

BWUA Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire
Candidate Questions

We have done thousands of door-knocks here in the Baltimore region to assess the issues that are most important to women. Please be as thorough as possible with your responses.

1. Maryland has some of the most strict gun laws in the nation, and yet we still have over 300 murders a year in the City, and gun violence in other parts of our state. What else will it take to curb gun violence?

We should target the serious offenders. We should address the conditions that breed crime.

However, we also need to hold the police accountable. A cultural shift must occur in the Baltimore Police Department if real crime reduction is to happen; accountability will make that happen. An important step was taken this session with the enactment of SB 1099/HB 561 (2018), that will set up a state commission with subpoena power to investigate allegations of Baltimore police corruption. The BPD, and other police departments, need to be held to a higher standard.

Additionally, I supported legislation this session to provide a \$3.6 million increase in funding for Safe Streets, a proven reducer of gun violence and an important facilitator between the BPD and communities. Safe Streets stops the spread of violence in communities by using the strategies associated with disease control, the Abell Foundation concluded. It detects and interrupts conflicts, identifies and treats the highest risk individuals, and changes social norms.

Lastly, in my own district, a constituent met with me about juveniles who had threatened to rob him. The failure of witnesses to appear in juvenile court, I found out, is a major problem. I worked with Delegate Luke Clippinger on HB 1023 (2018). With the passage of this bill, a judge can now ensure a witness's attendance by issuing a court order directing that a witness be brought before the court.

2. According to the National Partnership for Women and Families, women in Maryland who hold full time, year round jobs are paid 84 cents to each dollar a man is paid. Among Maryland women who hold full time, year-round jobs, Black women are paid 69 cents, Latinas are paid 47 cents and Asian women are paid 83 cents for every dollar paid to white, non-Hispanic men. Fighting for \$15 minimum wage is one step needed to close the wage gap. That was not successful this year. What are your other solutions to closing this wage gap?

A livable minimum wage is the best way to address income inequality and the wage gap. I co-sponsored HB 1416 (2017) and Del. Hettleman's HB 664 (2018) this session. I support the time period for implementation and the indexing provisions in HB 664 (2018).

One of my most proud accomplishments is, as lead sponsor, securing passage of the Lilly Ledbetter Civil Rights Restoration Act of 2009 (HB 288), which protects the rights of all workers to secure redress for discrimination in compensation. Discrimination in pay is harmful to all of us; and my bill ensures compensation can be obtained for past wage discrimination. This law has put employers on notice that if they continue to engage in wage discrimination, they will be subject to a claim for compensation from employees.

3. The General Assembly passed several laws this year to address sexual harassment in the workplace and in the General Assembly. What is still missing to address these issues?

What we passed this year is significant, and if issues arise with implementation, I would be responsive to those issues. I believe that the legislative process is best done through an iterative process whereby we build on prior years work to make incremental change and refinement year by year.

4. Education is the key to advancing women. In Baltimore as in other countries, education continues to be chronically underfunded. What are your solutions to this issue?

I support the Kirwan Commission's recommendation to provide universal access to public and private pre-kindergarten for all four-year olds and low income three-year olds.

When we raise more money for public schools, I would vote for a more progressive way of doing so than the current reliance on lottery or slots revenues.

In the long term, the State of Maryland should move towards an equitable tax system that relies mostly upon a progressive income tax instead of on regressive sales taxes or lottery and gaming revenues to fund the State budget.

5. What innovative ideas do you have to promote women leaders in your work (both in elected office and in professional life?)

The goal of electing more women to public office is important to me, and running in a slate with women candidates is one way I have sought to promote this goal.

My sponsorship of the bill that codified the Supreme Court's ruling in Roe v. Wade and the Lilly Ledbetter Civil Rights Restoration Act of 2009 demonstrate my ability and commitment to take the initiative to further the professional lives of women, rather than just vote the right way.

6. Maryland is strong when Baltimore City is strong. Although census estimates can be misleading, Baltimore City's population continues to decline. What do you think are the root causes of people moving, and how do you propose to resolve them?

Schools and Crime.

