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2018 Questionnaire for County Council Montgomery County

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 19, 2018**. Your responses will be available to the public at www.ProgressiveMaryland.org

Candidate Information

Candidate Last Name: **Meitiv**

Candidate First Name: **Danielle**

Office Seeking: **County Council At-Large**

District: **5**

Party: **Democratic**

Campaign Contact Information

Committee Name: **Meitiv for Montgomery**

Street Address: **7911 Woodbury Drive**

City: **Silver Spring**

Zip Code: **20910**

Business Phone: **240-621-0941**

Fax: **N/A**

Campaign Website: **<https://www.mektiv2018.com/>**

Candidate Contact Information

Cell Phone: **202-556-1166**

Email Address: **metivformoco@gmail.com**

Treasurer Contact Information

Treasurer Name: **Alexander Meitiv**

Street Address: **7911 Woodbury Drive**

City: **Silver Spring**

Zip Code: **20910**

Phone: **240-621-0941**

Email: **connect@meitiv2018.com**

Candidate History

Previous Elected Offices: I currently serve as a D20 representative (appointed) to the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee.

Which Years Did You Serve: I currently serve as a D20 representative (appointed) to the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee.

Have you ever received an endorsement from Progressive Maryland?

N/A

If Yes, when: N/A

Have you ever assisted Progressive Maryland in achieving its goals?

YES or NO

Describe: I have attended a number of rallies in favor of the minimum wage increase, I spoke with members of the Council on this issue and testified at hearings before the final vote on the question.

Major Endorsements (Elected Officials/Organizations/Opinion Leaders): Dr. Michael Mann; Metro DC Democratic Socialists of America;

Issue Questions

1. As the Kirwan Commission makes its recommendation on school funding, how will you support additional school funding to address the unmet needs in the county?

Comments:

I think it's important first to identify what new objectives we should be pursuing in this County. I am making it a priority to work at breaking through the education redlining to bring parity in educational opportunities throughout the county. Providing Universal Pre-K is a centerpiece of my policy agenda, something I speak about at every opportunity. I believe that this is one of the most powerful ways to at least begin to address the much-discussed achievement gap. I also want to see STEM programs offered at more than just one magnet school, and would encourage the School Board to look at Edison High School as a model for providing vocational training, rather than singular accomplishment. I also think this discussion must be broadened to include the next steps for our residents and our students as they transition into adulthood. Their education shouldn't stop with high school. As a state, or as a county, we should also be providing free community college and vocational education for adults.

If the state will not fund this, the County government must look at some hard choices to facilitate this important goal. But the focus should be on providing equity of opportunity. The money that is being invested in Bethesda-area schools has been helpful in dealing with the demands of increasing enrollment there, It's time to plan for similar investments in less well-supported schools.

2. Overcrowding in public schools in Montgomery County continues to be an issue. What are your plans to address that issue, especially considering increasing budgetary shortfalls?

Comments:

As I discussed above, there has been an effort to build out some schools on the west side of the county. There are plans for a new high school in North Bethesda, using an existing facility, which is both needed and fiscally prudent. There is also a proposal for expanding a number of schools in the Silver Spring area, which is also much needed. This is an opportunity to improve those schools, and perhaps alleviate the political pressures driving the investment in and around Bethesda. Construction from the Purple Line poses a challenge for a couple of schools, but it offers a tremendous opportunity to realize plans for expansion and for new school development which can be a springboard for the progress we've all struggled mightily to ignite in the East county schools. Funding is always a challenge, but it's also a choice. We need to stop creating wasteful tax breaks for big corporations that do not need them. If we invest that money in the County instead, we will be a more attractive place for businesses of every description.

3. What is your plan to close the performance gap in Montgomery County schools?

Comments:

Because our education begins even before we start in school, it is so important that we include all of our children in pre-K education programs. That is why I am always talking about the need to provide universal pre-K. If we miss this key step, we will never close the performance gap. That should be our top priority in reforming our educational system.

As a professional oceanographer, I am a big believer in science education. I see it as a vehicle to empower often marginalized communities. While it is harder for schools to deliver a quality education in STEM fields, it is essential to prepare our students for life in a society that will be driven literally and figuratively by new technologies. Moreover, I believe it is a way to excite interest in students who don't respond to the typical English and History curriculum that often seems irrelevant to their lives. I will push for the school board to prioritize STEM education to a far greater degree and to support recruitment of qualified STEM educators and make sure equal STEM opportunities are available at all schools throughout the county. For example, I have spoken with a parent who was outraged because there was no AP Science class available at Northwood High School for his child, but there were three sections of that course offered at Bethesda/Chevy Chase High School. We have to make sure that those opportunities are there regardless of where our children live.

