

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
of Montgomery County

 **VOTERS' GUIDE**

PRIMARY ELECTION: TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 2026, 7AM - 8PM

EARLY VOTING: JUNE 11 - 18, 2026, 7AM - 8PM

VOTE BY MAIL: RETURN BALLOT EARLY! (SEE PAGE 4)



Go to VOTE411.org to find personalized voting information and to read candidates' responses that may not be in this Guide.



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Share our *Guide* with others!

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This *Guide* and all candidate responses are also on our website: lwwmocomd.org

WELCOME VOTERS!

This *Voters' Guide*, published by the League of Women Voters (LWV) of Montgomery County, MD, provides information that can help you make decisions when you vote in the June 2026 Primary Election. The LWV, a national, nonpartisan organization of women and men promoting informed participation in government, does not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

The LWV sent questions to all candidates on the ballot in Montgomery County requesting responses before our print deadline. Their answers, presented exactly as written by the candidates, can be found in the following locations:

- This print version of the *Voters' Guide*, which includes candidate responses received before our print deadline, except for Party Central Committee members. Copies also are available in county libraries.
- Online at **VOTE411.org** for *all* candidate responses, including any received after our print deadline. This includes Spanish responses when provided.
- Online at the LWV of Montgomery County website, **lwvmocomd.org**. Responses in English from the Party Central Committee candidates are also available on the same website.

Spanish-language *Voters' Guides* will be available as an insert in the May 15 edition of *El Tiempo Latino* and posted at **ElTiempoLatino.com** and **lwvmocomd.org**. Copies also will be available in county libraries. *Washington Hispanic* also will insert a Spanish *Guide* in its May 29 edition and post it online at **washingtonhispanic.com**.

About the 2026 Primary Election and Political Parties

The 2026 Primary Election on **June 23** is when the Democratic and Republican political parties choose their candidates for the November General Election. You must be registered as a Democrat (**mcdcc.org**) or Republican (**mcgop.com**) to vote for that party's candidates in the Primary Election.

Voters not affiliated with the Democratic or Republican parties may vote *only* for the nonpartisan Board of Education offices in the Primary Election. All registered voters may vote for candidates of any party and on any ballot question in the November General Election.

In the Primary:

- Registered *Democrats* and *Republicans* will receive a ballot listing their party's candidates, candidates for Judge of the Circuit Court and nonpartisan Board of Education candidates.
- All other registered voters will receive a ballot listing only nonpartisan Board of Education candidates. The deadline for changing your party registration is **June 2**.

Get Ready To Vote

Voter Registration

For information on eligibility to vote in Maryland and how to register to vote, scan the QR code below or visit the State Board of Elections website at **elections.maryland.gov/voter_registration/index.html**.



Online Registration Deadline:
June 2

Same Day, In-Person Registration

Citizens who are not registered to vote in Maryland may register for the first time, declare a party affiliation and vote in person at an Early Voting Center during early voting *OR* at the assigned polling place for their address on Primary Election Day, provided they bring identification. Click on *Registration Process* at **elections.maryland.gov/voter_registration/index.html** for a list of documents accepted as proof of residency.

How to Request a Mail-in Ballot

Request a mail-in ballot at **voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/OnlineMailinRequest/InstructionsStep1** *OR* call the Montgomery County Board of Elections at 240-777-8550 *OR* text VBM to 77788 to have an application mailed or faxed to you. The deadline to request that a mail-in ballot be mailed to you is **June 16**. To receive a mail-in ballot by internet delivery, the deadline is **June 19**. Note that internet-delivery ballots cannot be returned electronically. They must be printed, placed in an envelope and mailed or returned in one of the drop-boxes. **Make your request as early as possible to ensure timely receipt.**

Three Ways To Vote

There are three ways to vote in the Maryland Primary Election:

1. EARLY VOTING — In-Person Voting

Voters may vote at any of the 14 Early Voting Centers, which are open from 7 am to 8 pm, **Thursday, June 11 through Thursday, June 18**. Ballots from all precincts will be available at each of the Montgomery County Early Voting Centers. The list of Centers is available at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Elections/EarlyVoting/EarlyVotingCenters.html>. You may also text EV and your zip code to 77788.

2. ELECTION DAY — In-Person Voting

On Primary Election Day, **Tuesday June 23**, voters should go to their assigned polling places. Polls are open from 7 am to 8 pm. If you are in line at 8 pm you will be permitted to vote.

Your sample ballot lists the name and address of your assigned polling place right above your name on the address label. You can also look up your polling place at elections.maryland.gov/voting/where.html.

Note: Early Voting Centers are closed on Primary Election Day, unless they serve as a local precinct polling place. On Primary Election Day, any voter who votes at a location other than the voter's assigned polling place will be required to use a provisional ballot, which may not correspond to candidates for the district where the voter lives.

3. MAIL-IN BALLOT

Your mail-in ballot will include instructions on how to complete and return it. Using the envelope provided:

- It is best to return your ballot in a Montgomery County ballot drop box to be certain that it will be received on time and counted. Your ballot will include a list of the drop box locations. A list of the 58 locations is also posted at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Elections/dropbox.html> OR you can text BOX and your zip code to 77788.

- Hand deliver your ballot. You may deliver your completed ballot to an Early Voting Center during Early Voting (**June 11-18**), to your assigned polling place on Primary Election Day (**June 23**) or to the Montgomery County Board of Elections (18753 N. Frederick Ave, Suite 210, Gaithersburg, MD 20879) any time before 8:00 pm on **June 23**.
- Mail your ballot. Return your ballot as soon as you have completed it. Ballots must be postmarked by 8:00 pm on **June 23**. If you return your ballot at the Post Office after **June 12**, be sure to request a hand stamp because a change in postmarking procedures could result in your ballot being postmarked too late to be counted. **After June 12**, we recommend you return your ballot at one of the drop box locations to ensure it is received on time and counted.

Mail-In Ballot Tracking

Check the status of your mail-in ballot request, the delivery of your ballot and whether your ballot has been received and counted at voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/VoterSearch.

Want Off the Permanent Mail-In Ballot List?

If you would like to cancel your request for a mail-in ballot for future elections, update your request at voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/onlinevoterupdate/ **Instructions Step 1** OR submit a signed paper request to the Montgomery County Board of Elections, 18753 N. Frederick Ave, Suite 210, Gaithersburg, MD 20879.

Language Assistance at the Polls

Montgomery County Board of Elections (BOE) will provide language assistance to voters whose first language is Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese or Amharic and have limited English proficiency. Voters will have the option to speak with election judges through a translator at Early Voting Centers and on Primary Election Day. Materials also will be available in those languages on the BOE website.

NOTICE

At your polling place you may:

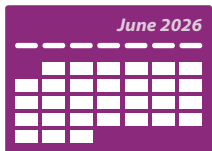
- Use printed material such as a paper sample ballot or the *Voters' Guide*
- Use your cell phone *only* for translation, identification, voting selections or to take a picture of your ballot



Questions about the voting process?



Call our Voter Hotline at **301-984-9585** Monday through Friday from May 18 to June 23, 10am – 4pm (English only) and 4pm – 7pm (English and Spanish) to reach an experienced League Volunteer.



Key Primary Election Dates

**Tuesday
June
2**

Deadline to register to vote online or to change your party affiliation

**Friday
June
19**

Deadline to request mail-in ballot by internet delivery (this is *not* an online ballot)

**Thursday
June
11-18**

Early voting in person at 14 Early Voting Centers 7am to 8pm

**Tuesday
June
23**

Primary Election Day voting at your assigned polling location 7am to 8pm

**Tuesday
June
16**

Deadline to request mail-in ballot delivered by mail or fax

The following pages contain descriptions of the offices being contested, the candidates in the Primary Election and their responses to questions asked by the League of Women Voters that were received by our print deadline. Responses are shown exactly as provided by the candidates. Responses received after the print deadline may be found at VOTE411.org. We urge you to visit candidates' web presence to learn more about their experience and priorities.



On the Ballot

Maryland Governor and Lieutenant Governor

(see candidates on pages 7 - 9)

Duties

The Governor is chief executive of the state and commander-in-chief of the Maryland National Guard. The Governor appoints state judges and heads of statewide departments, proposes the annual state budgets to the Maryland General Assembly and may veto legislation passed by it. The Lieutenant Governor assists the Governor, carries out specific duties as assigned, and fills the office of Governor if the incumbent dies, resigns or is incapacitated.

How Elected

The Governor and Lieutenant Governor are elected as a team.

Term

Four years, limited to two consecutive terms.

Salary

Governor \$195,000 per year; Lieutenant Governor \$175,000 per year.

Website

governor.maryland.gov

Who May Vote?

Registered Democrats may vote only for one (1) pair of Democratic candidates.

Registered Republicans may vote only for one (1) pair of Republican candidates.

Questions to the candidates for Governor and Lieutenant Governor:

- **AFFORDABILITY:** Many Marylanders are struggling to afford basic expenses such as housing, groceries, childcare, and healthcare. What will you do to make living in Maryland more affordable?
- **VOTING:** What strategies will you use to encourage all eligible voters to vote in every election?
- **HEALTHCARE:** What will you do to make sure people in Maryland have prompt and timely access to needed healthcare across Maryland, including rural and inner-city communities?
- **ECONOMY:** In light of economic uncertainties, declining federal dollars, and loss of federal jobs, what will you do to promote economic and job growth?
- **IMMIGRATION:** Federal agents have been stopping and detaining residents in Maryland and across the nation, often using aggressive tactics. What is your position on this?
- **BACKGROUND:** What else do you want voters to know about you?

See pages 7 - 9 for candidate responses. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidates for Governor and Lieutenant Governor

See previous page for details about the office of Governor and Lieutenant Governor.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidates

Party
Website

Affordability

Many Marylanders are struggling to afford basic expenses such as housing, groceries, childcare, and healthcare. What will you do to make living in Maryland more affordable?

Voting

What strategies will you use to encourage all eligible voters to vote in every election?

Healthcare

What will you do to make sure people in Maryland have prompt and timely access to needed healthcare across Maryland, including rural and inner-city communities?

Economy

In light of economic uncertainties, declining federal dollars, and loss of federal jobs, what will you do to promote economic and job growth?

Immigration

Federal agents have been stopping and detaining residents in Maryland and across the nation, often using aggressive tactics. What is your position on this?

