believe an 8 year phase in should help to mitigate the impact on small businesses. I would support than indexing provision that would assure that there would not be a decrease as the result of a negative or zero inflation factor.

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

Yes

Comments:

Public financing puts the “public” or voter back into the election process in a very real way and it mitigates financial influence. Given the negative impact of “Citizen’s United” on the federal elections we see more than ever that we need to reform election financing in this way.

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

Comments:

What is sometimes missing in employer business practices is the understanding that their workforce is their greatest asset—their business will be most successful when their employees are respected in all areas—including scheduling practices. I would absolutely support all of the requirements. I was a co-sponsor of HB 1614, Maryland Fair Scheduling, Wages and Benefits Act, in 2017 and look forward to working with Delegate Morales on that bill in the 2018 session.

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 employee's relations act, similar to the National Labor Relations Act, which has governed work in the private sector for over 80 years?

Yes

Comments:

As a former union president, (Montgomery County Education Association, 2003—09), I am committed to the advancement of all workers' rights and the ability to organize. I am committed to legislation that provides those protections covered by the NLRB for all employees.

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

Comments:

I am the chair of the Women's Empowerment and Equity subcommittee of the MD Legislative Women's Caucus. In that role I have been able to advocate for bills which mandate salary parity, bills that require transparency revealing gender pay gaps, transparency regarding gender composition on corporate boards, non-discrimination in insurance charges, etc. In the 21st century, it is inexcusable that there continue to be gaps in compensation and in leadership opportunities and I will continue to work to eliminate them.

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

Comments:

Not providing for accommodations for conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth is another form of discrimination against women in the workforce. I was a co-sponsor of Delegate Morales bill, HB 0214 in 2017, which addressed these issues. While the bill did not pass, I expect it to be resubmitted and will again co-sponsor. I have agreed to co-sponsor a bill that Delegate Kelly is submitting this year to provide for lactation rooms in public buildings. I intend to continue to work with my colleagues and advocate for these issues to overcome this discrimination.

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?

No X

Comments:

Women's reproductive health is women's health and all decisions made relative to personal health should be made by the individual. I have consistently opposed legislation that seeks to put any restrictions on those decisions or limits with regard to public funding for health care.

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 X

Comments:

I submitted a universal health care for all bill in 2012. I believe that the chaos that is being created at the federal level around health care sets the stage for the state to move toward a single payer program. I know that there are single-payer bills being submitted this session (2018) that we will look at very closely. The money that is being paid by employers and individuals for health care is more than adequate to cover a universal program. The Medicare program is a good model to consider at the beginning of this process. While I do not have the actual numbers, I am certain that a Medicare type program would cost considerably less than what is currently being paid so the impact on tax payers for health care would be significantly decreased in this type of program.

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 X

Comments:

We absolutely must address the cost of pharmaceuticals in the state. I very much support increasing transparency rules and creating a commission that would review how drug costs are set and determine how costs can be decreased in the manufacturing to consumer chain. This includes a deep analysis of the roll and impact of PBMs on the cost.

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

Oppose X

Comments:

I oppose the concept of independent charter schools which take funds from public schools and are not accountable for results. I would like to see school systems in Maryland set up laboratory schools where they could study innovations in education which they can apply appropriately to help address the achievement gap. I believe that public school educators know how to address the issues face by poor and minority students, but they are not given the opportunity to be creative or innovation in our current systems.

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.

Oppose X

Comments:

I categorically oppose school vouchers. While I honor parents' decisions to send their children to private schools, it is a decision they make that they must pay for. While they might feel that they do not have the benefit of the schools they pay for through property taxes, the fact is that they could if they made a different decision. In addition, having a system of public schools is the bedrock of democracy, in which everyone has the right to an education that opens the doors of opportunity for them as they join the society as adults. In that way, public education is the bedrock of a stable economy, which benefits all residents.

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

Yes

Comments:

As I stated in the previous question, our system of public education should provide access to all opportunities to all students. One of those opportunities is higher education and cost is frequently the barrier to it. Therefore I support free tuition for in-state students in state institutions of higher learning.

14. Will you support the Trust Act?

Yes

Comments:

I strongly supported the Trust Act in 2017 and will do so again. It is just the right thing to do.

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

Comments:

I have been active in the fight for combined reporting from the early days of Progressive Maryland and remember lobbying legislators as a teacher leader in the 1990's on this issue. While we have not succeeded thus far, perhaps the fact that corporations will experience windfalls as a result of the new tax law will help us to convince our colleagues that they can pay the Maryland taxes with those additional funds.

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

Comments:

Given my role on the Health and Government Operations, I do not have plans to introduce environmental protection legislation in the near future; however I have a 100% voting record on bills that provide for those protections and will strive to maintain that record.

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

Comments:

My focus at this point is on health care. I will be working on legislation and regulations that will mitigate the damage done by the current administration by working toward state mandates for insurance, a re-insurance fund, capped deductibles and out of pocket expenses in the short term. In the long term, I will work toward single-payer plans.

On education, we have the ability to set our own standards and accountability through ESSA and we must take advantage of the flexibility available in that law to maintain and improve our strong public schools.

Having the ability to file suit against the federal administration is an advantage this this election year, not only to fight the travesties being done there, but also to educate our residents on how bad the discriminatory and destructive executive orders are. That will help us to elect more progressives to the legislature in 2018.

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

Yes

Comments:

There is always the possibility for like-minded progressives to form a "caucus" and I would support that. .

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

- Co-sponsor legislation? YES_X_ or NO_____
- Work with our Policy and Legislative Director to help pass a bill? YES_X_ or NO_____
- Testify at a hearing in support of legislation? YES_X_ or NO_____
- Speak at public events in support of legislation? YES_X_ or NO_____
- Write a letter in support of legislation? YES_X_ or NO_____
- Write an op-ed in support of legislation? YES_X_ or NO_____

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

- Speaking at Progressive Maryland events? YES_X_ or NO_____
- Meeting with our membership annually to report on the progress of our shared priorities and answer questions from our members? YES_X_ or NO_____
- Writing a letter to unorganized workers endorsing an organizing drive by a labor union? YES_X_ or NO_____