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

Support

Oppose

Comments:

I am absolutely opposed to using our tax revenue to support private charters, which I believe are being promoted to disempower the labor movement, break down the separation of church and state, and undermine support for public education and support for government and progressive taxation. Pulling money out of public schools simply guts our ability to provide a quality education to the children there. In coming years, this could be one of the most defining fights. As to whether a public charter might be a better vehicle to deliver quality education to meet the needs of some student in some settings, I would be somewhat more open to approve proposals if the elected board makes the case for one in an underserved area. I am adamantly opposed to any public charters that would not be fully supported with unionized staffing.

5. 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:

I oppose this because it is directly taking money out of the public schools. Public money should be directed to support our public school system, not private schools. There may be situations where it is appropriate to provide public funds that will support kids who are in private school. For example, offering public transportation that helps keep cars off the road, or provides supporting services, in particular health and safety-related programs like flu clinics and nursing support. I make an exception in these limited cases, because they're providing a benefit to the public at large, and shouldn't be denied to children attending private schools.

6. Will you support making community college free for all county residents?

Yes

~~No~~

Comments:

I think this is a really important initiative that the Council should pursue. It's not clear if we can meet other priorities and find new money in the Council budget to support this, but I would look for opportunities to do this. We should also press our state delegation to direct money to support community college tuition across the state.

7. Will you commit to vote for full funding of Montgomery County's optional public campaign financing system?

Yes

~~No~~

Comments:

Without question, I am committed to full funding. I am participating in that system now, and I am a huge believer. It is empowering for a new class of candidates, and it is an important mechanism to get a Council with greater integrity that is responsive to the concerns of the majority of residents instead of the wealthiest donors. As I go around the County, I find that voters are very excited about the program and are fully supportive.

8. Are you using Montgomery County's new public financing option? Have you qualified? If not, how close are you and when do you expect to qualify? If you are not using the public option, why not and what are your funding sources?

Yes

~~No~~

Comments:

I will be filing the necessary documentation to qualify for public financing when the next report is filed on February 8.

9. In August, the Attorney General's office notified Delegate Marc Korman that counties can legally implement a public-financing option for candidates to statewide elected office. Do you support a statewide public financing program?

Yes

~~No~~

Comments:

As a publicly financed candidate, I am all in on public matched financing for campaigns at all levels of government. Delegate Korman has introduced legislation for funding state Assembly races at the state level. I am planning to testify in favor of that, but I would support an effort by Montgomery County to move forward on funding candidates for the County's Annapolis delegation.

10. What would you do to create more affordable housing options for Montgomery County residents?

Comments:

Expanding affordable housing is surely one of the most critical needs in Montgomery County, and should be at the top of each legislator's priority list. We cannot build our way out of this problem, relying on 10% or even 15% of new developments to be MPDUs. We need to preserve the affordable housing that we have through rent stabilization and look into building more County-owned affordable developments.

11. What will you do to relieve road congestion and improve transit options?

Comments: I would support the development of a robust public transit system, which includes MARC, Metro and bus rapid transit and encourage additional transit-oriented development throughout the county and connecting Montgomery County to our neighbors in Frederick County, Howard County, Baltimore, and the District of Columbia. Bus Rapid Transit would have an immediate impact getting cars off the road and reducing congestion on our main roads. BRT is the only economically feasible approach to have a tangible impact quickly. As WMATA begins to study yet another expansion in Virginia, with a new tunnel into Georgetown, Maryland should be insisting on comparable investment here. A line that extends the Purple Line into Virginia would be game-changing and eliminate the need to expand our clogged highways. Also I would demand good bikeway access to all public transit hubs and would support expansion of docked bicycle systems, bike racks and lockers for commuters. On the state level, we should be demanding that MARC service be expanded, with two-way all day service that would bring economic growth around stations and create new avenues for commuters.

12. How will you ensure that future housing and transportation projects ensure that poor or minority neighborhoods will not be forced to bear the burden of making way for new development?

Comments:

I will be a strong advocate for transit-oriented development, exploring ways to use the tax codes and other avenues to encourage construction and expansion of affordable housing, retail, and commercial buildings near existing transit. This includes extending transit to the areas where low and moderate income housing already exists, such as upcounty and in the east county. But it is imperative to have measures protecting vulnerable groups from gentrification. It is terribly ironic that development near transit tends to be very expensive due to its desirability, while lower and moderate income people who are most transit-dependent. All development efforts should be monitored and reported to allow for an accurate, comprehensive, and ongoing assessment of progress towards our goals of equity across the board. Walkable communities shouldn't be just for the wealthy. I advocate dramatically increasing affordable units, support rent stabilization and would ensure all environmental pollution standards are enforced.