Background

What else do you want voters to know about you?

Eric S. Felber / LaTrece Hawkins Lytes

D - Democratic

felberforgovernor.org

Maryland has one of the highest cost of living and utility expenses in the US. Our campaign's priority is to fix that by capping utility fees, increase safe and affordable housing, provide affordable childcare and fix a broken medical system which allows insurance companies and private equity to charge exorbitant prices for care. We want to increase minimum wage to \$30/hr by 2030 to make a living wage compatible with living expenses.

We strongly encourage everyone to vote in this upcoming election. We need to vote to keep ICE and its facilities out of Maryland, recover lost jobs and businesses, and to decrease crime in the streets of our cities and suburbs. It is crucial to vote on these matters to fix them. We will campaign throughout the state posting signs and banners and educating anyone on the crucial process of voting.

I am a physician and my lieutenant is a diabetes educator and organ transplant advocate. Our backgrounds are decades of experience in community medicine. We understand the hardships of medical care and its finances intricately. Timely access is crucial to obtain healthcare across Maryland, including rural and inner-city communities. We will put Maryland first, and do everything we can do to help people feel better and get the medical care they need.

Thousands have lost their jobs and businesses. This is a top priority of our campaign. Economic and job growth is critical to a Maryland economy which has stalled for the past 10 years. We must act now to turn the economy around and restore lost jobs. Federal workers, researchers, farmers, and many others have experienced a decline in jobs. We must work together and help each other regain jobs and businesses in light of declining federal dollars and economic uncertainties.

Our position is clear to remove ICE from Maryland. Our top priority is to stand behind every single person in Maryland, every immigrant, and every citizen to prevent ICE from acting on our residents. Our diversity in Maryland is what makes us great and we will not allow in any circumstances for ICE to change that. Stopping and detaining residents using aggressive tactics will not be allowed. Due process is a critical part of our Constitution and must be followed.

We will fight for abortion rights and reproductive freedom, LGBTQ+ rights, environmental safeguards, justice reform, decrease in crime, affordable housing, increase the minimum wage, lower utility costs, free public transportation and education, and fight to remove ICE.

Wes Moore / Aruna Miller

D - Democratic

WesMoore.com

We must protect our people, drive down costs, and strengthen our state's economic competitiveness. It is our responsibility to build an economy that makes sure more Marylanders can afford to live here, buy a home, create wealth, and live a secure middle-class life. That's why we're creating jobs, building more affordable housing, and introducing legislation to combat price gouging.

Democracy works best when everyone is involved—it doesn't matter what political party you belong to, where you live, or how you worship, we have a duty to make our voices heard. That's why we've passed legislation to protect election workers and keep ensuring Maryland's elections remain free and fair.

Affordable, accessible, and equitable health care is the foundation on which we build everything else—from safer neighborhoods to more vibrant communities. Your zip code shouldn't determine your level of care, or if you can access it. That's why we've fought to fund rural hospitals and create quality and accessible healthcare across the state.

After years of economic stagnation, we are jumpstarting Maryland's economy. In just three years, Maryland has added nearly 100,000 jobs and created over 35,000 new places of business. We will continue to pass legislation and take actions that have created jobs and helped Maryland create about 45% more new establishments each month than in 2019.

In Maryland, we defend Constitutional rights and Constitutional policing—we will not allow untrained, unqualified, and unaccountable ICE agents to deputize our law enforcement officers. We will continue to work with federal partners to hold violent offenders accountable—while refusing to blur the lines between state and federal authority in ways that undermine the trust between law enforcement and our communities.

It is the honor of my life to serve Maryland. From creating 100,000 jobs to bringing down violent crime to record lows, we've made great progress, but the job isn't finished. I'm asking for your support to continue our mission to ensure more Marylanders can afford to live here, buy a home, create wealth, and live a secure middle-class life.

(continues next page)

Candidates for Governor and Lieutenant Governor

See page 6 for details about the office of Governor and Lieutenant Governor.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidates

Party
Website

Affordability

Many Marylanders are struggling to afford basic expenses such as housing, groceries, childcare, and healthcare. What will you do to make living in Maryland more affordable?

Voting

What strategies will you use to encourage all eligible voters to vote in every election?

Healthcare

What will you do to make sure people in Maryland have prompt and timely access to needed healthcare across Maryland, including rural and inner-city communities?

Economy

In light of economic uncertainties, declining federal dollars, and loss of federal jobs, what will you do to promote economic and job growth?

Immigration

Federal agents have been stopping and detaining residents in Maryland and across the nation, often using aggressive tactics. What is your position on this?

Background

What else do you want voters to know about you?

L. D. Burkindine / Jeremy M. Shifflett

R - Republican

www.ldburkindineforgovernor.com

As Governor I will Establish a grant program for housing where the grant is for purchasing of housing the grant will give a person the down payment and settlement fees. Establish A CO/OP program for Farmers markets . Farmers to sell directly to the public-consumers. Childcare Facilities will be added to all Schools , parents will have freedom of choice . Establish new programs . Healthcare connection to be advanced to allow all Marylanders choice. Details provided upon written request.

Bring truth to election process. Assuring Voters that their votes count. Voter ID is a must to insure against voter fraud.

As Governor oversight and transparency will be on the top of the list. Healthcare connection will become the go to provider. State departments will be held accountable for non-compliance to execute claims in an... urgent manner. Day one of my administration I will declare poor healthcare a state of emergency. Providing Executive order fixing the problem. First

First of all, the federal government is not our enemy. As Governor I will establish a working relationship with all federal agencies. Bring back manufacturing cut regulations to allow companies to grow. Manufacturing provides living wages. Power plants are a must. Building - Manufacturing, Power plants lead to work better paying jobs (living wages) Details upon written. request

I support all law enforcement. Maryland is one state part of The United States of America. As Governor I will reverse the newly enacted law - Bill 245/House Bill 444. Giving People drivers License's does not make them a legal citizen. Maryland cannot be a safe haven for criminals or illegal aliens. My administration will be tough on crime. Protecting and serving the people of our great state is the most important job and I am looking forward to doing just that.

I have been Businessman for over 40 years. Working harder than anyone around me, providing solutions, fixing repairing bringing people together is in my DNA. Hands on approach, Finish the job. As governor I will Be working for the people, and I will have an open-door policy.

Ed Hale / Tyrone Keys, Jr.

R - Republican

haleforgov.com

Maryland families are being squeezed by rising costs. I will focus on lowering energy prices by expanding reliable in state power generation, reducing regulations that drive up housing and food costs, and bringing discipline to government and public spending. Maryland should once again be a state where working families, young people, and retirees can afford to live and build a future.

Voting should be convenient, secure, and trusted. I support early voting, clear voter information, accurate voter rolls, and strong civic education so every eligible voter knows how and when to participate. Confidence in elections and broad participation are both essential to a healthy democracy.

Every Marylander should be able to access care when they need it. I will expand the healthcare workforce, support rural and community health centers, reduce unnecessary regulations that limit providers, and expand telemedicine. Our goal should be practical solutions that shorten wait times and bring quality healthcare closer to every community.

Maryland must compete again for jobs and investment. I will reduce unnecessary regulations, support small businesses and entrepreneurs, invest in infrastructure and reliable energy, and promote industries such as technology, manufacturing, agriculture, and maritime trades. A strong economy begins with making Maryland a predictable and welcoming place to invest and work.

Public safety must come first. Maryland should cooperate with federal authorities when dealing with individuals who are committing crimes and jeopardizing public safety. At the same time, enforcement must respect constitutional rights and due process. Cooperation focused on removing dangerous offenders helps keep communities safe while maintaining respect for the rule of law.

I am not, nor do I ever want to be a career politician. I am a longtime business leader who believes in the strength of the Maryland family and the resources and people in our state that make Maryland great. My background is rooted in the belief that our government should be small, efficient, and accountable to the taxpayers who pay for it. I am running for governor to restore opportunity, strengthen our economy, and keep Maryland a place where hard work leads to success. Help is on the Way

Douglas Larcomb / Martina D. Duncan

R - Republican

Email: douglaslarcome@icloud.com

My administration's policy will support the current safety net policy with funding for Child Care Scholarship program, Housing Choice Voucher program. Maryland's Renters Tax Credit will continue. My administration brings forth a plan for State Owned Non Profit Energy for an electrical grid that will significantly reduce cost of electricity in the State through deregulation of grid operators and eminent domain. Maryland will fund a gentrification program to increase inventory in available housing

My administration will bring about excitement through engagement including awareness advertising with regard to how important each voice is. The issues at Stake now have arrived at critical mass. I encourage all eligible voters to register daily while I engage with the Public wherever I go. Judicial Reform will bring Unity within the Inner City initiatives of Baltimore and beyond. We all have a voice with regard to key issues such as Affordability, Public Safety & now more than ever Self Defense

The Maryland Children's Health Program which supports children and pregnant mothers will continue to be funded. The State Health Insurance Assistance Program for Seniors will continue to be funded. Medicaid for low income residents shall continue to be funded. Fund Adults and Children with Disabilities which is cut. Budget will be revisited. Money from all of the Ambitious Unsustainable spending leading to insolvency on Green Energy initiatives will be Suspended with my first Executive Order.

Maryland ranks 46 in the Nation in competition with all other States for the purpose of attracting New Corporate Business. Can you believe the idiocy? There is no business acumen in this State! The State boasts a whopping 8.25% Corporate Tax Rate because of your greed via leadership who push a false narrative on a Green Energy plan. Incentivized policy of Tax Abatement on Corporate Tax for 10 years with a 2.5% Corporate Tax rate promise after will bring New Industrial and Advanced Technology.

There are approx 230,000 undocumented immigrants in Maryland or 2.6% of the popul. It is mathematically impossible to deport 11 Mil. people so it was always a lie. Deporting 7,000/wk in the US equals approx 375,000 a year. The birth rate of 11 Mil. is higher than that therefore a zero sum task. My admin will create our own State registry to doc the undocumented Immig. through the Gov. Office of Immig. Affairs. The St. will complete its own background checks while allowing temp in state wk permits. Not Citizen

Judicial Reform: There are NO self defense laws leaving unnecessary unprecedented power in the hands of prosecutors and judges. Reasonable Legalese Reform relieves injustice in the court. Self Defense Laws such as Reasonable Restraint, Castle Doctrine and Stand Your Ground will be enacted while placed into Maryland Code. Judicial Reform will bring Unity in what is supposed to be a free state. 1.12% of Marylanders are incarcerated or on some kind of supervision. That is an oddly high number.

