

## Frederick Progressives

FrederickProgressives@Riseup.Net  
P.O. Box 492  
Buckeystown MD, 21717



March 11, 2018

# 2018 Questionnaire for Democratic Central Committee

Dear Christopher Izzo, Candidate for Democratic Central Committee:

Frederick Progressives, as a chapter of 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 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 Frederick Progressives & Progressive Maryland's endorsement, please return the completed questionnaire by email to [FrederickProgressives@riseup.net](mailto:FrederickProgressives@riseup.net) no later than 5 P.M. on Friday, March 23, 2018. Your responses will be available to the public at [www.FrederickProgressives.com](http://www.FrederickProgressives.com)

Sincerely,

Josh Cassell  
Secretary - Frederick Progressives  
(301) 928-0697

I'm a retired city planner who worked for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) and as a private consultant resulting in 30 years of planning experience. As a result of the 2016 election, I have decided to come out of retirement and enter into the realm of politics. I attended a meeting for Our Revolution in February of 2017, and subsequently decided to serve on the Steering Committee for Our Revolution Western Maryland. The issues that are important to me are education, social security, medical insurance, and climate change.

During my retirement, I was fortunate to continue working by teaching at the local community college. Working with students gave me a greater understanding of the difficulties facing both young students as well as adult students in achieving their dreams. Getting an education is the best and most successful way to get out of poverty, and that is why I support efforts to reduce the cost of higher education.

I am on the Board of Directors of the M-NCPPC Retirees Association so I am familiar with the concerns of an aging population, in particular, social security and health care. Social security is a vital part of this group's income security. The social security system needs to be put back into the black. Affordable health care for all is of particular concern to this demographic as they continue to age. I understand this first-hand. I suffered a heart attack 18 years ago but, fortunately, I had excellent health benefits at that time. Sadly, this is not the case for everyone. Climate change is real, and, in particular, sea-level rise will have a significant impact on the state of Maryland. In addition, Frederick County is growing and will continue to grow. As a city planner with 30 years of experience, I understand the issues associated with both climate change and growth.

Lastly, I want to address the political discourse in the country, and the local level is where to start.

Master of City and Regional Planning, Catholic University of America,  
Washington, DC, December 1979

Thesis: The Role of the Federal, State and Local Government in  
Coastal Zone Management in Maryland

B.A. Political Science, University of Cincinnati, OH, May 1977

2. What, in your opinion, differentiates traditional/establishment/centrist parties and progressives? Do you consider yourself to be a progressive, and why?

Progressive generally believe in or support the following issues or causes:

Community colleges free tuition

Get big money out of politics

\$ 15/ hr. Minimum Wage

Climate Change is Reality

Affordable Housing Policies

Women's Rights

AIDS and HIV Preventive Measures and Treatment

LGBT Equality

Caring for Our Veterans

Medicare for All

Affordable Prescription Drug Prices

Disability Rights

Other groups or political philosophies don't necessarily support these issues. A progressive philosophy is open, inclusive, and embraces our differences. We accept and respect people as they are and invite them to be part of the community.

3. What can the Central Committee do to bridge the gap between the different groups of voters, such as Progressives, Libertarians, and Democratic Socialists and how, as a Committee member would you facilitate that bridge building?

As a member of the Steering Committee of Our Revolution, I have insisted we invite others to our events and open meetings in an effort to promote inclusiveness and strength in unity. I strongly believe we have to act together to get progressive democrats elected to offices. Our Revolution is initiating the discussion of co-sponsoring events at our March 25<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee meeting as a way to begin to bridge the gap between groups. As an administrator of our Facebook and webpage, I have been open to other group postings and expressions of opinion.

4. How would you promote diversity within the Party?

While I was working in Prince George's County for the M-NCPPC, we reached out to the religious community on many occasions as a way to engage the community in community planning activities. I would do that again in Frederick County reaching out to minority churches and communities to educate their members on basic voting rights and procedures.

5. Would you support expanding the Primary to include independent voters and how would you advocate for that change in Maryland?

I would not support an open primary system. I do support same day voting registration and changes to state legislation to allow party affiliation change easier to achieve.

6. As a Central Committee member how do you plan to organize issue campaigns to engage voters on important progressive issues? What are some of those issues for you?

I think climate change is an important long term issue that will affect Maryland in a variety of ways. I would sponsor workshops and teach-ins to engage the public on this topic. I believe that educating people with the facts is the best and most effective way to achieve positive results.

Retired people are constantly being inundated with all kinds of medical insurance offers, on line scams and sales phone calls. The DCC can sponsor events aimed at seniors that give them the knowledge to navigate this on-line cell phone society.

7. How will you reach out to diverse communities and increase their participation in the Party?  
What means will you employ to improve voter turn out?

There is a significant Spanish-speaking community in Frederick. The DCC needs to contact the groups that support this community and begin working with them to educate people and help people vote. DCC materials need to be available in Spanish. In addition there are other minority immigrant populations that we need to reach out to.

8. What do you see as your most critical function as a Central Committee Member?

A DCC member should be a communicator. The job of the DCC is to communicate the ideas, principals and ideals of the Democratic Party. A member should be willing to use all the communication tools available to promote the progressive ideals of the Democratic Party.

9. If Frederick Progressives /Progressive Maryland does not to endorse you for this race, would that affect your willingness to work with the group in the future on important issues?

. I am willing to work with any group on important issues affecting the Democratic Party.

13. Would you be willing to support Frederick Progressives priorities by:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ● cosponsoring legislation?                            |  |
| ● testify in support of legislation?                   |  |
| ● write an op ed?                                      |  |
| ● speaking at progressive events?                      |  |
| ● attending meetings?                                  |  |
| ● meet with our leadership group?                      |  |
| ● give updates on shared goals?                        |  |
| ● writing letters to endorse a labor organizing drive? |  |

Other: