

**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

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| **Candidate Information** | | |
| Candidate Last Name:  \_\_\_Wells\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
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| Candidate First Name:  \_\_\_Melissa\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
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| Office Seeking:  \_State Delegate\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
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| District:  \_\_40\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
| Party:  \_Democratic\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
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| **Campaign Contact Information** | | |
| Committee Name:  \_\_Friends of Melissa\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
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| Street Address:  \_P.O. Box 22794\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
| City:  \_\_\_Baltimore\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
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| Zip Code:  \_\_\_21233\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
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| Business Phone:  \_443-380-3926\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
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| Fax:  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
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| Campaign Website:  \_www.electmelissawells.com\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
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| **Candidate Contact Information** | | |
| Cell Phone:  \_443-380-3926\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
| Email Address:  \_\_info@electmelissawells.com\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
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| **Treasurer Contact Information** | | |
| Treasurer Name:  \_\_\_Ebony Nicholson\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
| Street Address:  \_\_45 South Poppelton St\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
| City:  \_\_Baltimore \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
| Zip Code:  \_21201\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
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| Phone:  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
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| **Candidate History** | | |
| Previous Elected Offices:  **N/A** | | |
| Which Years Did You Serve:  **N/A** | | |
| Have you ever received an endorsement from Progressive Maryland? | YES\_\_\_\_\_ or NO\_\_X\_\_ | |
| If Yes, when: | | |
| Have you ever assisted Progressive Maryland in achieving its goals? | | **YES** |
| Describe:  **My work as a union organizer has often put me on the front lines of issues that Progressive Maryland supports, such as a $15 minimum wage, the right to organize, and TIF accountability.** | | |
| Major Endorsements (Elected Officials/Organizations/Opinion Leaders):  **I anticipate receiving endorsements from local and regional union chapters once they begin offering endorsements.** | | |

**Issue Questions**

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

**Yes**

Comments:

**Cash bail is a regressive system that allows someone’s access to money to determine his or her access to freedom. It also has a negative impact on workers who already suffer from job insecurity, by putting them at risk of losing their job if their detention prevents them from showing up for a shift.**

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:

**I am a strong supporter of the $15 minimum wage, and have testified in support of its beneficial impacts at every opportunity.**

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 means increased political access for candidates who can demonstrate a critical mass of support in their communities, but might not have access to a well-resourced donor network. I am always in support of greater political access.**

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:

**Workers should have predictability for their time commitments at work, so that other important decisions like childcare or medical appointments are not subject to the whims of a changing workplace schedule. Moreover, for workers making an hourly wage, greater predictability for their schedules can offer greater financial predictability, making it easier for them to budget month-to-month.**

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**

Comments:

**As a union organizer, I am both a vocal supporter and an active participant in attempts to expand the right to organize. I believe that public employees should be offered the same protections and opportunities as private employees when it comes to their right to organize.**

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 anticipate the specific legislation will need to be crafted in concert with third party advocates like our regional and local union chapters, but as a basic unifying principle, I believe the legislation will have to require that no women is paid less than a man for the same or comparable work. That compensation must include any benefits and retirement that are packaged with the compensation, as well as ancillary benefits like vacation time.**

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:

**I do not believe that men should ever be privileged in the workplace, which is what we allow to happen when we do not prevent women from being given the protections they deserve before and after childbirth*.***

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**

Comments:

**Woman should never be stripped of their right to bodily autonomy.**

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**

Comments:

**I do not anticipate passage of the legislation being functionally different than the coalition building for other progressive bills that have historically been passed in the General Assembly. The real barrier to that coalition building will likely be questions over whether the state is capable of paying for single-payer healthcare, especially given that insufficient funding seems to have been one of the biggest barriers to single-payer’s success in Vermont. I believe that new revenue streams like an expanded marijuana marketplace must be considered, as well as the reduced expenditures on enforcement and incarceration that should arise from not just decriminalizing small amounts of marijuana, but legalizing the substance altogether. Other revenue streams such as a reinstated millionaire’s income tax and rolling back cuts to the estate tax should also be considered.**

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**

Comments:

**Companies without something to hide have no reason to fear transparency, and workers who depend on these companies for their healthcare access deserve transparency.**

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

Comments:

**It must be acknowledged that Maryland has a comparatively strong charter school law, in so far as charters and their employees fall under the auspices of local school boards. Charters are not the solution to Maryland’s long-term academic barriers though, nor do they help remedy the chronic underfunding for areas of poverty throughout the state.**

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**

Comments:

**We are functionally redirecting education funds when we redirect or cut the tax dollars that the government would otherwise have available for education spending. That is exactly what is at stake with vouchers, which is all the more problematic when those cuts are coming in order to enable schools that poor or working class families do not have access to, and comparatively wealthy families are the beneficiaries of the cuts.**

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

**Yes**

Comments:

**The student loan debt burden has been increasingly discussed as a barrier to financial freedom, but we rarely discuss tangible solutions that would free future students from that debt burden. Pathways to free higher education are the most powerful and systemic potential solution.**

14. Will you support the Trust Act?

**Yes**

Comments:

**I would have proudly voted for the Trust Act in the House of Delegates 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**

Comments:

**Other states have closed these loopholes, and just as importantly for us as advocates who must win over skeptics, those states have demonstrated that the loopholes can be closed without creating the negative economic repercussions that are traditionally touched on as reasons not to close tax loopholes. I also support reinstating the millionaire’s tax, which Maryland implemented without any negative repercussions just a few years ago, and which would only impact the less than 1% of Maryland’s population who make over a million dollars in income per year.**

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:

**I look forward to finding ways not just to support our state’s more traditionally discussed waterways, but to improve the health of waterways in urban environments like Baltimore’s Inner Harbor and the Patapsco watershed that it is part of. I also believe implementing natural protections like oyster beds that improve the water’s health through filtration is a great opportunity to do so.**

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

Comments:

**As a union advocate, I am always arguing that state and local worker protections that increase financial security and freedom are among the greatest keys to most Marylanders’ long-term quality of life. That means a higher minimum wage, greater prevailing wage protections, protections against wage theft, and accountability for government spending like TIFs that includes local hiring requirement are more important than ever under a Trump administration. The Trump administration also creates an ever greater sense of urgency around state attempts to expand access to healthcare and increase our environmental protections.**

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

**Yes**

Comments:

**I would not only participate in a progressive caucus, but would also help organize and lead the caucus if given the opportunity, because I believe the collective action principle it represents speaks to my experience as a union organizer.**

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| 19. For the measures above that you have agreed to support would you be willing to: | |
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| * Co-sponsor legislation? * Work with our Policy and Legislative Director to help pass a bill? * Testify at a hearing in support of legislation? * Speak at public events in support of legislation? * Write a letter in support of legislation? * Write an op-ed in support of legislation? | **Yes**  **Yes**  **Yes**  **Yes**  **Yes**  **Yes** |
| 20. Would you be willing to engage with Progressive Maryland members and their communities by: | |
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| * Speaking at Progressive Maryland events? * Meeting with our membership annually to report on the progress of our shared priorities and answer questions from our members? * Writing a letter to unorganized workers endorsing an organizing drive by a labor union? | **Yes**  **Yes**  **Yes** |
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