The following Republican candidates were invited to respond but provided no answers by the print deadline:

Carl A. Brunner, Jr. /
Kevin L. Rhodes, Sr.

Dan Cox /
Rob Krop

See VOTE411.org for any late responses.

Candidates for Governor and Lieutenant Governor

See page 6 for details about the office of Governor and Lieutenant Governor.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

John A. Myrick / Brenda J. Thiam

R - Republican

johnmyrickformdgovernor.org

By reducing State spending, and making government more efficient, we will reduce taxes and fees for Marylanders. We will cut energy costs by 50% within 4 years by re-opening plants and moving toward new nuclear technologies. This will drive down prices across the board. We will lower insurance costs, including medical malpractice insurance, which will reduce healthcare costs. We will look at ways to increase access to childcare. We will reduce regulations that drive up the cost of housing.

Voting is the most important thing we do. We support efforts to ensure that voter rolls are current, and that all eligible voters have the chance to cast their ballots. We will work to increase the number of polling places across the State.

By reducing malpractice insurance costs, we will drive down healthcare costs. We will seek to eliminate Plan Benefit Managers (PMBs) that inflate costs for healthcare. We will increase access to healthcare in our rural and urban communities through Public-Private Partnerships, and through working with our federal partners. We will restore the prescription drug coverage plan for State Retirees. We will negotiate with drug companies to reduce costs that the State (Medicaid) pays for medications.

We will lower the Corporate Tax Rate from 8.5% to 5.0% to attract businesses to Maryland and to help those already here. We will work with the federal government to stop the hemorrhaging of federal jobs from Maryland. We will repeal the 3% Tech Tax. We will reduce burdensome regulations that stifle business development. We will attract new, good paying jobs to Maryland and provide economic opportunities for Marylanders. We will restore vocational & computer certification training to our schools

I support cooperation with ICE. Participation in the DHS 287(g) program is vital to protecting Marylanders from criminal Unlawful Aliens and I will seek legislation making this the standard. If Maryland participates with our federal partners, not only do we enhance safety for our residents, but we eliminate the need for mass ICE deployments to find these criminal Unlawful Aliens. I also support "Plan Dignity," the most comprehensive federal immigration bill in the past 40 years.

We are Public Servants, seeking to improve the lives of EVERY Marylander. Using a common-sense approach to governing, fiscal restraint, and logic, we will restore prosperity to Maryland. We will bring accountability to Annapolis. We will reduce taxes and fees, cut energy costs, provide economic opportunity, improve our failed schools, and restore public safety for ALL Marylanders. We will never forget that we work for YOU!

Michael Oakes / Ronald W. Abend

R - Republican

No website provided

Change 99%of the policies instituted in the last 4 yrs

Already have instituted the coalition of RID. Stands for republican independent democrat. All are welcome to vote for me to change Md for the better

There are many plans and programs already in place. No one should be denied. If they are then they're not taking advantage of the complex systems the current government has in place.

Get rid of all the ridiculous paperwork and regulations that hinder small business creation.

The previous US administration allowed millions to enter our country illegally. If they're here illegally they need to be arrested and sent back to their home country by what ever means necessary. If they are US citizen with proper id there should not be a problem

I want to have equal representation for all. Unlike the current system where one party outnumber all others, knows nothing about candidates, votes because there's an R I or D after the name and really doesn't care about Md. I don't accept campaign contributions because it leads to corruption. I also will not be accepting a salary. My primary goal will be electric rates reduction and a change in the property tax system

Nancy Jane Taylor / Rachel Hannah "Mohawk" Swift

R - Republican

No website provided

WELL I HAVE AN AMAZING RESPONSES BUT I apolo.nGize, SAMSUNG I SAID APOLOGIZE. I don't know if it's my horrible cheap Samsung or this website, but it does not copy and paste what so ever. I'm sorry. I cannot be more thorough with my responses. AS I INTENDED ORIGINALLY NOTHING Whatsoever, because it will not remain on the screen. WE'RE TURNING BACK TO EMPTY FIELDS IT deletes ALL TEX as I click off this page EACH TIME you'll have to catch me on the flip side TRUST ME! U WILL HEAR OUR VOICES

I am the best campaign strategist ever!! IT IS NOT MY FAULT THAT TECHNOLOGY DOES NOT WORK PROPERLY y DO YOU THINK I'M RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT AGAIN 2024 2026* 2028 2032AD *STATEWIDE. i received 1% of the vote in West Virginia 2326 votes! Looking at 2020 results IF CAN BE BEAT, yes SO CAN i Google REPUBLICAN PRIMARY ELECTION RESULTS WV 2024 NOW MY MOTHER'S GOVERNOR TAYLOR AT THE TOP OF THE TICKET AS THE CANDIDATE. I'M JUST LIEU. SWIFT it's all about beating 2028

Promote healthier lifestyles more socialization promote blood & living kidney donations i'm doing everything in my power 2 keep my mom out of hospital hospitalizations is not acceptable. You are NOT coming out that hospital any better than you went in this corrupt pharma health care system you are better off praying to any deity you can think of for a cure Don't give me started on how it cost if they transp u wrong! AN EXTRA \$10,000 MORE IF U HAPPENED TO GO to Carroll co hospital<NW HOSP=POISION

WOW AS A RINO, the description of question indicates policy is shady at best. Wow! I do believe some people (R) missing the 2020 ECONOMY RIGHT ABOUT NOW! correct DOES NOT HAVE GOOD IDEA agree BUT BANKRUPTCY !! We WOULD NEVER HAVE never GONE INTO t CURRENT SEVERE GREAT DEPRESSION W IN THE OVAL OFFICE SO I CANNOT RETYPE UP MY GOOD RESPONSES look is MESSING UP! NO JUSTIFICATIONS, OK FOR A CHANGE, LET'S HAVE NO EGOW ♡PERSONAL GREED

UNDER AGE CHILDREN MINORS 4-YEAR-OLDS, 8-YEAR-OLDS, 15-YEAR-OLDS BUT NOT LIMITED TO, KIDDO (R) IN CAGES LET'S SEE YOUR CHILD IN ONE THOSE U WOULD BE SCREAMING! THE KIDS COMMITTED NO CRIMES. THEY ARE UNDER EIGHTEEN. THAT IS NOT A GREEN LIGHT! For you to drop your pants again & again Sorry I do not have enough space to write again +1,200X PLEASE CALM DOWN YOUR SINFUL LUST UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES WITH JUVENILES FOR THOSE LITTLE KITTYs

Taylor gone to church all of her life SHE READS HER BIBLE EVEN AT 3AM! SHE UNDERSTANDS THE CAMEL CANNOT GO THROUGH THE EYE OF A NEEDLE. U DON'T NEED A SIXTY DOLLAR \$60 "CHINA BIBLE" TO TELL U THAT. FYI CORRECT She has not had any sexual activities with anyone under 18yo She ONLY HAD SEXUAL ACTIVITY w ONLY 2 MEN [NOT +1200little teen kitty] gave live births indicating birthdays included to 13children SHE WILL WIN THIS ELECTION! Lieu/DAUGHTER R.SWIFT2024# is THE BEST CAMPAIGN STRATEGIST EVER

Shannon Wright / Reba A. Hawkins

R - Republican

Wright4Maryland.com

As Governor Fast track housing for all Stabilize property taxes Expand workplace based childcare options Strengthen Maryland's food supply chain Expand agriculture partnerships Increase access to home based chronic care support Fix a broken education system Cut waste, fraud, and mismanagement Support small businesses Invest in job training and apprenticeships I'll do this without raising taxes Maryland should be a place you can life, not just survive it.

As Governor We will have year round civic education Work with community organizations, faith leaders, and institutions Meet voters where they are Support early voting, and secure mail in options Clear information about when and how to vote Run registration drives in underserved areas Use technology to provide reminders Strengthen trust by ensuring elections are transparent "A healthy democracy depends on participation"

As Governor, we will Ensure every Marylander gets prompt, reliable healthcare Expand community clinics, urgent care, and mobile health units Increase access to home based care Strengthen partnerships with hospitals and local providers Keep essential services in underserved areas Hold insurers accountable for delays, denials, and hidden fees "When care is local, transparent, and responsive, Marylanders get help when they need it—not weeks later."

As Governor We will grow our tax base Redirect resources into economic engines Cut waste, fraud, and mismanagement Strengthen small businesses with targeted investments Reduced regulatory barriers Invest in job training, apprenticeships Connect Marylanders to high demand careers Create workforce pipelines Support rural and urban economic corridors Attract new industries "With declining federal dollars, and the loss of federal jobs, Maryland needs a Governor who will build a strong economy."

As Governor, I will not allow Marylanders to be unprotected. I will require federal agencies to coordinate with state and local authorities before operations take place. I will demand clear protocols, clear identification, and accountability so Marylanders know their rights and know who is acting in their communities. We can support lawful enforcement without allowing intimidation or overreach. Public safety requires order and we will protect both safety and civil liberties with equal force.

I am a faith driven leader, and strategist dedicated to strengthening Maryland's families and rebuilding trust in public institutions Known for my work at the intersection of policy, service, and empowerment. I has spent years working with parents, educators, small businesses, and local organizations to address challenges in education, healthcare access, economic mobility, and public safety. I am a wife, pastor, author, and policy advocate who authored 2 bills this session, HB1626 and HB1632



On the Ballot

Comptroller

(see candidates on page 11)

Duties

The Comptroller collects, manages and plans for state revenues. This includes Maryland taxes on income (personal and corporate), retail sales, motor vehicle fuel, tobacco, alcohol and estates. The Comptroller, Governor and state Treasurer serve on the Board of Public Works, which approves major contracts for the purchase of goods or services by the state government.

How Elected

The Comptroller is elected statewide.

Term

Four years, no term limit.

Salary

\$175,000 per year

Website

marylandcomptroller.gov

Who May Vote?

Registered Democrats may vote only for one (1) Democratic candidate.

Registered Republicans may vote only for one (1) Republican candidate.

