

## Frederick Progressives

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March 11, 2018

# 2018 Questionnaire for Democratic Central Committee

Dear Renee Knapp, 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

1. What professional experience, personal experience, education and or training do you possess that makes you a qualified candidate for a member of the Central Committee?

I am a lifelong resident of Frederick County, so I know the area very well. I have seen many positive changes to the area over the years, and some not so positive. I have a B.A. degree in Criminal Justice from Mount Saint Mary's University in Emmitsburg, MD. As a result of my educational experiences there, an area of interest to me personally is criminal justice reform.

I am currently the Director of Communications of the Women's Democratic League of Frederick County, as well as a Board member. I have held these positions for approximately two years. Being the Communications Director has afforded me the opportunity to form relationships with other Democratic organizations, clubs, and people. I enjoy helping and seeing Democrats coming together and working to advance Democratic values. I believe these experiences and relationships will offer a valuable contribution to the Central Committee.

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

In my experience, progressives work to change and encourage establishment leadership to become more directly responsive to the voters.

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?

I believe we find crucial common ground with the fundamental belief that the economy in America needs to, like our government, be the work of the people, by the people, and for the people. I have not encountered any person who identifies as a follower of any of the schools of thought listed above who does not believe that we should all value the work and dignity of working people more than the bottom line. Partnership behind this unifying idea should help Democratic candidates who want to improve the lives of local working people.

4. How would you promote diversity within the Party?

Outreach events in diverse communities are needed to advance and educate voters and potential voters about progressive/Democratic values.

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

While I realize many independent voters feel the current system is insufficient, I do not support any changes to the Primary at this time.

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 would support all Democratic candidates and the highlight their progressive events. I don't think it is appropriate for a Central Committee Member to use the office to advocate for a specific progressive cause.

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

To improve voter turnout, I support reaching out to younger voters especially. To improve turnout overall, I am in favor of transportation initiatives such as working with ride share companies or volunteers to get voters to polling locations. Many voters do not know their polling location. This information needs to be distributed in multiple media forms and in multiple languages.

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

The most critical function of a Central Committee Member is to work to get Democrats elected to every possible local, state, and national elected office. While I certainly have candidates whom I personally support, I will, without reservation, support the candidates in the Democratic primary and general elections.

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

No. I will always look for ways for various groups dedicated to Democratic values to work together.

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?	yes
● give updates on shared goals?	yes
● writing letters to endorse a labor organizing drive?	

Other: