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2018 Gubernatorial 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 Legislative and Policy Coordinator Jennifer Dwyer at Jennifer@progressivemaryland.org **no later than 5 P.M. on Friday, December 1, 2017**. Your responses will be available to the public at www.ProgressiveMaryland.org

Candidate Information

Candidate Last Name: Jealous

Candidate First Name: Ben

Office Seeking: Governor

District: N/A

Party: Democrat

Campaign Contact Information

Committee Name: Friends of Ben Jealous

Street Address: 923 Gist Avenue

City: Silver Spring

Zip Code: 20910

Business Phone: 443-812-1883

Fax:

Campaign Website: benjealous.com

Candidate Contact Information

Cell Phone: 443-812-1883

Email Address: Ben@benjealous (travis@benjealous)

Treasurer Contact Information

Treasurer Name: Jason Small

Street Address: 923 Gist Ave

City: Silver Spring

Zip Code: 20910

Phone: 301-312-1459

Candidate History

Previous Elected Offices: None

Which Years Did You Serve: N/A

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 2013, I was named Marylander of the Year due to my efforts to pass the DREAM Act, marriage equality, end the death penalty, police reform, and expand voting rights. These progressive victories would not have been

possible without building a diverse coalition determined to engage on each of these issues collectively. I'm proud of my work in these battles and when I'm governor we'll get back to doing big things again.

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

- Maryland Working Families
- Maryland Postal Workers Union
- Our Revolution, Maryland
- Senator Bernie Sanders
- Mayor Eric Garcetti
- National Nurses United
- Friends of the Earth Action
- Bill McKibben
- Van Jones
- SEIU
- Senator Booker
- Rea Carey, Executive Director of the LGBTQ Task Force (in her personal capacity)
- Phil Radford

Issue Questions

1. Will you work to pass a \$15 per hour minimum wage for all workers and index it to the Consumer Price Index for the Washington-Baltimore metro area?

Yes No

Comments:

The people of Maryland deserve a living wage and when I'm governor I will fight to make the minimum wage \$15 dollars an hour. It is my long commitment to workers and raising the minimum wage that earned me the endorsement of SEIU, the leaders of the Fight for \$15. I know that when we invest in our workers, they can invest in our economy and Maryland will prosper.

2. 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:

Ensuring labor rights for all Marylanders will be a top priority when I'm governor and I will continue to be a strong voice for workers. I will ensure that all those appointed to state boards feel similarly as well.

3. As Governor, will you work to create a higher density of union jobs in our state? If so, how will you accomplish this?

Yes No

Comments:

Firstly, I intend to pass a blanket state law making it easier for all workers in Maryland to organize rather than the current industry by industry standard. Secondly, I intend to direct our state to invest in offshore wind projects that will have good, union jobs that come along with these investments. Moreover, having a governor partnered with a legislature that is union friendly will create the environment for people to be willing to organize and enter into collective bargaining agreements.

4. Are you willing to develop, support, and sponsor legislation that would keep the right for WMATA employees to collectively bargain on wages, benefits, and working conditions as they do now?

Yes No

Comments:

I am a strong proponent of labor rights and believe that the right to collectively bargain should be as unrestricted as possible.

5. Will you work to ensure that all state funded infrastructure and construction projects are done with project labor agreements and assurances that state expenditures will result in good jobs for Marylanders?

Yes No

Comments:

Yes, I will endeavor to change the prevailing wage formula in Maryland and to lower the threshold for prevailing wages below the current \$500,000 level. Moreover, not only am I a proponent of PLA's but I will seek to increase the number of prevailing wage inspectors significantly. We cannot ensure a fair system without adequate oversight by inspectors.

6. How will you generate the new state revenue needed to close the projected deficit and meet Maryland's increased investment needs such as the expected recommendations of the Kirwan Commission?

Yes

No

Comments:

First and foremost, we will require combined reporting and direct those funds towards raising teacher pay which is the most important step in increasing teacher quality and improving our public school system. Secondly, I've been a CEO or Partner in a firm for almost all of my adult life. I know how to optimize our state budget by rooting out inefficiencies endemic in the budgeting process. Thirdly, I believe that progressive investments in working families pay back into our state as people's wages grow and they spend more and demand more goods and services. As such, raising the minimum wage will increase our tax base and allow us to invest into our education system. Ultimately, however, any discussion of additional revenue toward education cannot be conducted until we see the results of the Kirwan Commission's work and learn the extent of the problem and their recommendations.

7. 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 support requiring combined reporting and tying that revenue directly into raising teachers' salaries. I am committed to going over the Maryland tax code and ensuring that everyone is paying their fair share. My priorities are to first decide the programs that Marylanders need to achieve equality of opportunity when it comes to economic opportunities, healthcare, education, and the criminal justice system. As we determine the associated costs we will have to be strategic about where we find the funding for these programs. The best way to do this in my opinion is to look at the tax code holistically and develop a strategy for amending it, rather than supporting different measures in an ad-hoc manner. I am certain that taxes on the wealthiest of Marylanders will be a part of that discussion but I can't determine now the exact basis point rate for particular taxes. I can promise that all of the programs necessary for Marylanders to achieve equality of opportunity I am committed to supporting.

8. How will you support, interpret, articulate, and address the Black Lives Matter movement to the larger, majority white Maryland community and law enforcement?

Yes

No

Comments:

I've been a civil rights leader my whole life and it has been a lifetime of bringing together diverse coalitions across the lines that are supposed to divide us like race, class, religion and so on. Talking to Marylanders from the place that they are coming from, whether they are a white police officer dealing with violent crime in Baltimore City or a black working mother from Montgomery County, you have to first recognize and acknowledge their struggle and it is only from that place that understanding and change can happen.

This isn't theoretical. In 2013, I was named Marylander of the Year for my efforts to pass marriage equality, the DREAM Act, ending the death penalty, and expand voting rights. The constituencies that are primarily concerned with these issues are very different but by pulling them together into one grand coalition we were able to get all four of these major progressive victories passed in a single year.

9. Do you support ending the money based bail system in Maryland?

Yes No

Comments:

Whether or not we keep someone in jail should be purely a matter of public safety, not a question of their ability to afford to buy their way out of jail.

10. Will you work to pass the Trust Act?

Yes No

Comments:

Yes. I support the Trust Act, both on grounds of human rights and human dignity and because it enhances public safety. Police jeopardize their ability to keep the public safe when they acts as immigration officers because it creates an environment of fear between immigrants and the police. When that happens, immigrants stop reporting crimes and are then targeted by criminal networks who know they will not turn to the police for protection. Ultimately both of those make us all less safe. This is profoundly dangerous and for all of these reasons I support the Trust Act.

11. How will you address the needs and uphold the rights of persons who have disabilities? Please be specific.

Yes No

Comments:

First and foremost, we need to expand disability rights in our schools. As we move away from a segregated model of learning we need to bring in experts and staff to support our teachers as we integrate our classrooms as much as possible to ensure that every child has educational opportunity. Secondly, we need to focus on our law enforcement system where officers have often not been prepared with the proper training on how to treat people with disabilities. On that front, I intend to meet with stakeholders and increase funding for disability training amongst our law enforcement officers so that they are adequately equipped to respond to situations involving people with disabilities. Thirdly, we must provide quality, affordable health insurance to everyone which I will do as governor by passing a state-based Medicare-for-All bill.

12. We believe that the financial security of women is integral to the health of our economy. In the 2017 legislative session, multiple bills that focused on ensuring workplace equality for women failed to make it out of their committees because some members of the General Assembly felt they would place too much of a burden on the business community. 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 Governor to bring women to parity with their male colleagues?

Yes **No**

Comments:

Women's rights cannot be treated as burdens, they must be treated as absolute. Women deserve equal pay in the workplace and as governor, I will support pass legislation that ensures this. Women also disproportionately take on childcare responsibilities so I will fight for affordable childcare and universal Pre-K as well. Moreover, this climate has brought to the forefront issues of sexual harassment and assault in the workplace and every level of government. As governor, I will work to make sure that women who work in Annapolis and interact with state government have multiple avenues to report sexual misconduct to trained and compassionate professionals.

13. 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:

I am a proponent of Medicare-for-All at the federal level, first and foremost. But we have a federal government that is wholly uninterested in promoting the rights of everyday people. As such, I will be releasing my comprehensive plan on how to enact a state-based Medicare-for-All healthcare system here in Maryland. We will build on the success of our all-payer model and create a system that provides quality, affordable healthcare for all.

14. What is your plan to ensure that Marylanders don't lose health coverage in the event the federal government repeals the Affordable Care Act or otherwise reduces coverage?

Yes **No**

Comments:

Yes, as I said above, I will be enacting a state-based Medicare-for-All system to ensure that no matter what happens in Washington, Marylanders have quality, affordable healthcare.