Questions to the candidates for Comptroller:

- **CONTRACTS:** What factors will you use, in addition to cost, to evaluate major state contracts?
- **TAX POLICY:** Please explain what legislation affecting tax policies you will actively support for consideration in the legislature.
- **CHALLENGES:** What are the major financial stressors that the state of Maryland will face in the coming term?
- **REVENUE:** The Comptroller's Office issues revenue projections annually that are used to develop the budget. How do economic uncertainties affect your ability to ensure these projections are accurate?

See page 11 for candidate responses. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.



Candidates for Comptroller

See previous page for details about the office of Comptroller.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidate Party / Website	Brooke Elizabeth Lierman D - Democratic brookelierman.com	Sonya Dunn R - Republican www.VoteSonyaDunn.com
Contracts	<p>On the Board of Public Works, I ensure Maryland receives the best value - not just the lowest price - from every contract dollar. Beyond cost, I evaluate vendor track records, commitment to MBE goals, labor standards, local economic impact, and accountability mechanisms. I've also modernized contract spending reporting so Marylanders can see exactly how their money is being spent. Smart procurement means stronger communities and a more equitable Maryland economy.</p>	<p>Primary factor: Is the company a Maryland-based firm? If not, what state resources or taxpayer support will it require to establish and maintain a presence in Maryland? Capacity building within Maryland is critical to strengthening and growing our procurement economy. State procurement dollars should support and circulate within Maryland whenever possible. Other factors include local workforce impact, compliance history, accountability, efficiency, risk management, and community engagement.</p>
Tax Policy	<p>As Comptroller, I do not set tax policy - I administer tax laws equitably and make government work better for every Marylander. I've expanded branch offices, boosted call center staff, and launched new tools to ease filing. I've championed access to Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit, supported small businesses, and returned a record \$121 million in unclaimed property in FY25. I'll keep fighting for free federal tax filing so every Marylander can access the money they've earned.</p>	<p>FOR: HB 392 & HB 1554 - Short term revenue loss but helps retain manufacturing jobs and reduce food deserts in Maryland. FOR: HB 1422 & SB0858 - Adds teeth to compliance unit to address repeated failed audits by state agencies. Strengthen financial management oversight of budgets and contracts. AGAINST: 2025 BRFA (Tax Changes) - 2% capital gains tax on high earners and 3% tax on IT/data services discourages investment, limits capacity building, and accelerates wealth migration from Maryland.</p>
Challenges	<p>Maryland faces two major financial stressors: a rising cost of living pushing residents out of state, and the unprecedented threat to federal funding - including the loss of thousands of federal jobs, cuts to grants and contracts, and reduced Medicaid, SNAP, and disaster relief. My office now publishes state-of-the-economy reports to keep policymakers and the public informed. We must be clear-eyed about what reduced federal investment means so we can build a strong financial future together.</p>	<p>Budget & Revenue Shortfalls: structural deficit, slow revenue growth, federal job losses, and high-income out-migration. Economic Competitiveness: business out-migration, affordability, taxes, and inflation. Public Spending Cost: education costs, Medicaid, state pensions, and rural hospitals. Infrastructure Risks: transportation trust fund shortfalls, aging infrastructure (state buildings, water, sewer), energy transition costs, healthcare workforce, cybersecurity, and IT modernization.</p>
Revenue	<p>Economic uncertainty is the defining challenge of revenue forecasting and today's environment is among the most volatile we've seen. Tariffs, federal cuts, inflation, and market instability all hit Maryland revenues in unpredictable ways. As Chair of the Board of Revenue Estimates, I ensured we proactively adjusted projections in December 2024 leading to a year of stable finances, and our new tax system gives us real-time visibility to better understand our financial situation.</p>	<p>I would be straightforward and transparent with taxpayers: Maryland is in a structural deficit. Rose-colored revenue projections create public distrust and lead to spending cuts to public and social programs. Maryland families, businesses, and communities deserve better. I plan to use conservative forecasting practices with a spectrum of investment risk profiles. Build a team of reliable economists and financial analysts who evaluate risks like the migration of businesses and taxpayers.</p>



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lwvmocomd.org



On the Ballot

Attorney General

(see candidates on page 13)

Duties

The Attorney General is the chief legal officer of Maryland who advises the Governor, the legislature, and all state departments, boards and most commissions. This office represents the state in all cases that relate to the Governor, the General Assembly and most state agencies, enforces civil rights and consumer protection laws, investigates medical and investment fraud and oversees the juvenile justice system.

How Elected

The Attorney General is elected statewide.

Term

Four years, no term limit.

Salary

\$175,000 per year

Website

oag.maryland.gov

Who May Vote?

Registered Democrats may vote only for one (1) Democratic candidate.

Registered Republicans may vote only for one (1) Republican candidate.

Questions to the candidates for Attorney General:

- **CIVIL RIGHTS:** What do you see as the greatest threat to Marylanders' civil rights, and what will you do to protect them?
- **CRIMINAL JUSTICE:** Do you support initiatives, such as restorative justice practices, to reduce incarcerations and create better outcomes in the juvenile justice system?
- **PRIORITIES:** As Attorney General, what will be your top priority areas, and how will you implement those priorities?
- **DISINFORMATION:** Will you use the Attorney General's office to protect consumers from disinformation and fraud, including false advertising and scams? If so, how? If not, why not?
- **ADVOCACY:** On what issues, if any, will you support bringing actions against the federal government on behalf of Marylanders?

See page 13 for candidate responses. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidates for Maryland Attorney General

See previous page for details about the office of Attorney General.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidate

Party / Website

Civil Rights

What do you see as the greatest threat to Marylanders' civil rights, and what will you do to protect them?

Criminal Justice

Do you support initiatives, such as restorative justice practices, to reduce incarcerations and create better outcomes in the juvenile justice system?

Priorities

As Attorney General, what will be your top priority areas, and how will you implement those priorities?

Disinformation

Will you use the Attorney General's office to protect consumers from disinformation and fraud, including false advertising and scams? If so, how? If not, why not?

Advocacy

On what issues, if any, will you support bringing actions against the federal government on behalf of Marylanders?

The following Democratic candidate was invited to respond but provided no answers by the print deadline:

Anthony G. Brown

See VOTE411.org for any late responses.

James B. Rutledge, III

R - Republican

www.electjim.com

The greatest threat to Marylanders' civil rights is the erosion of equal protection under the law — when government plays favorites, enforces laws selectively, or uses legal power as a political weapon. I will enforce civil rights protections evenhandedly, without ideology. Every Marylander, regardless of background, politics, or zip code, deserves equal justice. I am committed to uphold the MD Constitution and apply the law without partiality or prejudice as the AG's oath of office requires.

As AG, I will focus on victim-centered justice and public safety. I support approaches that hold young offenders accountable, change the direction of their lives, protect victims, and reduce recidivism. Restorative justice can complement — but not replace — accountability. I will work with prosecutors, juvenile case workers, and community leaders to identify solutions that can actually reduce juvenile crime and create hope for our young people, who are often victims of abuse themselves.

1) Fighting crime by supporting our State's Attorneys and law enforcement and by putting the rule of law ahead of partisan politics; 2) Thwart cyber predators by pushing cyber-crime investigations to the next level, and 3) Protect clean water and our Chesapeake Bay by investigating and prosecuting environmental crimes that harm them. I will promote the Maryland Constitution without partiality or prejudice to build confidence in our institution of law for all Marylanders, not just a favored few.

Absolutely. Protecting Marylanders from consumer fraud, scams, and deceptive business practices is a core responsibility of the AG. I will aggressively seek to hold these predators accountable. What I will not do is use the office to punish political speech or label a political viewpoint as 'disinformation' — that path leads to censorship, which I condemn. The AG does not have the power to declare whose political opinions are acceptable. That decision is made by the voters of Maryland.

The AG should defend the people of MD when the federal government exceeds the authority granted to it by the US Constitution. The MD Constitution declares that federal laws are the Supreme Law of the State and "all the People of this State, are, and shall be bound thereby." It is a grave matter for MD to resist federal authority and sue to nullify federal law. I will make my decisions based on the facts and the law, and my allegiance to the MD Constitution, not to partisan politics.



On the Ballot

U.S. Representative in Congress

(see candidates on pages 15 - 19)

Duties

U.S. Representatives and U.S. Senators make laws, oversee the operations of all federal government departments and investigate issues of national importance. Laws that impose taxes always begin in the House of Representatives. Through the impeachment process, the House of Representatives can recommend that the Senate remove a public official accused of a crime from office.

How Elected

U.S. Representatives are elected by voters residing in each congressional district. Maryland is represented by eight of the 435 U.S. Representatives. Montgomery County is part of three congressional districts – 4, 6 and 8.

Term

Two years, no term limit

Salary

\$174,000

Website

house.gov

Who May Vote?

Registered Democrats may vote only for one (1) Democratic candidate.

Registered Republicans may vote only for one (1) Republican candidate.

Candidates for Representative are grouped by Congressional District. Your ballot will be specific to your district.

District 4.....page 15

District 6.....page 16-17

District 8.....page 18-19

Questions to the candidates for U.S. Representative:

- **ELECTIONS:** What laws will you support to protect election integrity and secure accurate vote counts?
- **IMMIGRATION:** Do you support current approaches to enforcing federal immigration laws? Why or why not?
- **AFFORDABILITY:** Many Marylanders are struggling to afford basic expenses such as housing, groceries, childcare, and healthcare. What will you do to make living in the United States more affordable?
- **INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS:** What do you see as the United States' role on the world stage?
- **SAFETY NET:** How will you safeguard social safety net programs for the most vulnerable Marylanders?

See pages 15 - 19 for candidate responses. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Due to space limitations, only responses to the first three questions are printed. Responses to the remaining two questions may be found at **VOTE411.org** or **lwmocomd.org**.

NOTE: Candidates were advised that references to other candidates or officeholders would not be published. Accordingly, these references have been deleted and replaced with ellipses (...).

To find your Congressional District see your Sample Ballot or go to **voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/VoterSearch** or call the Montgomery County Board of Elections at 240-777-VOTE.

Candidates for U.S. Representative – District 4

See previous page for details about the office of U.S. Representative in Congress.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidate
Party / District / Website

Elections

What laws will you support to protect election integrity and secure accurate vote counts?

Immigration

Do you support current approaches to enforcing federal immigration laws? Why or why not?

