

**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

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| **Candidate Information** | | |
| Candidate Last Name:  Stewart | |
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| Candidate First Name:  Vaughn | |
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| Office Seeking:  Delegate | |
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| District:  19 | |
| Party:  Democrat | |
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| **Campaign Contact Information** | | |
| Committee Name:  Friends of Vaughn Stewart | |
|  | |
| Street Address:  7714 Goodfellow Way | |
| City:  Derwood | |
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| Zip Code:  20855 | |
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| Business Phone:  (301) 804-8085 | |
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| Fax:  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
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| Campaign Website:  VaughnForMaryland.com | |
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| **Candidate Contact Information** | | |
| Cell Phone:  (301) 804-8085 | |
| Email Address:  vaughn@vaughnformaryland.com | |
|  | | |
| **Treasurer Contact Information** | | |
| Treasurer Name:  Alexandra Stewart | |
| Street Address:  7714 Goodfellow Way | |
| City:  Derwood | |
| Zip Code:  20855 | |
|  | |
| Phone:  (301) 693-3055 | |
|  | |
| **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: N/A | | |
| Have you ever assisted Progressive Maryland in achieving its goals? | | YES\_\_\_X\_\_ or NO\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Describe: I have attended rallies and County Council hearings on the Fight for $15. Additionally, as a board member of the Montgomery County Renters Alliance, I worked with Progressive Maryland to pass Bill 19-15, which expanded renter protections at the county level. | | |
| Major Endorsements (Elected Officials/Organizations/Opinion Leaders):  No organizational endorsements have been made public yet, though I have received word from a few groups that I will be receiving their support. I’ve received an endorsement from former Maryland Attorney General Steve Sachs—a progressive icon in our state—and [Hank Thomas](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCdQs9aUchc), the youngest of the original Freedom Riders. | | |

**Issue Questions**

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

Yes X No

Comments: The use of money bail is widespread, despite the fact that it does no better at getting people to court than other release options and is profoundly unfair to poor and working class people. Someone who poses no danger to society should not be imprisoned simply because they are poor. We must continue the fight toward moving Maryland away from reliance on this large corporate industry that profits off the poor.

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 X No

Comments: I support a $15 minimum wage on the state level that is implemented immediately, includes tipped workers, and is indexed to inflation. I was pleased that the Montgomery County Council finally passed a $15 minimum wage, but disappointed that increased the phase-in period after commissioning a junk science “study.” I will be a strong supporter of a statewide $15 minimum wage. The simple truth is that no one should be working full time yet living in poverty. The fight for $15 is perhaps the best example of the glaring gap between working families and our elected officials. Huge majorities of Marylanders support a higher minimum wage, yet we have recently seen two “progressive” leaders—the Montgomery County Executive and the Mayor of Baltimore—veto minimum wage legislation. A statewide $15 minimum wage, even if it is indexed to inflation and includes tipped workers, is not a panacea, and it will not eliminate poverty. But it is a good and obvious starting point for offering more dignity to working families.

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

Yes X No

Comments: Large checks from corporate donors represent one of the biggest threats to bold, progressive solutions. The grim reality is that elected officials in both parties are often more responsive to the concerns of big business than to the voters. Public financing of elections is the best way to limit the pernicious influence of big money and amplify the voices of everyday residents.

Montgomery County’s public financing system is already allowing candidates for County Executive and County Council to focus their fundraising efforts on meeting regular people instead of calling lobbyists, corporations, and the wealthiest few. I hope the success of our county’s sytem will finally push the state in the right direction. I will champion legislation to establish a generous public matching system for all state candidates. Though I would strongly prefer a state-wide solution, I am interested in Delegate Korman’s effort to allow counties to fund state candidates on a county-by-county basis.

In addition, I’m practicing what I preach by refusing campaign contributions from for-profit corporations, their industry groups, and their lobbyists. Once I’m a Delegate, I will use every tool at my disposal to fight the influence of the corporate plutocrats and return political power to the people.

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 X No

Comments: Strong fair scheduling legislation would allow working families to more predictably plan their lives. Allowing employers to change workers’ schedule at a moment’s notice is treating them like machines rather than like humans.

