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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. Responses will be available to the public at www.ProgressiveMaryland.org

Candidate Information

Candidate Last Name:

Kerr

Candidate First Name:

Ken

Office Seeking:

House of Delegates

District:

3B

Party:

Democratic

Campaign Contact Information

Committee Name:

Friends of Ken Kerr

Street Address:

7412 Skyline Dr

City:

Frederick

Zip Code:

21702

Business Phone:

240-815-9260

Fax:

Campaign Website:

Kenkerrfordelegate.com

Candidate Contact Information

Cell Phone:

240-815-9260

Email Address:

Kenkerrfor3b@comcast.net

Treasurer Contact Information

Treasurer Name:

Helen Kerr

Street Address:

7412 Skyline Dr

City:

Frederick

Zip Code:

21702

Phone:

240-815-9260

Candidate History	
Previous Elected Offices: Frederick County Board of Education	
Which Years Did You Serve: 2016--current	
Have you ever received an endorsement from Progressive Maryland?	YES _____ or NO X
If Yes, when:	

Have you ever assisted Progressive Maryland in achieving its goals?	YES X or NO _____
<p>Describe:</p> <p>Civic Engagement</p> <p>As a community college professor, I engage my students in political discourse. I offer extra credit for registering to vote and voting (regardless of party affiliation) Additionally, since 2004, my students and I have organized and produced candidate forums for local, state, and national elections.</p>	
<p>Major Endorsements (Elected Officials/Organizations/Opinion Leaders):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rep. Jamie Raskin (MD 8) • Leap Forward • Sierra Club <p>Completed questionnaires/interviews and awaiting decisions from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • League of Conservation Voters • Clean Water Action • Food and Water Action Fund • Maryland Farm Bureau • Frederick County Teachers Association/Maryland State Education Association • Maryland Working Families • Baltimore/ Washington Construction and Public Employees Laborers' District Council 	

Issue Questions

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

Yes X

No

Comments:

For non-violent crimes, those unable to post bail should not have to await trial while incarcerated simply because they lack the fund to pay. The Court Observations Project shows that this is beginning to happen.

Additionally, Atty. General Frosh's statement that cash bail is probably unconstitutional shows there is momentum behind pretrial reform.

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 the "Fight for \$15" along with the index for inflation. In 1978, the Minimum wage was \$2.65. Adjusted for inflation, that wage would currently be \$10.56, yet the current minimum wage of \$9.25 put minimum wage workers at a \$1.25/hour disadvantage. For full-time workers, this amounts to \$2600 annually. It is a realistic approach to raise the minimum wage to \$15 by 2023 and index it for inflation thereafter. This would bring it in line with the inflation adjusted 1978 minimum.

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:

State funding of campaigns would create a political environment where candidates would compete on their abilities and policies rather than their ability to raise large sums of money.

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:

While I support this concept, there needs to be some consideration for small companies with few employees.

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:

As a member of the Frederick County Board of Education, we have had a good relationship with our affinity groups. Being able to negotiate with a group provides for efficiency and equity across all employee groups.

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 No

Comments:

Maryland is doing better in this area than most states. According to the Maryland Commission for Women, we rank 2nd in the nation for annual earning for women. Still women lag behind male counterparts by nearly \$10,000 or 83% of a man's earnings. Additionally, 29% of households headed by females are in poverty compared to 8% of all Maryland households. With women comprising 49% of the State's workforce, pay equity is a moral imperative. We do a good job in education where salaries are set based upon academic preparation and years of service without regard to gender. A first step at expansion is to apply the same practice to all public sector employees.

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 No

Comments:

In my role as Department Chair at Frederick Community College, this has been my practice. I have worked with pregnant faculty members and faculty members who have small children (both moms and dads) to work a schedule that allows them to fulfill their contractual obligations and care for their families. The majority of Americans support family leave. Even the White House 2019 budget proposal calls for 6 weeks of family leave following the birth of a child. I supported this as a supervisor, and I would support it as a legislator.

