**2018 Questionnaire for State’s Attorney**

**Prince George’s 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](http://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, end mass incarceration 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 Prince George’s County Mass Liberation Organizer Seanniece Bamiro at Seanniece@progressivemaryland.org **no later than 5 P.M. on Monday, April 16, 2018.** Your responses will be available to the public at [www.ProgressiveMaryland.org](http://www.progressivemaryland.org/)

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| **Candidate Information** |
| Candidate Last Name: Ramirez |   |
| Candidate First Name: Victor |   |
| Party Affiliation: Democrat |   |
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| **Campaign Contact Information** |
| Committee Name: Friend of Victor Ramirez |   |
| Street Address: P.O. Box 166  |   |
| City: Mt. Rainier |   |
| Zip Code: 20712 |   |
|  |   |
| Business Phone: 202-469-9969 |   |
| Fax:  |   |
| Campaign Website: www.victorramirez.com |   |
|  |
| **Candidate Contact Information** |
| Cell Phone: 301-379-8976Email Address: victor@victorramirez.com  |   |
| **Treasurer Contact Information** |
| Treasurer Name: Margaret Joyner |   |
| Street Address: 4025 Ingraham StreetCity: HyattsvilleZip Code: 20781 Phone: 301-741-2246 |   |
| **Candidate History** |
| Previous Elected Offices:House of Delegates Maryland Senate  |
| Which Years Did You Serve:Member of House of Delegates, representing District 47, Prince George's County, January 8, 2003 to January 12, 2011.Member of Senate since January 12, 2011. |
| Have you ever received an endorsement from Progressive Maryland? | YES\_\_X\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_  |
| If Yes, when: ? 2014 District 47 Senate race     |
|   Have you ever assisted Progressive Maryland in achieving its goals?  |    YES\_X\_ NO\_\_  |
| Describe:As a member of the Senate Judicial Proceedings committee I was instrumental in the passage of the Justice Reinvestment Act. Currently we have dire problems with mass incarnation. Working with the committee I was able to point out low level drug offenses that should have lowered sentences and with the money saved from less incarceration, money could be invested into education. I have fought for numerous years to bring Environmental Justice to our State. I introduced the R.E.D.U.C.E. Act which aimed to hold high polluting businesses accountable to the pollution they were creating in their communities. One of my proudest legislative achievements came with the passage of legislation to enable police officers to wear body cameras. With the current relationsip between law enforcement and citizens, body cameras are needed to help ensure trust and accountability.     |
| Major Endorsements (Elected Officials/Organizations/Opinion Leaders): Li-UNA 32 BJ SEIUCASAFormer State’s Attorney Glenn Ivey   |
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**Issue Questions**

**Measure #1: End Wealth-Based Disparities**

1. Will you issue public statements in support of statewide legislation, local ordinances, and/or litigation to end money bail? Please explain your answer. Yes, I will set a policy within the State’s Attorney office to release accused defendants under their own recognizance and pre-trial release if there is not an issue of public safety or a flight risk.
2. Will you presume, and affirmatively recommend, release for all defendants unless there is a clearly articulated substantial risk of harm to the community or high likelihood of flight?

YES\_\_\_X\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

1. Will you publicly support the expansion of cash-free pretrial bonds?

YES\_\_\_X\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

1. How will you improve the diversion programs in Prince George’s County? Please explain your answer. I was proud to sponsor House Bill 1574 in 2017 that was titled The Prince George’s County Pretrial Release, Work Release, and Diversion Programs Task Force. There is a lot more that our county can be doing to expand these services to low level crimes. Just this past year we finally received a work release program in Prince George’s County. Expanding these programs would allow individuals a much needed second chance, save the county and state resources, and show the rest of the state that Prince George’s County is not interested in mass incarceration.
2. Will you eliminate all fees, court costs, and fines associated with pretrial diversion programs?

YES\_\_\_\_X\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

1. Will you publicly support legislation to outlaw drivers’ license suspensions for non-payment of fines or fees including child support?

YES\_X\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

1. Will you oppose incarceration based upon the failure to pay fines, fees, court costs, or restitution unless there is uncontroverted proof the individual is able but willfully refusing to pay?

YES\_\_\_X\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

**Measure #2: Re-Entry Services**

### How will you ensure a more coordinated re-entry system in Prince George’s County? Please explain your answer. I would order my office to evaluate resources that are currently being used for re-entry services and how we could expand them. I would also work with the Department of Corrections, Health Department, and local non-profits to prepare individuals for when they transition back to society. Programs such as work release are critical to utilize to ensure people make a successful and permanent transition.

### How will you ensure that formerly incarcerated people have the necessary supports to obtain basic necessities such as food, housing and employment? Please explain your answer. One of the areas I have advocated for years has been job and career skills learned while an individual is incarcerated. As a society we need to be sure that when release individuals they are ready to be successful. Expanding training for the trades and completion of GED courses for those who need it, are just a couple of examples of what we can do to help individuals land on the right foot post incarceration.