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 X No

Comments: I will be a champion for labor in the House of Delegates. The reality is that, for decades, Democrats have lacked the political courage and the bold ideas required to stand up for unions. As Delegate, I will fight for: (1) a public investment program that provides an immediate increase in jobs so that employers must compete for workers; (2) ending forced arbitration in employment contracts; (3) paid sick leave and paid family leave; (4) laws to make it easier for workers to sue over unfair treatment by their employers; (5) parity between so-called independent contractors and employees; and (6) regularly scheduled union elections. More ambitiously, we must give all workers a more permanent and institutionalized voice at work by creating a co-determination system. Such a system, successfully used in many European countries, would require that workers be consulted about how the work process is organized and how the business is run. Ultimately, the goal should be for all workers—rather than a small number of wealthy shareholders and corporate executives—to democratically run their workplaces.

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 X No

Comments: I was a strong supporter of the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act of 2016, which passed the Maryland General Assembly in 2016. Since women take most parental leave, private employers looking for full-time workers have a disincentive to hire young women who, if they become pregnant, will require a substitute worker. And women taking parental leave often face a “child penalty”—missing pay raises and advancement opportunities. The solution is to copy Norway’s successful model of shortening the total parental leave if the father does not take his share, often called a “father quota.” These quotas induce more men to take leave, leveling the playing field in the labor market and at home.

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 X No

Comments: I support expanding the law passed in the 2013 General Assembly—which required employers with 15 or more employees to provide reasonable accommodations to pregnant women—to all employers. My wife is currently pregnant with our first child, and I’ve seen firsthand how difficult many tasks are for her. I will champion further steps to ensure the workplace is a more secure and safe place for pregnant women.

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?

Yes No X

Comments: The right to choose abortion is a fundamental human right. Abortion access should be safe, legal, and available for women at any income level. I will fight any restriction on the ability of women to make their own decisions about their own lives.

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 No

Comments: Creating a single-payer system in Maryland will be my top priority. Health care is a human right. Maryland has the highest median income in the richest country in the history of the world, yet nearly 400,000 Marylanders lack health insurance, and millions more struggle with medical bills. As a two-time cancer survivor, I know firsthand that a devastating diagnosis and unexpected medical bills can strike a family at any time, and I will not rest until every Marylander has quality, affordable care. Thanks to our successful All-Payer system, Maryland is well positioned to become the first state to create a single-payer system and to serve as a model for the rest of the country. But it will take strong progressives in the Maryland General Assembly to stand up to corporate interests and get this legislation passed.

I’m open to several different options for financing, though I’m confident that the overall costs of health care as a percentage of GDP would be lower under a single-payer system. The most promising option is a combination of an employer-side payroll tax, the reinstitution of the Millionaire’s Tax, and increasing the estate tax beyond pre-2013 levels. There is no question that passing the legislation will be politically challenging. It will take a strong marketing campaign to persuade the public and relentless pressure from groups like Progressive Maryland on centrist legislators, but it is achievable. And it is absolutely essential to creating a more just and equitable state.

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 No

Comments: Yes, the cost of prescription drugs is the issue I have been emphasizing the most in my campaign. The skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs is making some medicines virtually inaccessible to many Marylanders. I’ve spoken with several District 19 residents forced to ration their medications in order to afford them.

The three largest PBMS control 80% of the market. The opacity of the drug-pricing system allows them to line their pockets without any accountability or transparency. I will absolutely support legislation to create more transparency for PBMS. Moreover, I am a huge proponent of the proposed Drug Rate Cost Review Commission, which will extend Maryland’s successful all-payer rate setting into the drug market. The Commission will protect consumers from the monopoly power that manufacturers abuse to produce excessive costs.

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

Support Oppose X

Comments: Charter schools are not a silver bullet that their often advocates claim, and research shows that many charters are very ineffective. If they are allowed to exist, we must ensure they remain tightly regulated and monitored. I oppose Governor Hogan’s proposals to create a parallel system for charter schools that involves less accountability. Those types of schemes have encouraged especially low-quality charters in other states; I will fight to maintain our state’s high standards.

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.

Support Oppose X

Comments: I categorically oppose any voucher program that would send public funds to nonpublic schools. The research is clear: Voucher programs have failed to achieve any of the goals that advocate claim will materialize. The academic achievement for low-income students does not improve and, in fact, often declines. In Maryland, nearly 80% of students participating in BOOST were already in private schools—BOOST is nothing more than a redistribution of funds from public schools to private schools.

Unfortunately, we have seen across the country a trend of corporate-backed groups attempting to privatize public education and starve our public schools of resources. I will fight to eliminate the BOOST voucher program, and will join the burgeoning progressive coalition in the House of Delegates fighting back against the DeVos agenda of privatization. One dollar spent on vouchers is a dollar too much.

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

Yes X No

Comments: I absolutely support free tuition at community colleges, four-year public universities, and vocational training programs. I would like to see Maryland expand on New York’s unambitious “free tuition” program, which features income caps, does not cover fees, and imposes meritocratic hurdles. Fully funded higher education is not a radical idea: The New York and California systems were free or very low cost for most of the 20th century, and most European universities remain free to all. Tuition-free higher education is an achievable goal and a democratic right, and I will fight for it as Delegate.

14. Will you support the Trust Act?

Yes X No

Comments: If the legislation fails to pass in the upcoming legislative session, I will be an enthusiastic cosponsor of the TRUST Act in 2019. I represent undocumented refugees as part of my legal practice, and have seen their struggles and fear firsthand. But any declarations of sanctuary are virtually meaningless if they are not also paired with concrete protections. At a bare minimum, “sanctuary” should mean not handing any residents over to ICE and providing basic social services and suffrage to immigrants. DC has also launched a legal defense fund for undocumented immigrants, a program Maryland should copy.

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 X No

Comments: Absolutely. To fund the many needs of our state, we will need to increase taxes on the wealthiest few. I support increasing: (1) the income tax on earnings over $500k; (2) the state’s corporate tax rate, along with requiring combined reporting; and (3) the estate and inheritance tax on millionaires. I also support levying a carbon tax and a tax on intangible property (stocks and bonds). Annapolis politicians—both Democrats and Republicans—have been more willing to bend over backwards for the largest corporations and the wealthiest donors than for working families. Since the recession, supposedly “progressive” leaders have claimed Maryland does not have enough revenue to fund public schools, infrastructure improvements, or public employee pensions, yet they cut taxes for (living and dead) millionaires and handed out tens of millions of dollars in corporate welfare to massive companies.

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 X No

Comments: I’ve made the health of the Bay a centerpiece of my campaign platform. I support the Maryland Healthy Soils Program, which would provide research, education, technical assistance, and—crucially—financial assistance to farmers to implement farm management practices that contribute to healthy soils.

I also support the resurrection of the Poultry Litter Management Act, which failed to pass the General Assembly in the 2016 session. It is obscene that massive corporations like Perdue rake in profits by forcing farmers, residents, and the Bay bear the burden of its pollution. I will be a cosponsor for a renewed push, and will work with stakeholders to find a path forward for the legislation. While the Manure Transport Program has kept a large amount of manure off the Eastern Shore, the financial burden should rightfully be on the industry that creates it.

I also oppose the expansion of large, industrial-sized chicken farms on the Eastern Shore. There’s no doubt about it: The number one source of water pollution in Maryland is the big chicken companies. And the number of these poultry houses is expanding on the Eastern Shore and across the Delmarva Peninsula. These farms not only produce manure that harms the Bay; they also produce toxic gases, including ammonia, that threaten human health. Some of these farms also engage in abhorrent labor practices.

Regarding the Potomac, I adamantly oppose the proposed natural gas pipeline that would run under it. The pipeline offers no benefit to Maryland whatsoever, and, as a fracked gas pipeline, poses a serious threat to our state’s drinking water. More fundamentally, rubber-stamping the project will only deepen the nation’s dependence on fracking at a time when we should be moving aggressively toward green energy.

