

Frederick Progressives

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March 11, 2018

2018 Questionnaire for Democratic Central Committee

Dear Lauren Beacham, 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

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 no later than 5 P.M. on Friday, March 23, 2018. Your responses will be available to the public at 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 have been a political activist in varying ways since the first Bush administration. Though my involvement waxed and waned during the Obama years, after I was a volunteer on his first campaign, my interest in liberal politics has not ceased. After Trump was elected, I sought out local activist groups to be involved with. I applied and was appointed to the Frederick County Democratic Central Committee in April 2017 after a competitive interview process, and have been serving ever since. During my time on the committee thus far, I've completed many tasks including organizing and running the Summer of Resistance and Renewal campaign in the summer of 2017 to listen to the concerns of Frederick County citizens and find out how the Democratic party has or has not been serving their needs and interests; assisted in grassroots efforts for the Frederick City election; started a chapter of Drinking Liberally to bring a sense of fun and casual community back into the activist atmosphere; helped plan and execute several events, fundraisers, forums, conferences, classes, etc.; served on the campaign and messaging subcommittees to help the party in more tailored ways; organized GOTV efforts for the 2018 women's march in Frederick; and more. I have several more plans and projects I'd like to see through, and will continue to be involved with the community even if I do not get elected back onto 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?

My belief in the democratic party comes from the progressive era that gave women the right to vote; emphasized labor unions and workers rights; social, gender, sexual, and racial justice; environmental protections; closing the gaps of income inequality. I still believe the democratic party represents these values, but in the process of the growing tent we have left people behind. And I believe the best way to better the system in place is to become involved in that system, adding your energy, values, and voice to promote the change you wish to see. I do see myself as a progressive, and outside of my role in the FCDCC I am involved in several progressive activist groups and causes and will continue to be regardless of the results of the June election.

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?

While the central committee has no say in legislation or policy, and we are required to remain neutral in the primary election, I believe that several members (including myself) do try and bridge these gaps. I have involved myself in progressive activist groups and activities, worked for progressive causes, sought out and encouraged progressives to run for office, and I vote for who I believe are progressive candidates and align with my values. The chapter of Drinking Liberally that I started has a significant number of unaffiliated, libertarian, and socialist members. In that casual atmosphere, we've formulated deeper bonds of understanding and genuine friendships through respectful conversation in a safe environment. I hope to continue more of these types of initiatives and stay involved with these groups.

4. How would you promote diversity within the Party?

Though the central committee has no part in forming policy or legislation, I do try and elevate voices from marginalized communities as often as I can. When we need to find a speaker for an event and we have a discussion about who would be a possibility, I aim to nominate folks from communities who are underrepresented in the party and in our society as a whole. While I may not always succeed, and these opportunities are few and far between, I do continue to try. Most of this work is done outside of my role with the central committee. One example: I was very disheartened by the way the Women's March in Frederick unfolded. The lack of diversity and marginalized voices did not feel to me like a true representation of our community, so I took it upon myself to lend my skills and time to leading the charge in planning the 2019 march. My hope is to work 100% behind the scenes, to elevate and emphasize marginalized voices and stories that need to be heard, and to create a truly intersectional and inclusive event for all. While this may not be an official party event, this is an example I can cite and shows the energy I try to bring to opportunities to promote diversity,

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

To be honest, I am very on the fence about this issue. I believe that primaries should include independent voters for the simple fact that their voice should be heard. Whatever the outcome of the election will be is going to affect everyone, regardless of your party affiliation. So that part of closed primaries is bothersome to me. However, I also understand that these are party-specific nominations, and in order to have a say in how a party should be led, you should be a part of that party. I see it from both sides of the argument, and understand both completely. So I can't say I have a true answer one way or the other on the issue.

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?

The central committee does not organize campaigns around issues as, again, we are not involved in policy or legislation. Our main job is to seek out, support, and elect Democratic candidates. However, the purpose of the Summer of Resistance and Renewal campaign I mentioned above was to listen to the concerns from our citizens. That information is then passed onto the Maryland State Democratic Party to help them formulate a stronger and more cohesive platform for the Democratic party to truly represent Marylanders. Many of the issues I heard during this campaign were also my issues as a voter - healthcare for all, social justice, fair taxation to close the income inequality gap, public funding of political campaigns, gun safety legislation, better public education and job training, more opportunity in Maryland, environmental concerns, and much more. I will always vote with these issues at heart, though they play little role in my place as a central committee member since we do not deal with policy issues and it is not part of the job.

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?

As a white woman, going into these neighborhoods will not prove helpful in many situations since they don't want to talk to me (and I do not blame them.) However, the central committee already has hopeful plans to work with language interpreters and volunteers from minority groups to go into these communities and canvass alongside us. We hope to register as many voters as we can, and inform them about candidates and how they do or could impact their daily lives. Literature will be printed in multiple languages for mailers and lit drops. We are also hoping to organize transit to the polls for folks without reliable transportation, working with volunteers, churches, and other ways to make that happen. I hope to play a leading role in organizing these initiatives, and a supportive background role where appropriate to ensure these communities feel safe voicing their opinions and feel comfortable with whom they speak.

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

The main function of the Central Committee is to seek out, support, and elect democratic candidates. We remain neutral in the primary, and we work like hell in the general. This comes in many forms, such as organizing fundraisers for the party to help candidates during the election, assisting candidates when they have questions, getting information out about their platforms, promoting candidate events and information on social media, etc.

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

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

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

Other:

I cannot do some of these things, the ones I did not mark, as an official representative of the central committee as these are not items that are within our jurisdiction. However, I do already attend meetings, have met with several members of the leadership (and would be happy to continue to do so), and discuss/promote/be involved with progressive initiatives, if I believe in them, as a citizen.

Thank you for your interest and the opportunity!