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

Comments:

This is a difficult question to answer, as I have not faced, nor will I ever have to face, that decision personally. I am in support of reproductive rights; however, there are many who have differing views on the role the State should have in terminating pregnancies. Out of respect for the deeply held beliefs of all Marylanders, state money should not be used to terminate pregnancies that are not determined to be medically necessary. Private, non-profit organizations are needed to address the reproductive choices of women who choose to terminate a pregnancy for reasons other than those determined to be medically necessary.

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:

This is an area where the federal government has failed us and the state needs to take responsibility. By most measures, Maryland is the wealthiest state in the nation, yet we rank 34th in the number of uninsured, estimate at just under 7%. Of course, healthcare is complicated, and my reasoning may be flawed.

Most insured Marylanders (54%) get their coverage through their employer, another 30% through Medicare/Medicaid, leaving 7% purchasing individual plans and 6% uninsured. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation/Health Research & Education Trust 2017 Employer Health Benefits Survey, annual premiums for employer-sponsored family health coverage average \$18,764, with workers on average paying an additional \$5,714 towards the cost. If employers were removed from the health care equation and passed their contribution to the employee, \$13,000 per year would find its way into employee paychecks. Combined with the employee contribution, that totals \$24,478 for the annual cost of family health coverage in the employer model. Massachusetts healthcare annual premiums for a family were \$18,454. Removing the employer and returning the cost of health care to the employee—who would contribute the average amount to the single-payer system-- would more than fund the cost of a single payer system in Maryland. At the very least, we need a state option to address the issue of uninsured and affordability.

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:

I would support HB1194 submitted by Delegate Pena-Melnyk and cross filed as SB1023 by Senator Conway.

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

Support Oppose X

Comments:

In general, I support neighborhood-based public schools. Charter schools do not demonstrate increased results and most-often are not neighborhood based resulting in a lack of access for families below a certain socio-economic level and cannot arrange for transportation to the non-walkable charter school.

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: Until public schools are adequately funded, money should not be taken, in the form of vouchers or direct aid, to private schools.

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

Yes No X

Comments:

I have been a college professor for the last 24 years. Too many students come to college because they have no set goals. The majority of these do not complete at great expense to the state in the form of the FTE payment made to the college. I favor free tuition to any students who is sponsored by an employer in an apprentice relationship where the student is a full-time employee training for professional employment with the sponsor at the completion of the degree or certificate. The apprentice sponsor should also pay the apprentice to attend class as part of the apprentice's work day. This would address the issues of student debt, students not completing college, and students not finding jobs once they graduate. Simply making college free would not increase completion rates or employment post graduation.

14. Will you support the Trust Act?

Yes X No

Comments: HB1362 (2017) filed by Delegate Morales did not get a favorable report from the senate and died last April 10. I do not think it was reintroduced this year.

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: I am in favor of fir taxation.

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: The district I would represent has two rivers, the Monocacy and the Potomac, as boundaries. The rivers are vital to the district and the district vital to the health of the rivers.

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

Comments:

So far, Maryland has refused to provide rump's Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity. with voter names, dates of birth, portions of Social Security numbers, voting histories and party affiliation. That is a

good sign. We can also enact state environmental regulations to protect our air and water, we can move toward 100% renewable energy, and we can enact a state-sponsored health care system all to protect ourselves against the damage being done at the federal level through executive order.

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

Yes X No

Comments:

19. For the measures above that you have agreed to support would you be willing to:

- Co-sponsor legislation? YES or NO
- Work with our Policy and Legislative Director to help pass a bill? YES or NO
- Testify at a hearing in support of legislation? YES or NO
- Speak at public events in support of legislation? YES or NO
- Write a letter in support of legislation? YES or NO
- Write an op-ed in support of legislation? YES or NO

20. Would you be willing to engage with Progressive Maryland members and their communities by:

- Speaking at Progressive Maryland events? YES or NO
- Meeting with our membership annually to report on the progress of our shared priorities and answer questions from our members? YES or NO
- Writing a letter to unorganized workers endorsing an organizing drive by a labor union? YES or NO