To improve the conditions of the schools, my City delegation colleagues and I fought in 2013 for major construction funding under the 21st Century Schools Program. I look forward to attending the reopening of the new Lyndhurst Elementary School. Arlington, Cross Country, Forest Park, Pimlico, Mary Rodman, and Calvin Rodwell will also be rebuilt.

More resources are needed for students with the greatest need. The state funding formula needs to take into account the additional needs of children living in poverty. This most certainly includes the additional needs for after-school academic and/or social services vital to the success of young people in impoverished communities in Baltimore City.

To reduce the crime we should get guns off the street. We should target the serious offenders. We should address the conditions that breed crime. I detailed my work I've done in the answer to Question #1. I have been a pro-active advocate for taking guns off the streets of Baltimore, not just a good voter. I hope that you believe that I have met and will continue to meet that standard.

7. Affordable housing is at risk. Subsidies are about to expire on about 35% of existing affordable housing units that use federal and state subsidies. Gentrification and redevelopment displace residents. In Baltimore City public housing has declined by 40% in the last 15 years. How are you going to increase affordable housing in Baltimore given the issues above.

My first job was as the first Director of the Section 8 Existing Housing Program for the Housing Authority of Baltimore City.

As a consequence, affordable and safe housing has been a priority of my legislative career. Most recently, I worked to protect the residents in the buildings being converted to private ownership under the RAD program.

Baltimore's large number of vacant houses depresses home prices and invites criminal activity. The State and the City should underwrite the demolition of these properties and their replacement with a solution supported by the affected communities. These communities must drive the decision making process in each of their neighborhoods. What is right for one community will not always be right for another.

8. We are committed to ensuring that Baltimore women and families have access to the quality, affordable healthcare and sexual health information they need and deserve. Health outcomes are unfortunately still too dependent on zip codes. What could Maryland be doing to advance women's health that isn't currently being done?

I have long been a champion and forward thinker on women's health and will continue to do so if re-elected. As an example, just eight days after Donald Trump was elected, I emailed the lobbyist for Planned Parenthood, "I've just started to think about what we could do in Md. if the defunding of Planned Parenthood happens [with a Republican Congress and President]. We should talk."

That conversation led to HB 1083 (2017), which requires the Governor to fund the health care provided by Planned Parenthood if the federal government would no longer pay for it. I am proud to have played a leadership role in enacting this measure – the first of its kind in the country.

My colleagues and I accomplished much to advance access to high quality affordable healthcare and make positive steps forward on reproductive health this session.

In particular, expanding the mandate of Medicaid/MD Children's Health Program to provide a 12 month supply of prescription contraceptives, the creation of a collaborative care primary services model pilot program for Medicaid recipients, and expanding the mandate of the Maternal Mortality Review Program are important incremental steps forward. I want to continue to move in the direction where we expand mandates to capture segments of the population currently under served by existing programs.

9. The Maryland General Assembly approved legislation this session that will require the state to increase its spending on the Child Care Subsidy program for low-income families. Families of a mere 17,400 young children received subsidies in 2016, and they were so low that they covered the costs of just 9 percent of providers. What else do you propose to help families struggling with child care costs?

Addressing income inequality in the long term through progressive tax policies and an increase in the minimum wage to a livable one in the short term will significantly improve the ability of families to afford rising child care costs.

10. Researchers at the U.S. Geological Survey, Blue Water Baltimore and the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies tracked changes in water quality from 1998 to 2014. The study found that precipitation, pollution and water quality data has traced degradation of Baltimore's Gwynns Falls to frequent sewage leaks, and some environmental improvements to projects to clean up or reduce stormwater runoff. How will you ensure that Baltimoreans have clean water to drink in the future?

I was honored to sponsor and defend the Maryland Defense Act of 2017, giving the Attorney General the authority to sue to protect Marylanders from harmful federal policy, including misguided and illegal actions by the EPA. Maryland's Attorney General can now sue the federal government to ensure enforcement of the Clean Water Act's Total Maximum Daily Load limits which will in turn ensure that all Marylanders have access to clean water in the future.