Affordability

Many Marylanders are struggling to afford basic expenses such as housing, groceries, childcare, and healthcare. What will you do to make living in the United States more affordable?

Shavonne N. Hedgepeth

D - Democratic / District 4
voteshavonneforcongress.com

The SAVE Act would strip 21 million Americans of voting eligibility through a citizenship documentation trap. The Voting Rights Act is being gutted amid federal inaction on enforcement. I will pass the John Lewis Act, block citizenship requirements, and fund election infrastructure properly. In 2024, Prince George's voters waited in lines past 8 pm because our polling capacity failed them. That is not acceptable, and it is not an accident.

Raids without reform do not fix anything. Families in Langley Park, Hyattsville, and Riverdale are being separated while the backlogged immigration courts sit with over 3 million pending cases. I support comprehensive reform with legal pathways, humane enforcement, and fully funded immigration courts. Prince George's County's restaurants, construction sites, and care facilities run on immigrant labor. Policies that ignore that reality are not serious policies.

In Prince George's County, 52 percent of residents are rent burdened, childcare costs nearly 24,000 dollars annually, and grocery prices are up 32 percent since 2019. I work in an 11 billion dollar public asset portfolio; I know exactly where federal housing and healthcare dollars stall before reaching families. I will fight for Medicare for All, housing vouchers, universal preK, and transit corridors connecting our residents to jobs, not just vote for them.

Glenn F. Ivey

D - Democratic / District 4
glennivey.com

I will continue to support legislation that protects election integrity by expanding voter access, protecting early voting and vote-by-mail, enabling automatic and same-day voter registration, and safeguarding our democratic institutions for future generations. I am also strongly opposed to the SAVE act, which aims to restrict voter access and is a threat to our free and fair elections.

No! The... reckless approach to immigration enforcement, particularly its use of DHS and ICE, has undermined trust in our justice system and left many communities right here in Maryland living in fear. Recent incidents, including fatal shootings involving federal immigration agents, have only deepened these concerns. Everyone, regardless of status, deserves due process. We need immigration policies that uphold the rule of law while respecting human dignity.

During my time in Congress, I've supported efforts to lower the cost of living for Maryland families. But those gains are now being undermined by... reckless tariffs, which act as a hidden tax on working people and drive up prices on everyday goods. At the same time, Republican attacks on the Affordable Care Act are raising health care costs and threatening coverage for millions. I'm fighting back to reverse these harmful policies and protect Maryland families.

The following Democratic candidates were invited to respond but provided no answers by the print deadline:

Joseph Gomes
Jakeya Johnson
Jonathan D. White

See VOTE411.org for any late responses.

Candidate
Party / District / Website

Elections

What laws will you support to protect election integrity and secure accurate vote counts?

Immigration

Do you support current approaches to enforcing federal immigration laws? Why or why not?

Affordability

Many Marylanders are struggling to afford basic expenses such as housing, groceries, childcare, and healthcare. What will you do to make living in the United States more affordable?

The following Republican candidate was invited to respond but provided no answers by the print deadline:

George E. McDermott

See VOTE411.org for any late responses.



Due to space limitations, only responses to the first three questions are printed. Responses to the remaining two questions may be found at VOTE411.org or lvmocomd.org.

Candidates for U.S. Representative – District 6

See page 14 for details about the office of U.S. Representative in Congress.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidate Party / District / Website	Alexis Goldstein D - Democratic / District 6 electalexis.org	April McClain Delaney D - Democratic / District 6 april4congress.com	David J. Trone D - Democratic / District 6 davidtrone.com
<p>Elections</p> <p>What laws will you support to protect election integrity and secure accurate vote counts?</p> <p>Immigration</p> <p>Do you support current approaches to enforcing federal immigration laws? Why or why not?</p> <p>Affordability</p> <p>Many Marylanders are struggling to afford basic expenses such as housing, groceries, childcare, and healthcare. What will you do to make living in the United States more affordable?</p>	<p>I would work to pass the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, the Freedom to Vote Act, and the Native American Voting Rights Act.</p> <p>I do not support the current approach to federal immigration enforcement. The U.S. government is waging war against its people with the weaponization of its immigration enforcement through ICE and other agencies. I believe we need to abolish ICE, and redirect ICE funding to social safety net programs.</p> <p>We know how to lower costs: stop subsidizing billionaires and waging forever wars. We need leaders brave enough to prioritize care: build more affordable housing, pass medicare for all, provide universal free child care, make public colleges free, enshrine the right to unionize for all workers, and cancel student debt.</p>	<p>I will protect free and fair elections by defending access to the ballot while ensuring accurate counts. I opposed the SAVE Act because it would make it harder for eligible Americans to vote. I support strengthening the Voting Rights Act, expanding early and mail voting, improving election security, and providing resources to states to ensure safe, secure, and reliable elections.</p> <p>I do not support current immigration enforcement practices. I introduced the Keep ICE Out of Washington County Act to block a proposed ICE detention center in Hagerstown, and I'm glad construction has been halted while legal challenges move forward. I have never voted to fund ICE—not even a penny. We need a humane system that protects due process and keeps families together, not the lawless approach we're seeing from the current administration.</p> <p>I'm focused on lowering costs and expanding opportunity for working families. My Costs Down, Opportunity Up agenda cracks down on price gouging and junk fees, lowers health care and prescription drug costs, and tackles the housing shortage by building more homes. I'll expand the Child Tax Credit and invest in childcare and paid leave, while lowering energy and grocery costs and ensuring big corporations pay their fair share.</p>	<p>I'm committed to restoring faith and trust in our government by putting an end to voter suppression laws that harm our democracy. We can start by passing the John Lewis Voting Rights Act and defeating harmful legislation like the SAVE Act. Throughout my time in public service, I've consistently taken on the power of special interests, worked to institute term limits and ensure we have free and fair elections, and fought to end gerrymandering and hold our elected officials accountable.</p> <p>Immigrants are the foundation of this country, and passing comprehensive reform measures - instead of demonizing immigrants - is critical. The current approach to enforcing immigration laws is violently inhumane. ICE has no place in Maryland, nor in our country. It is now the highest-funded US law enforcement agency by far. Astronomical growth in their budget will not lead to greater accountability, and I support measures to abolish their overreach.</p> <p>From groceries to gas, tariffs have put an added tax on working families that have turned basic living into barely surviving. In Congress, I will work to repeal these tariffs and enact solutions that alleviate this cost burden while championing legislation that expands affordable and equitable housing, healthcare, energy, and childcare. We need to start planning for how we will rebuild and make a difference when we take back the House in 2026.</p>
<p>Candidate Party / District / Website</p> <p>Elections</p> <p>What laws will you support to protect election integrity and secure accurate vote counts?</p> <p>Immigration</p> <p>Do you support current approaches to enforcing federal immigration laws? Why or why not?</p> <p>Affordability</p> <p>Many Marylanders are struggling to afford basic expenses such as housing, groceries, childcare, and healthcare. What will you do to make living in the United States more affordable?</p>	<p>Ethan P. Wechtaluk D - Democratic / District 6 www.ethanformd.com</p> <p>Americans deserve elections that are secure, transparent, and trusted. Require paper ballots or voter-verifiable paper records nationwide. Mandate risk-limiting audits after every federal election. Fund cybersecurity for state and local election systems. Establish national standards for ballot chain-of-custody and transparency. Implement automatic and same-day voter registration. Set national standards for timely, accurate vote counting.</p> <p>No. Our current immigration system is broken and too often targets families and long-time residents instead of focusing on real threats to public safety. We need clear legal pathways for workers and families, faster and fairer asylum processing, and enforcement that targets criminals; not people simply trying to build a life. America should have laws that are strong, fair, and humane.</p> <p>Costs are rising because corporations and Wall Street investors have rigged the system against working families. I will fight to build more housing, pass Medicare for All to end crushing healthcare costs, enact universal childcare, and crack down on price gouging in groceries and essential goods. We must break up monopolies, stop corporate housing speculation, strengthen unions, and raise wages so families can actually afford to live.</p>	<p>Kiambo "Bo" White D - Democratic / District 6 kiambowhite.com</p> <p>Voters Rights Act, Voter Registration Act, and HAVA. Bring back to the floor the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. Most importantly fight the implementation of the Save Act.</p> <p>No not at all. For decades all sides have stayed to quiet about changes needed in the 21st century. The current approaches are making us less safe and will not lead to a better America in the future.</p> <p>Education, fight for improved wages, housing/medical caps on cost and additional training resources.</p>	<p><i>The following Democratic candidates were invited to respond but provided no answers by the print deadline:</i></p> <p>George Gluck Daniel M. Krakower A. Mark Wilks</p> <p>See VOTE411.org for any late responses.</p>

Candidates for U.S. Representative – District 6

See page 14 for details about the office of U.S. Representative in Congress.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