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

Comments: I’ve discussed a few ways already—passing the TRUST Act, shoring up the Chesapeake Bay, making abortion and birth control access easier and safer, adding additional revenue streams, and implementing a single-payer health care system.

In addition, there are more environmental measures Maryland can take to combat climate change in the face of the federal government’s retreat. For one, we should increase the Renewable Portfolio Standard to 50% by 2030 (and eventually to 100% as soon as possible) and remove waste incineration as a qualifying source. Climate change threatens our environment, public health, and economy. We have a tremendous opportunity to turn this threat into an opportunity by investing in clean, renewable energy. I will be at the frontlines of the fight to make Maryland the national leader in creating a clean energy economy.

Second, we can fight back against the Trump administration’s attacks on the electoral process by making Election Day a state holiday, expanding early voting, passing automatic voter registration, and extending public financing to the state level.

Third, Maryland should fight back against Trump’s proposed border wall by passing a measure to deny state contracts to firms that take part in building the wall. We could similarly requiring any public pension funds to divest from any companies that help build the wall.

Finally, Maryland should thumb its nose at Attorney General Sessions by legalizing marijuana, which would both combat the carceral state and raise revenue to fund other programs. A poll from 2016 showed that nearly two-thirds of Marylanders support legalizing marijuana, yet the General Assembly continues to lag behind public opinion. Importantly, we must ensure that the groups oppressed by the War on Drugs are not locked out of the benefits of legalization. I’ll champion a public banking system and legislation to support worked-owned cannabis businesses that hire formerly incarcerated people.

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

Yes X No

Comments: I’m running for Delegate to address the ever-widening gap between citizens’ needs and officeholders’ priorities. I experienced this gulf firsthand last summer, when I underwent four rounds of chemotherapy for non-Hodgkin lymphoma. During my third treatment, I received the chemo cocktail in my right arm while holding my smart phone in my left hand, reading about what monstrosity the Republicans in DC had planned for those of us with preexisting conditions. Meanwhile, I listened to a couple next to me as they expressed worries that they would not be able to afford their husband’s next treatment.

This disconnect between elected officials and working families is not specific to the Republican Party, and it is certainly not relegated to Washington, D.C. Our state’s Democratic Party has held supermajorities in Annapolis for decades, yet our problems mount. Marylanders spend hours sitting in traffic so they can get to a job where they are working hard for fewer wages and worse benefits. They can only pray that they don’t get sick or laid off. Their children sit in overcrowded classrooms before facing an anemic job market, weighed down with mountains of student debt. And their parents—our senior citizens—are increasingly choosing between medicine and food. Faced with wage stagnation and the squeezing of working families, Annapolis politicians have chosen their side in the class war: In the last few years, Democrats and Republicans in the General Assembly have cut taxes for both living millionaires (by eliminating the Millionaire’s Tax) and dead millionaires (by cutting the estate tax for the wealthiest few). Our elected officials have also handed over hundreds of millions of dollars in corporate welfare to some of their biggest donors.

I’m running to be a vocal champion for Maryland’s working families, and to bridge this divide between residents and their representatives. To do that, the progressives in the General Assembly must confront the neoliberalism of the Assembly’s leadership by forming an active and vocal progressive caucus.

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| 19. For the measures above that you have agreed to support would you be willing to: | |
|  | |
| * 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\_\_\_X\_\_ or NO\_\_\_\_\_  YES\_\_\_X\_\_ or NO\_\_\_\_\_  YES\_\_\_X\_\_ or NO\_\_\_\_\_  YES\_\_\_X\_\_ or NO\_\_\_\_\_  YES\_\_\_X\_\_ or NO\_\_\_\_\_  YES\_\_\_X\_\_ or NO\_\_\_\_\_ |
| 20. Would you be willing to engage with Progressive Maryland members and their communities by: | |
|  |  |
| * 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\_\_\_X\_\_ or NO\_\_\_\_\_  YES\_\_\_X\_\_ or NO\_\_\_\_\_  YES\_\_\_X\_\_ or NO\_\_\_\_\_ |
|  | |