

Jewish Times Candidate Questionnaire

1. Why did you decide to run again?

I have important work left to do for the people of the 41st district.

We need to ensure that the Preakness remains at Pimlico, with the site becoming an economic and community development attraction for Northwest Baltimore; improve pre-kindergarten-12th grade education in Baltimore City and throughout the state by implementing the recommendations of the Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education; and preserve parochial school funding from the State.

What are some of your recent achievements?

My advocacy during the 2018 session helped bring about a \$1.5 million (~19%) funding increase for the BOOST Scholarship program for low-income students.

I introduced legislation that would require online platforms, such as Facebook, to keep records of who paid for political advertisements on their sites. I acted in response to the online ads bought by Russian agents, working at the behest of the Putin government, during the 2016 Presidential election. Several of the provisions in my bill (HB 768) were included in the landmark legislation that the General Assembly enacted. (HB981)

Last year, I introduced the bill which gave Attorney General Brian Frosh the authority to sue the federal government without Governor Hogan's approval. Whether President Trump is unconstitutionally profiting from his business dealings while in office is the issue in one of the suits the AG filed as a result of this law. A trial judge recently allowed this case to proceed.

When Republicans tried to eliminate funding for the lawyers needed for this litigation, I declared on the House floor, "It is imperative that our Attorney General, on behalf of the people of Maryland, defend the rule of law. It is not tomfoolery to defend the rule of law. **It is not political grandstanding to defend the rule of law.** That's what we asked our Attorney General to do." This funding was not cut.

2. Highlight/explain three of the most important policies in your platform.

The Preakness is our Super Bowl. Every May, our economy gets a huge boost from visitors and locals celebrating the second jewel of the Triple Crown. An abandoned Pimlico would be a major blow to Northwest Baltimore, the City, and the metropolitan region.

It was my idea for the Maryland Stadium Authority to conduct a study of Pimlico's future. The final phase of that review will include "visioneering and concept development an of 'ideal'

Preakness venue... and assessing the site's ability to accommodate various non-racing functions on a year-round basis." The study should be completed by December, and I hope to be in Annapolis next January to fight for funding of a future Pimlico and the creation of hundreds of 21st Century jobs. .

I support the Kirwan Commission's recommendation to increase funding for public schools and to provide universal access to public and private pre-kindergarten for all four-year olds and low income three-year olds. I led the way on pre-K funding by introducing the Maryland Early Learning Challenge and School Readiness Act in 2013.

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.

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.

Slots money has been used to create a \$400,000 homeownership loan pool for the purchase and renovation of homes in Northwest Baltimore and is administered by CHAI. Street sweeping and facade renovation of residential properties have also been funded. I was instrumental in passing the legislation that created this funding source.

3. What is the most pressing unmet need in your district and how do you plan to address it?

Public safety is the most pressing unmet need in the 41st District. We should get guns off the street. We should target the serious offenders. We should address the conditions that breed crime.

A constituent met with me about juveniles who had threatened to rob him. What could be done to impose the appropriate penalty on young but serious offenders? The failure of witnesses to appear, I found out, is a major problem. I worked with Delegate Luke Clippinger on House Bill 1023. 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.

I also support the crime prevention efforts of the Northwest Citizens Patrol and Shomrim.

4. What policies or programs have you authored or support that would, or do, benefit the Jewish community?

I worked with former State Senator Barbara Hoffman and the late Rabbi Herman Neuberger to

create the textbook aid program and have supported its funding from the outset. I support parochial school aid, whether it be textbook aid, scholarships, facility upgrades, or resource sharing, because every child in Baltimore deserves the best education possible.

The Weinberg Park Heights JCC was evacuated twice last year due to bomb threats. I sponsored the bill that made hate crimes a felony in Maryland. I introduced HB246 (2018) to make a threat to commit such a crime a felony as well, even if there was no attempt to carry it out, as was the case at the JCC. HB 246 did not pass, but we did enact a law expanding hate crimes to include illegal actions directed at a group of people, not just an individual. This change in the law reflects the harm that such crimes can have on the greater community's sense of security.

Rabbi Meir and Bleema Sher owned Sher Auto Sales on Reisterstown Road. The Shers are observant. Under Maryland's Blue Laws, their business had to be closed on Sundays. They could not even send a title application to the Motor Vehicle Administration's website. This five-day work week seriously hampered their business. The legislation that we drafted and passed allowed a used car dealer in Baltimore City to inform the Motor Vehicle Administration that the business will be closed on Saturday, instead of Sunday. I joined the Shers at their business on the first Sunday that they were open.

Leo Bretholz was a survivor. He never made it to a concentration camp. Instead, he jumped from a train headed from France to the German border. I worked with Leo on legislation requiring all companies that want to bid for MARC train service contracts to disclose their specific involvement in Nazi regime deportations. The passage of HB 520 (2011) was instrumental in getting the French National Railroad to finally disclose its deportation files and be held accountable for its actions aiding and abetting in the deportation of Jews and other victims to Nazi concentration camps.

5. Why should residents vote for you? How do you stand out from your opponents?

I am an effective representative for the Jewish community, as part of my representation of all of the diverse neighborhoods of the 41st district.

In my first term as a Delegate, Ben Cardin was the Speaker of the House, and I was the junior member of the 42nd District delegation. What I learned from Ben is to work hard both in Annapolis and back home in Baltimore; to write good legislation and to advocate for the neighborhoods back home.