<p>Candidate Party / District / Website</p>	<p>Chris Burnett R - Republican / District 6 www.burnettforcongress.com</p>	<p>Robin Ficker R - Republican / District 6 www.voteficker.com</p>
<p>Elections</p>	<p>As a retired Marine Corps & national-security lawyer, I will support these laws to protect election integrity: • SAVE America Act – proof of citizenship & photo ID • National Voter ID Requirement • Paper Ballot & Chain-of-Custody Standards • Mandatory Risk-Limiting Audits • Ban on Ballot Harvesting & Drop Boxes • Real-Time Voter Roll Maintenance To preserve and protect our most fundamental right, I will support these measures to ensure only citizens vote and every count is accurately counted.</p>	<p>Mandatory voter ID same as required for driving, boarding an airplane, bank transactions, renting a hotel room, food stamps, welfare, unemployment, social security, for school, getting married, joining the military, or library books. Require US Citizenship to register to vote, unlike Frederick City which recently allowed non-citizens to vote in city elections. Disallow interference with voters within 100 feet of polls. Must be 18 to vote. Ensure integrity of voter machines and counting.</p>
<p>Immigration</p>	<p>Yes. as a Marine Corps officer and lawyer, I believe in accountability, transparency, and integrity. I fully support enforcing federal immigration laws through consistent law enforcement, full accountability (for officers & violators), and transparency via public stats. This strengthens and upholds the rule of law. Change belongs in new legislation by Congress—not discretionary non-enforcement or obstruction. Enforce as written; reform properly.</p>	<p>U.S. allows 1 million vetted legal immigrants/year, more than any country. Keep borders secured to stop illegal immigration. The prior administration's 300,000 illegal immigrants/month, human trafficking, and fentanyl and cocaine transportation non-enforcement were outrageous. Our Democratic opponents' abolish ICE and impeachment approach is not acceptable.</p>
<p>Affordability</p>	<p>We must address affordability through economic opportunity. My family, like many families in Western Maryland, struggles with out-of-control taxes, fees, and the rising cost of everyday goods. I will champion an Innovation Corridor to create high-paying jobs in advanced manufacturing while powering the AI economy through energy production from small modular reactors on existing industrial/commercial sites. Rebuild infrastructure, produce energy, and create jobs to drive prosperity.</p>	<p>I successfully collected 18,000 signatures each to place charter amendments to limit property tax increases and to term limit elected tax-increase specialists. Both passed voter scrutiny despite unanimous opposition from elected Democrats. I'll oppose tax increases and endorse a balanced budget. Protect Social Security and Medicare. Never vote to close the federal government as the Democrats have done. We have 35,000 federal employees and 35,000 government contractors in MD6.</p>
<p>Candidate Party / District / Website</p>	<p>Mariela Roca R - Republican / District 6 rocaforcongress.com</p>	
<p>Elections</p>	<p>I would support legislation such as the "SAVE America Act" that will require all voters to show voter ID, proof of citizenship in order to register to vote, and no mail-in ballots, except for illness, disability, military, or travel.</p>	
<p>Immigration</p>	<p>I support enforcing federal immigration laws and believe immigration enforcement should remain the responsibility of federal law enforcement agencies. At the same time, it's clear our immigration system is outdated and needs serious reform. We must secure the border, enforce the law, and modernize the legal immigration system so it works for our economy and respects the rule of law.</p>	
<p>Affordability</p>	<p>Many Marylanders are struggling because the cost of everything—from groceries to housing to energy, has gone up. I will focus on lowering cost of living by reducing inflationary spending in Washington, expanding domestic energy production to lower energy prices, and cutting unnecessary regulations that drive up the cost of housing/small business operations. We also need to support policies that strengthen the economy and create good-paying jobs so families can get ahead instead of falling behind</p>	



Due to space limitations, only responses to the first three questions are printed. Responses to the remaining two questions may be found at VOTE411.org or lwmocomd.org.

Candidates for U.S. Representative – District 8

See page 14 for details about the office of U.S. Representative in Congress.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidate Party / District / Website	J. D. Kumar D - Democratic / District 8 www.votejdk.com	Stephen Alan Leon D - Democratic / District 8 www.leonforcongress.us	Jamie Raskin D - Democratic / District 8 JamieRaskin.com
<p>Elections</p> <p>What laws will you support to protect election integrity and secure accurate vote counts?</p> <p>Immigration</p> <p>Do you support current approaches to enforcing federal immigration laws? Why or why not?</p> <p>Affordability</p> <p>Many Marylanders are struggling to afford basic expenses such as housing, groceries, childcare, and healthcare. What will you do to make living in the United States more affordable?</p>	<p>Some processes require perfection. Govt decides \$Trillions Budget. Must enforce Immigration Laws. Feels tremendous freedom to walk in, vote with no ID, but, need protections for organized abuse, is a centuries earned right. Our USA long history of voter suppression for African Americans. No joke. Is a cost impediment for poor, govt should provide funds, proper notice, for some difficult to prove citizenship, transient lives. Empower Congress and Judiciary to enforce Civil Rights, VRA, EC, etc.</p> <p>No police state, local, federal, brash fools or a IllegalsUndocumented hate militias against generational merit privilege earned. Our citizenry devalued. Causes duress, mistakes by law enforcement. Replace judges with integrity citizen committees, quick evaluation for Refugees. Legal entry now only for low quota countries for diversity, optimal. Maryland no e-verify or landlord checks. Market USA first Govt Integrity website for labor shortage jobs, then rest of world. Zip Recruiter is flawed.</p> <p>Nationwide cost plus rent control 30 years like mortgages, this is top expense, option to buy apt., credit pctg rent pd. Fund landlords to build more homes, replace loss of profit. Tax Corporate AI profits huge, millions job loss soon, one person entity \$Trillionaire trajectory. Work with Social Dems like Bernie Sanders for wide area equality ideas. Negotiate \$30 weekly package for basic grocery, home needs. Add voluntary third FICA Tax for medicaid. Free child, healthcare for USA Citizens only.</p>	<p>Model legislation, the American Anti-Corruption Act https://represent.us/anticorruption-act/, is paramount for election finance and reform. Further, establishing an electronic two-step authentication voting system with the USPS. I also oppose SAVE Act suite of bills.</p> <p>No, the current ICE response is much different from previous administrations (or previous practice). A moderate approach which balances border security with temporary to permanent statuses would be the humane thing to do. My agenda includes a continental socioeconomics plan by mitigating climate change and illegal immigration with technology investments, without government subsidization.</p> <p>Increasing GDP with technology investments that mitigate climate change without government subsidization, or tariffs. Codifying Data Ownership will provide supplemental income, taxable revenue, and protections from Artificial Intelligence.</p>	<p>I believe that voting rights and free and fair elections are the cornerstone of a healthy democracy. That's why I've supported legislation such as the For the People Act and John Lewis Voting Rights Act to expand voter access, strengthen oversight of voting systems and election technology, prevent voter suppression, promote transparency in election administration and reduce the influence of dark money in politics.</p> <p>I do not support the current administration's approach to enforcing federal immigration laws. In Maryland and all over America, masked federal agents have been indiscriminately rounding up immigrants and regularly intimidating, arresting, harassing and kidnapping people in our streets. I remain committed to ending this reign of terror and forging a bipartisan path forward to rebuild our broken system and provide meaningful pathways to lawful immigration.</p> <p>The administration's billionaire tax cuts and cost-increasing tariffs have made life unaffordable for most Americans. That's why I'm fighting hard to expand federal rental assistance and affordable housing programs, lower prescription drug costs and cap out-of-pocket health care expenses, reduce household costs through child care subsidies and family tax credits, raise the federal minimum wage and strengthen oversight of government spending to ensure taxpayer funds are used responsibly.</p>
<p>Candidate Party / District / Website</p> <p>Elections</p> <p>What laws will you support to protect election integrity and secure accurate vote counts?</p> <p>Immigration</p> <p>Do you support current approaches to enforcing federal immigration laws? Why or why not?</p> <p>Affordability</p> <p>Many Marylanders are struggling to afford basic expenses such as housing, groceries, childcare, and healthcare. What will you do to make living in the United States more affordable?</p>	<p>Boris Kabel Velasquez D - Democratic / District 8 borisvelasquez.com</p> <p>Four steps. First, the Freedom to Vote Act as a baseline. Then the For the People Act, which goes further, closing gaps on dark money, gerrymandering, and ethics. Then my own bill, the American Birthright Act — public funding, paper trails, ranked-choice voting. Finally, the Right to Vote Amendment. Codify it or lose it, so codify. I will protest, organize, and build coalitions for every step. And I will fight for Puerto Rico and D.C. statehood until it is done. (Full answer on website)</p> <p>As a Native American and Marine veteran, I see current enforcement as human rights violations. I support deporting violent criminals. I do not support wasting \$220M in taxpayer funds on corrupt ad contracts, detaining 3,800 children in foul conditions, or executing American citizens in the street. This is not law enforcement. This is a government deliberately terrorizing its own people. (Full answer on website)</p> <p>We have a housing crisis and an empty office crisis simultaneously. I will legislate remote work as the norm, converting vacant buildings into homes. Add FDR-style taxes on oligarchical wealth, anti-price-gouging laws, free childcare, healthcare as a human right, and federalized utilities. The money exists. It is simply being hoarded by the few at the expense of everyone else. (Full answer on website)</p>		

Candidates for U.S. Representative – District 8

See page 14 for details about the office of U.S. Representative in Congress.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidate Party / District / Website	Anita Mpambara Cox R - Republican / District 8 www.anitamcox.com	Cheryl Riley R - Republican / District 8 Cheryl4Maryland.com	Michael Yadeta R - Republican / District 8 www.michaelyadeta.com
<p>Elections</p> <p>What laws will you support to protect election integrity and secure accurate vote counts?</p> <p>Immigration</p> <p>Do you support current approaches to enforcing federal immigration laws? Why or why not?</p> <p>Affordability</p> <p>Many Marylanders are struggling to afford basic expenses such as housing, groceries, childcare, and healthcare. What will you do to make living in the United States more affordable?</p>	<p>Having grown up where elections were neither free nor fair, and served overseas in nine countries, I have witnessed and therefore know what a compromised election looks like. Voting over days instead of just one day raises accountability questions. High turnout in a system people do not trust is not democracy. I support the Restoring Faith in Elections Act — photo ID, paper ballots, restricted mail-in voting — so every legitimately cast vote is protected and the result is trusted and accepted.</p> <p>There was also this...Depends on which immigration you are talking about — illegal or legal? Two very different conversations. As an immigrant who spent years at a US embassy deciding who gets a visa and who does not, knowing the cost of jumping that line - keep the border closed. Deportations must be professional and humane. Legal immigration needs a complete overhaul. Who does America want to admit, and why? That is the nuanced conversation my experience uniquely equips me to have in Congress.</p> <p>I have seen that struggle; people removing items from their grocery carts at checkout. At Kohl's I gave a mother my Amazon returns coupon — she rushed back to get shoes her son needed but could not afford. Affordability is now about needs versus wants in an economy growing at less than 3% annually. I will reduce regulatory burdens, give businesses incentives to create jobs, diversify Maryland away from federal dependency, and expand childcare tax credits so families keep more of what they earn.</p>	<p>I support making Election Day a federal holiday, requiring REAL ID for voter identification, and limiting mail-in voting to active-duty military overseas and citizens with documented disabilities. In-person voting with proper ID creates a verifiable transaction with full chain of custody. A federal holiday eliminates access barriers, reduces costs, and produces results Americans can trust on election night.</p> <p>We are in an immigration crisis. Unvetted individuals, including violent criminals, gang members, cartel operatives, and traffickers, have entered our country unlawfully and been given priority over citizens. I support halting immigration until we identify and remove dangerous individuals already here. I am pro-legal immigration but will support stricter vetting standards going forward to ensure we welcome non-violent, pro-American future citizens.</p> <p>As America grows more affordable, current leadership burdens Maryland families with high taxes and regulations. I'll support cutting wasteful spending, slashing taxes and housing rules to lower property taxes so homes are affordable, achieve energy independence via domestic oil, gas, and nuclear to lower costs in groceries and childcare, and enforce healthcare price transparency for true market competition.</p>	<p>Free and fair elections are the foundation of our democracy. I support secure voter registration, accurate voter rolls, paper ballot records, strong cybersecurity, and transparent audits so every vote is counted accurately. Voting must remain accessible so every eligible citizen can participate confidently.</p> <p>America is both a nation of immigrants and a nation of laws. We must secure our borders while modernizing our legal immigration system. I support enforcing immigration laws, reducing visa backlogs, and creating fair legal pathways that strengthen families and support our workforce.</p> <p>Maryland families face rising costs for housing, groceries, childcare, and healthcare. I will support policies that reduce inflation, expand affordable housing, lower healthcare costs, strengthen small businesses, and invest in workforce training so families can build stable futures.</p>
<p>Candidate Party / District / Website</p> <p>Elections</p> <p>What laws will you support to protect election integrity and secure accurate vote counts?</p> <p>Immigration</p> <p>Do you support current approaches to enforcing federal immigration laws? Why or why not?</p> <p>Affordability</p> <p>Many Marylanders are struggling to afford basic expenses such as housing, groceries, childcare, and healthcare. What will you do to make living in the United States more affordable?</p>	<p><i>The following Republican candidate was invited to respond but provided no answers by the print deadline:</i></p> <p>Donald L. Lech</p> <p>See VOTE411.org for any late responses.</p>		