13. How will you help Montgomery County become cleaner and increasingly carbon-free?

Comments: I would advocate for a comprehensive approach to County climate policy, one that addresses transportation, construction practices and retrofitting of existing building stock, repurposing and reducing the waste stream, and cleaner energy. I would ensure the implementation of the recently passed emergency climate mobilization resolution which commits the county to “transform the climate by reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2027 and reaching 100% elimination by 2035, and initiate large-scale efforts to remove excess carbon from the atmosphere.” I would push for rapid and comprehensive implementation of a zero waste program and to close the Dickerson incinerator. I would support the development of a robust public transit system, which includes MARC, Metro and bus rapid transit and encourage additional transit-oriented development. The County government should implement the green building practices embodied in the International Green Construction Code for county buildings and schools, as well as mandating and facilitating as much as possible electric car charging stations. The County should be more committed to promoting the PACE renewable financing program and Solar Co-ops and to creating greater awareness of these promising initiatives.

14. What would you do to enhance economic stability and wealth for Montgomery County residents?

Comments:

I would focus on creating good jobs for lower and middle income residents and fostering an environment for local businesses to thrive, creating wealth for working families. I would support unionization at all levels, favoring unions in public contracts. I do not believe bribing large corps to come in is in the interest of the workers of the county.

15. Will you work to create a higher density of union jobs in Montgomery County? If so, how would you accomplish this?

Yes ~~No~~

Comments:

16. What are your plans for implementing police reform and accountability?

Comments:

Anyone familiar with my brush with law enforcement will know that I am conscious of the need for protocols and training to help our police officers and other county officials to serve and protect, rather than confront and arrest. I helped force an important policy change that empowers officers to inquire and resolve, rather than escalate benign situations. I will bring that focus to a wider array of practices and strive to make that brand of community policing the ethic by which our officers interact with our communities.

17. How do you plan to ensure the implementation of Civilian Review Boards for police misconduct?

Comments:

I think it is important to take these decisions out of internal processes that leave our citizenry questioning whether justice applies to law enforcement. Civilian review boards are crucial to having an honest assessment when questions are raised about one of our officers and fitness to do the job properly.

18. What are your plans, if any, to end cannabis prohibition? What are your plans to change cannabis policy in Montgomery County?

Comments:

While this is a question of state and federal policy, I am fully supportive of efforts to decriminalize, legalize and regulate the sale of medical and recreational cannabis.

19. The County Executive has announced a budget shortfall of about \$120 million and has asked departments to cut 2% of their budgets in response. What cuts would you make to the budget? How would you change the county's budget process to make it more progressive?

Comments:

An across the board cut makes no sense at all. It is an abdication of responsibility to make tough decisions and to identify the real priorities for funding in the county. While there are many things that we can fund to improve quality of life, including aesthetics such as tree trimming, there are essential services that many residents cannot survive without. I will labor to distinguish between the two -- to preserve the essential funding even if it means making larger cuts to less essential services which may displease some less needy residents.

20. How do you intend to protect and support the undocumented community beyond what is currently being done? What would you do if the administration refuses to renew DACA and TPS?

Comments:

Although the TRUST Act is unlikely to pass at the state level, if there are holes in our system that would put our residents in jeopardy with immigration enforcement officers, I would work with activist groups to identify and close these holes.

21. What is your plan to implement greater protections for women and children?

Comments:

Women and children are the most likely to be impoverished and homeless. Therefore, programs to lift people out of poverty and to provide affordable housing will benefit women and children the most. I will work to preserve funding for these effort sin our budget currently, ad look for ways to dedicate more funds to these efforts. One of the reasons I fought so hard to change policy at Child Protective Services was because I know that minority populations, and particularly single-parent households are most at risk of being disrupted by unresponsive administrative agencies. I will keep an open door for constituents that need advocates to ensure that our County agencies are supporting their families.

22. Which progressive groups or organizations are you a part of, have worked with, or supported?

Comments:

Progressive Maryland, Progressive Neighbors, Our Revolution, Democratic Socialists of America, Montgomery Green Democrats, Climate Mobilization (staff scientist), 350 MoCo, Chesapeake Climate Action Network, Citizens Climate Lobby, Don't Frack Maryland, Jews United for Justice (founding member), J Street, Interfaith Power & Light (in their Speakers Bureau).

23. Will you support ending the money-based bail system in Maryland?

Yes

~~No~~

Comments:

I do support ending a system that imprisons people simply because they lack sufficient financial means to satisfy arbitrary bail assignments. This system has been supported for years not because it makes sense but because it enjoys the support of one of the most exploitative industries in our state.

24. 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
- Speak at public events in support of legislation? YES or NO
- Write an op-ed in support of legislation? 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