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# **Measure #3: Eliminate Excessive Punishments**

### Adopt an office-wide policy stating that your office will never seek a sentence of life without parole, or any practically equivalent sentence, for any person under the age of 18?

YES\_\_X\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

### Will you refrain from using direct file or transfer to adult court for any child unless required by law?

YES\_\_\_X\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

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### In the extremely rare circumstances when a juvenile is sent to adult court, will you consider their youthful status and unique circumstances as mitigating factors at each stage of the process, from charging decisions through final disposition?

YES\_\_X\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

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### Will you refuse to prosecute school suspension or expulsion cases where there is no use or threat of force resulting in serious physical harm?

YES\_\_X\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

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1. What alternative programming or practice would you explore to find alternatives for this population? I would create a truancy program similar to that which State’s Attorney John McCarthy established in Montgomery County. Of the 300 plus families that participated in the program over 245 families experienced drastic increases in attendance and performance in school.
2. What tips would you offer parents who may not know the signs of nefarious behavior or how to discipline? I would host community workshops to educate parents on signs to be look out for. We want to create relationships with families so that the warning signs are met with concern and the families can safely and effectively work through the issue(s).

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### Will you publicly oppose any proposed legislation that would create new mandatory minimum sentences or lengthen existing minimum sentences, and support legislation aiming to eliminate such sentences?

YES\_X\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

### Will you establish an office-wide presumption that the least severe applicable charges apply, and that the lowest sentencing outcome is the correct recommendation?

YES\_\_X\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_ (Crimes of Violence may not apply in all Cases)

### Will you establish an office policy against increasing or threatening to increase the number or severity of charges in order to secure more favorable plea dispositions or waivers of rights?

YES\_\_X\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

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1. Will you take a stand against the truth-in-sentencing bill and advocate for second chances even for those that commit serious crimes?

YES\_\_\_X\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_ (I don’t believe in Truth-in-sentencing in all cases)

1. In 2013, the Maryland State Legislature passed the Justice Reinvestment Act. However, Prince Georgians continue to be charged with broken-windows offenses such as riding motorized bicycles without a license. Will you commit to abiding by the Justice Reinvestment Act and not punishing residents for broken-windows offenses?

YES\_\_X\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

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### **Measure # 4: Be Transparent and Accountable to the Community**

### Will you establish a public platform to measure the overall effectiveness of the office—including race, gender, and LGBTQ demographics, the number of misdemeanor and felony cases filed each month, disposition statistics, pretrial incarceration rates and length of stay by offense category, and average bond for each class of offense—so that the community can determine the effectiveness of policies aimed at reform?

YES\_\_\_X\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

### Will you track racial information at all steps of the prosecution process, and publicly report any significant racial disparities arising at any stage of the process?

YES\_\_X\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

### Will you develop clear procedures and staff responsibilities whenever an officer-involved shooting occurs, including a robust investigatory protocol and an independent investigatory team that has no regular contact with the law enforcement agency in question?

### YES\_\_\_X\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

### Will you release dash-cam recordings and audio or video surveillance related to police-involved shootings within 30 days of any incident?

YES\_\_\_X\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

### Will you commit to a full investigation of any allegation involving police corruption, including presentation to the grand jury?

YES\_\_\_\_X\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

1. Will you work with your staff to train them on prosecutorial aggressiveness?

YES\_X\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

1. Will you implement mandatory trainings on prosecutorial misconduct?

YES\_\_\_X\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you commit to investigate all prosecutorial misconduct claims?

YES\_\_X\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you commit to implement a policy that requires the prosecutor to give the dollar amount it would cost to incarcerate each defendant?

YES\_\_\_X\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

1. Will you support the implementation of a court watch program?

YES\_\_\_X\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

### Will you provide defense counsel with a list of all officers under investigation?

###  YES\_\_X\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_(As long as it does not violate the Law Enforcement Officers Bill of Rights)

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###  **Measure #5: Promote Policies that Aid Undocumented Communities**

### Will you publicly support local ordinances and statewide legislation that affirmatively limits law enforcement’s cooperation with ICE, and oppose any effort to enlist local law enforcement as federal immigration agents?

YES\_X\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

### Will you expand diversion programs to include non-citizens?

### YES\_\_X\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

### Will you support post-conviction litigation from non-citizens who pled guilty without being advised of the potential immigration consequences of their plea?

### YES\_\_X\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

**Measure #6: Co-governing with Progressive Maryland**

If elected, will you:

1. Work with us to develop a mass liberation strategy in Prince George’s County?

YES\_\_X\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

1. Meet with Progressive Maryland Mass Liberation team monthly?

YES\_\_X\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_

### Will you co-host quarterly State’s Attorney town halls with Progressive Maryland and the community?

YES\_X\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_\_