Due to space limitations, only responses to the first three questions are printed. Responses to the remaining two questions may be found at VOTE411.org or lwmocomd.org.



On the Ballot

Maryland State Senators and Delegates

Districts 9/9A, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 39

(see candidates on pages 21 - 31)

Duties: Maryland State Senators and State Delegates enact laws, raise revenue through taxes and fees, and approve the spending of money by state agencies in an annual budget. They may propose amendments to the state Constitution for ratification by the voters and oversee the operation of all state government departments. The Senate confirms the Governor's appointments of judges and the heads of certain government agencies. Maryland has 47 legislative districts statewide. Each district is represented by one Senator; most districts are represented by three Delegates.

How Elected: State Senators and State Delegates are all elected districtwide every four years. Montgomery County has nine legislative districts (9/9A, 14 – 20 and 39).

Term: Four years, no term limit.

Salary: \$56,636 per year.

Website: mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite

Who May Vote?

Registered Democrats in Districts 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, or 39 may vote for one (1) Democratic candidate for State Senator, and no more than three (3) Democratic candidates for State Delegate. Voters in District 9/9A may vote for one (1) Democratic candidate for State Senator and no more than two (2) Democratic candidates for State Delegate.

Registered Republicans in Districts 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, or 39 may vote for one (1) Republican candidate for State Senator and no more than three (3) Republican candidates for State Delegate. Voters in District 9/9A may vote for one (1) Republican candidate for State Senator and no more than two (2) Republican candidates for State Delegate.

Unsure of your Legislative District? See your Sample Ballot or go to <https://voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/VoterSearch> or call the Montgomery County Board of Elections at 240-777-VOTE.

Questions to the candidates for State Senator and Delegates:

- **DATA CENTERS:** Data centers can bring some important economic benefits, but also have a negative impact on the power grid, water supply, and land use. Do you support the establishment of additional data centers in Maryland? Why or why not?
- **UTILITY COSTS:** What do you see as the factors contributing to escalating utility costs in Maryland? How will you address them?
- **TRANSPORTATION:** Should the availability of public transportation be improved across the state? Why or why not?
- **BUDGET:** Maryland is required to balance the budget every year. What will be your three top budget priorities, and what programs will you fight for?
- **IMMIGRATION:** Immigrants are an important part of our community and make significant contributions, including to Maryland's economy. What will you do to support immigrant communities in Maryland?

See pages 21 - 31 for candidate responses. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Due to space limitations, only responses to the first three questions are printed. Responses to the remaining two questions may be found at VOTE411.org or lwmocomd.org.

NOTE: Candidates were advised that references to other candidates or officeholders would not be published. Accordingly, these references have been deleted and replaced with ellipses (...).

Candidates for State Senator and Delegates - District 9 / 9A

See previous page for details about the offices of State Senator and Delegate.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidates for State Senator

Candidate

Party / District / Website

Katie Fry Hester

D - Democratic / District **9**
www.katiefryhester.com

Yes — but only with responsible safeguards. Data centers can bring jobs and local revenue, but they must not drive-up electric bills, strain water supplies and impact communities. We're anticipating 32GW of new data center growth, and we're already paying \$10-\$20/month in utility bills for increased regional capacity costs. I've been leading a group of state legislators, demanding that data centers pay their fair share and market operators level the playing field to lower your energy bills.

My priority is affordable, reliable power. Energy bills are too high due to increased demand and un-checked utility infrastructure projects. I've pushed for a regional price cap on capacity costs and for data centers to pay for their full energy impact. We must ensure strong oversight of utility rate cases and supplemental projects. This year I introduced SB 992 to strengthen oversight and tariffs for data centers and SB 2 to stop ratepayers from funding excessive utility salaries and bonuses.

Yes - public transportation is essential for jobs, safety, and quality of life. We need more practical options in District 9, like bus rapid transport. I've worked with MDOT on safer bike routes and continue pushing State Highway to improve safety at choke points on Rt. 32 and variable speed limits on Rt 70 based on weather concerns. I support funding to repair aging infrastructure and keep projects moving responsibly to shorten commutes and support economic growth.

Data Centers

Data centers can bring some important economic benefits, but also have a negative impact on the power grid, water supply, and land use. Do you support the establishment of additional data centers in Maryland? Why or why not?

Utility Costs

What do you see as the factors contributing to escalating utility costs in Maryland? How will you address them?

Transportation

Should the availability of public transportation be improved across the state? Why or why not?

Candidates for State Delegate

Chao Wu

D - Democratic / District **9A**
www.chaowu.org

I support responsible development of data centers. They are essential infrastructure for AI, cloud computing, and our digital economy, bringing high paying jobs and tax revenue. However, growth must be sustainable. We must expand energy production, require efficient water use and water conservation, modernize the grid, and ensure large energy users, like data centers, help manage peak demand and bring up their own energy capacity, so Marylanders are not burdened with higher costs.

Rising utility costs are driven by regional market pressures in PJM, growing energy demand, aging infrastructure, and reliance on imported electricity. I am working with legislators across the PJM region to push for market reforms, expand Maryland's energy generation (nuclear, wind, solar, thermal and all other forms), and ensure large energy users share infrastructure costs. My goal is reliable, affordable energy for Maryland families.

Yes. Improving public transportation strengthens our economy, reduces congestion and pollution, increases road safety, and expands opportunity. Maryland should continue investing in Metro, MARC, rapid bus systems, and last-mile connections so residents can reliably reach jobs, schools, and services. Smart transit investments also support environmental goals and create more connected, accessible communities across our state.

Natalie Ziegler

D - Democratic / District **9A**
NatalieforDelegate.com

If we don't allow any data centers in MD, our electric rates will go up but we won't get any tax revenue. That said, we need to carefully control where they are located and ensure that ratepayers don't foot the bill for the increased electricity and water they require.

Increasing demand, in large part from data centers, is the biggest factor, along with what some see as overly aggressive construction and repair projects, paid for by ratepayers. We need to ensure that data centers are bringing their own generation and/or paying for the excess demand they place on the grid, and we need to generate more renewable energy. The General Assembly has passed legislation to help bring down rates and continues to work on that top priority.

We absolutely need to increase public transportation across the state, to deal with traffic congestion, lower emissions, and get people where they need to go. For my district, the bus rapid transit projects between Howard and Montgomery counties that are in the planning stages will be a tremendous help.

Candidates for State Senator

Candidate

Party / District / Website

Ben Hightower

R - Republican / District **9**
www.benhightower.org

I support data center development with conditions. Maryland's grid is strained — we import 40% of our electricity at volatile prices. New facilities must not worsen grid instability or raise costs for ratepayers. Water and land use impacts must be reviewed at the county level, not dictated from Annapolis. Done right, data centers are a win. Done carelessly, they deepen our energy crisis.

Maryland families face a two-sided squeeze. The Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022 retired power plants before replacement capacity was ready, creating a supply gap driving prices up. BGE has exploited grid instability to push through rate increases families cannot absorb. I will oppose premature plant retirements, demand full transparency in BGE's rate-setting, and fight to expand Maryland's in-state energy generation while preserving our environment.

Public transportation works when built around real community needs, demonstrated ridership, and fiscal accountability. District 9 is primarily suburban, but seniors, veterans, and working families have real transit needs. I support locally driven investments like the Flash BRT extension. I will oppose Annapolis mandating one-size-fits-all transit spending without county input and a clear funding plan.

Data Centers

Data centers can bring some important economic benefits, but also have a negative impact on the power grid, water supply, and land use. Do you support the establishment of additional data centers in Maryland? Why or why not?

Utility Costs

What do you see as the factors contributing to escalating utility costs in Maryland? How will you address them?

Transportation

Should the availability of public transportation be improved across the state? Why or why not?

Candidates for State Delegate

Fitzgerald Mofor

R - Republican / District **9A**
www.mofor4md.com

I support data centers only when they are paired with responsible infrastructure planning. They must provide their own power, protect local water supplies, and avoid burdening ratepayers. When properly sited and self-sustaining, they can bring jobs and investment without straining Maryland's grid or communities.

Utility costs are rising because of regulatory mandates, energy shortages, and lack of energy production in our state. Maryland must expand affordable energy options, reduce excessive fees, and while thinking towards the future and nuclear energy. I will push for policies that lower costs at the source and ensure families and small businesses aren't paying for policy mistakes.

Yes, Maryland needs better public transportation, but solutions must fit each region. Rural and suburban areas need flexible, cost effective options, while urban areas need reliability and safety improvements. Smarter planning and not one size fits all mandates will help people get to work, reduce congestion, and support economic growth.