15. 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:

I am and have always been a fierce defender of a woman's right to choose and believe that every woman should have the right to make decisions about her health herself, in consultation with her doctor and family. Government needs to stay out of the way, and I have no plans to change existing law in Maryland in this area.

16. Will you support immediate and full restoration of state support for the Baltimore region Red Line rail transit project that was supported in the past by Governors Glendening, Ehrlich, and O'Malley but canceled by Gov. Hogan?

Yes No

Comments:

Governor Hogan has attacked Baltimore City in every conceivable way. His decision to kill the Red Line which was supported by both Republican and Democratic governors in years past, betrayed his indifference to our state's largest city. When I'm governor we will invest in rail transport in Baltimore City, building on the Red Line plan and making sure that Marylanders can reach jobs and opportunities so that we all prosper.

17. How will you resolve the State Center redevelopment controversy and move forward with this project, which is so vital to Baltimore City?

Yes No

Comments:

The State Center project should be a critical investment in Baltimore, providing jobs and infrastructure near neighborhoods that badly need them. Yet Larry Hogan -- like so many other priorities for Baltimore -- has killed it with no real plan in place to move forward in developing that site. As governor, developing State Center in a manner that creates jobs and improves nearby neighborhoods will be a priority for me, and I will work to bring all sides together to move forward on a resolution and stop engaging in the delay and obstruction tactics of Gov. Hogan.

18. Do you support Metro-dedicated funding and would you support the creation of tax assessment districts near Metro stations to secure dedicated funding for the Metro system before instituting a sales tax?

Yes No

Comments:

We need a consistent source of revenue for the Metro. Marylanders in the DC region depend on the metro for access to their jobs and it makes our state less prosperous if we make it more difficult for people to access employment while living in our state. The constant budget fights over this issue are unsustainable so we must ensure Metro has the resources it needs to work. I'll study the best ways to do this as governor, and won't treat this as a political football like Gov. Hogan has.

19. Do you support the proposed MAGLEV train project, currently slated to run without stops from DC to Baltimore through Prince George's County and potentially displacing thousands of residents?

Yes No

Comments:

We should be prioritizing realistic and effective transportation projects like rail in Baltimore, the Purple Line in the Washington region, Marc and Amtrak service, and expanding strong bus networks. If MAGLEV can play a realistic role in improving transportation networks without destroying communities I will be open to the idea, but I'm not convinced that this can be done in a realistic and fiscally sustainable manner and it should not be prioritized over more effective options that can help Maryland now.

20. Over the past several decades, the Chesapeake Bay has attracted more development than the existing infrastructure can support. What is your plan to ensure that development is beneficial to both existing and new residents as well as the environment?

Yes No

Comments:

As a lifelong environmentalist, I am committed to the health of our state's environment and in particular that of the Chesapeake Bay. Any development that will impede the development of the Bay must go through rigorous environmental impact analysis and I will ensure that economic realities are balanced with my commitment to maintain the health of the Bay.

21. In general, do you support or oppose charter schools? If you support them, how do you feel about the current charter school law in MD? What specifically about the law do you agree with and disagree with and how would you change the law as a whole? If you oppose charter schools, would you work to change the existing law?

Yes No

Comments:

I believe charter schools have a role as laboratories for innovation in education, yet they still must be held to proper standards and guidelines. While charter schools have a role to play in Maryland, my administration's focus will always be on ensuring every public school in Maryland is a high-performance school as that is the best way to provide high-quality education to every Maryland student. In most instances this will be addressed by bolstering traditional public schools, by helping more of them adopt the community schools model. In some instances this will be addressed by embracing high quality charter schools.

22. 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. In particular, if you support vouchers, explain how you would fund them and if you would place constraints on them.

Yes

No

Comments:

I oppose voucher programs. We should be investing public dollars available for education into making sure our public school system is healthy and strong so that anyone who needs a free education can get it. When I'm governor, I will phase out the voucher programs allowing those currently benefiting to finish out their education.

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

Yes

No

Comments:

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

- Sign legislation?

YES or

NO

- Work with our legislative coordinator to help pass a bill?

YES or

- Testify at a hearing in support of legislation?

NO

- Speak at public events in support of legislation?

YES or

NO

- Write a letter in support of legislation?

YES or

- Write an op-ed in support of legislation?

NO

YES or

NO

YES or

NO

25. 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