Spencer Rhoda

R - Republican / District **9A**
VoteRhoda.org

Data Centers present a huge opportunity for our state. Our neighbor states are harnessing taxes and fees paid by data centers to improve their energy infrastructure, while Maryland sits on the sidelines. The general assembly has done little to regulate data centers other than to offer them a sales and use tax exemption incentive program. My plan calls for using natural gas production as a bridge to a 100% clean nuclear powered future, paid for entirely by data centers.

The primary reason that we are in an energy crisis in Maryland today: legislators have removed fossil fuel energy production from our state, catering to a misguided climate agenda. Bureaucrats in Annapolis that seek to blame the grid operator or the utility companies need to take a look in the mirror.

Reliable, affordable and accessible public transportation is perhaps the most important economic equalizer and absolutely essential to giving all Marylanders the opportunity to travel around our state for work and pleasure. I have taken a great deal of public transportation throughout my life, and it has never been worse or less enjoyable than it is today.

Candidates for State Senator and Delegates - District 14

See page 20 for details about the offices of State Senator and Delegate.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidates for State Senator

Candidate

Party / District / Website

Data Centers

Data centers can bring some important economic benefits, but also have a negative impact on the power grid, water supply, and land use. Do you support the establishment of additional data centers in Maryland? Why or why not?

Utility Costs

What do you see as the factors contributing to escalating utility costs in Maryland? How will you address them?

Transportation

Should the availability of public transportation be improved across the state? Why or why not?

Craig J. Zucker

D - Democratic / District 14
craigzucker.com

Data centers are coming. Currently, Maryland residents are paying for data centers in other states. Moving forward, we need to ensure that three criteria are met. First, any data center in has to be ratepayer-neutral. Meaning, we do not want customers to subsidize them by paying more. Secondly, they have to be infrastructure aligned, near transition lines. Third, it needs to be responsible. Community benefit agreements need to be in place.

Utility costs are too high. That is why this past session, I have focused on lowering utility costs and making Maryland more affordable. It has been a balancing act of managing costs while enhancing clean energy. During the current legislative session, we are holding utility companies accountable for higher costs while ensuring we put money back in customers' pockets. I, along with my teammates Del. Anne Kaiser, Del. Mireku-North, and candidate Matt Post, are making this a priority.

As Chairman, of the Capital Budget Subcommittee, I have worked to improve public transportation reliability and availability. In addition, I helped secure millions in pedestrian safety improvements in and around the Greater Olney Area, as well as adding more than 400 street lights in the greater Burtonsville area. Statewide, we need to take a balanced approach, ensuring people have access to public transportation while still investing in our critical road and bridge infrastructure.

Candidates for State Delegate

Alicia Contreras-Donello

D - Democratic / District 14
www.aliciacontrerasdonello.com

Data centers can provide significant economic benefits and technological advances, however, their role in our communities needs to be further reviewed. Particularly how these centers impact power grids, utility costs, as well as farmlands, air quality, and waterways across Maryland. I fully support further studying and researching the expansion of data centers with additional community input to positively balance growth with environmental protection and safeguarding communities.

Rising utility costs are straining working families, seniors, and small businesses in Maryland. Addressing this issue requires oversight of pricing, investment in modern infrastructure, and expanded energy-efficiency programs. This includes scaling community and rooftop solar that can lower energy costs and expand access to clean generated power. Therefore, utility costs can remain affordable, climate friendly, and strengthen long-term reliability.

Public transportation is essential to connect Marylanders to jobs, health care, and workforce opportunities. By strengthening public transit, this will help reduce congestion, lower emissions, and support hardworking Marylanders. In recent years, climate change highlights the importance of public transit. By investing in reliable, flexible, and clean systems, we will increase economic opportunity, stabilize costs, and build resilient communities across Maryland.

Anne R. Kaiser

D - Democratic / District 14
www.annekaiser.com

I support MD's data center expansion only if balanced by a strict regulatory framework. While they boost computing quality and support many industries, the cons - including severe energy grid strain, rising consumer costs, and threats to water supply/quality - must be mitigated. Moving forward, we need incentives for environmental protection, a shift to battery power, support for union jobs, and mandatory public notice to ensure these facilities serve the public good without depleting resources.

Escalating utility costs in MD are driven by a huge spike in regional capacity charges, the rapid retirement of aging power plants, and a lack of local generation. Hence, I have supported initiatives to provide direct ratepayer reductions and enhance oversight of utility spending. We must modernize our grid with advanced technology to lower transmission costs, cap executive bonuses, invest more in renewable energy, and ensure large energy users pay their fair share for infrastructure upgrades.

Yes, improving public transit is essential. Robust systems in cities and suburbs benefit the entire state by reducing regional traffic congestion, lowering carbon emissions, and connecting Marylanders to high-quality jobs. Beyond environmental and economic gains, expanded transit increases property values, supports the aging population, and reduces road maintenance costs. By investing in reliable transit, we foster a more mobile workforce and a healthier, more equitable economy for all.

Candidates for State Delegate

Bernice Mireku-North

D - Democratic / District 14
www.mirekunorth.com

There is no question that more data centers are coming to Maryland, which could bring significant, high-standard jobs. However, it is important to create guardrails on its growth. That means supporting efforts to have data centers pay for their own energy infrastructure instead of Maryland families. Data centers should be held accountable for their impact on the grid, water, land, the sensitive information kept, and Maryland's energy bills.

High utility costs are a concern for Maryland families. I have focused on lowering utility costs and making Maryland more affordable. It has been a balancing act of managing costs while enhancing clean energy. During the current legislative session, we are holding utility companies accountable for higher costs while ensuring we put money back in customers' pockets. I, along with my teammates Sen. Craig Zucker, Del. Anne Kaiser, and candidate Matt Post, are making this a priority.

Yes. When we have more public transportation, we have more affordable means to participate in the economy, and more job opportunities for the public transit employees and our unions who support them. Expanding the availability of public transportation offers opportunities to create climate-friendly infrastructure, which includes not only for public transit, but also for pedestrians and cyclists.

Matt Post

D - Democratic / District 14
MattPostforMD.com

No. As Delegate, I'll support a moratorium on new data centers until we create a regulatory framework that prevents them from passing their costs onto our utility bills. (74% of the spike in regional electricity costs is attributed to data center demand.) We should not have to subsidize the wealthiest corporations in the world. Maryland must require new data center projects to hire local workers, bring their own clean energy to cover their power needs, and pay for grid capacity improvements.

Data centers account for 74% of the spike in regional electricity costs, which is passed to our utility bills. As I describe above, I'll fight to make those corporations—not Maryland families—bear that burden. We must also invest in green power to expand our state's energy capacity. As Delegate, I'll support faster permitting for new sustainable generation, transmission, and storage infrastructure: shorter timelines, firm deadlines for agency decisions, & limits on procedural delay.

Yes. Public transit is our best tool for reducing traffic congestion, pollution, and socioeconomic inequities, but only if service is reliable, safe, and frequent enough for people to depend on it. To achieve that, Maryland must build projects faster & cheaper by increasing state capacity, limiting consultants, and expanding best-value procurement. With the right investments, we can avoid the delays & overruns of the Purple Line and all have cleaner air, shorter commutes, and more just transit.

District 14: No Republican candidates for State Senator or Delegate

Candidate

Party / District / Website

Data Centers

Data centers can bring some important economic benefits, but also have a negative impact on the power grid, water supply, and land use. Do you support the establishment of additional data centers in Maryland? Why or why not?

Utility Costs

What do you see as the factors contributing to escalating utility costs in Maryland? How will you address them?

Transportation

Should the availability of public transportation be improved across the state? Why or why not?

Candidates for State Senator and Delegates - District 15

See page 20 for details about the offices of State Senator and Delegate.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidates for State Senator

Brian J. Feldman

D - Democratic / District 15

www.BrianJFeldman.com

Data centers can spur local economic development, attract investment and generate tax revenue. However, data centers are intensive energy users and their massive energy demands can lead to higher utility rates and overwhelm local power grids. Maryland should require data centers to bring their own power generation capacity and they should bear the financial burden of new infrastructure. Costs associated with new data centers should not be borne by Maryland ratepayers on their energy bills.

Demand for energy continues to increase dramatically while in-state generation of energy is not keeping pace with such demand. This supply-demand imbalance is a major driver of escalating utility costs. As Chair of the Senate Committee with jurisdiction over energy policy, I worked with my colleagues this Session to sponsor the Utility Relief Act. The legislation includes a multi-faceted set of policy changes designed to drive down utility costs in Maryland.

As sponsor of the 2018 Metro Funding Act and the 2026 Metro Funding Act, improving public transportation availability is important. Public transportation provides access to jobs, education, healthcare, and recreation. Efficient public transportation can boost economic productivity by reducing traffic congestion while also benefiting the climate by reducing carbon emissions. Investing in public transportation is a strategic move that can lead to multiple long-term benefits for Maryland.

Candidates for State Delegate

Asher E. Beckwitt

D - Democratic / District 15

asherbeckwitt.nationbuilder.com

Data centers power the internet and can bring jobs and tax revenue, but they also use a lot of electricity, water, and land. I believe we need to be thoughtful before building more. Maryland should make sure new data centers don't strain our power grid, raise energy costs, or harm our environment. If they are built, they should be energy-efficient, use renewable power when possible, and be located in appropriate industrial areas, not near neighborhoods.

Utility costs in Maryland are rising due to increased energy demand, aging infrastructure, fuel price volatility, and the need to modernize the power grid. My priority is protecting ratepayers. We should invest in energy efficiency, expand renewable energy to stabilize long-term costs, strengthen oversight of utilities, and ensure grid upgrades are done responsibly so residents are not burdened with unnecessary costs.

Yes. Reliable public transportation connects people to jobs, schools, healthcare, and community life. Maryland should expand bus and rail service, improve reliability and frequency, and better connect suburban and rural areas to job centers. We also need safer roads and support for biking and walking. Improving transportation can reduce congestion, lower emissions, and make it easier for people to get where they need to go.

Linda Foley

D - Democratic / District 15

foleyfor15.com

I support the establishment of additional data centers so long as the centers: 1. supply their own power or otherwise account for increased power usage. 2. are located on appropriately zoned areas that don't impact the quality of life of residents. 3. are required to adhere to environmental regulations that protect water and the area around the data centers.

The most significant driver of rising utility costs, particularly electric utility costs, is increasing demand on the PJM grid. We need to create incentives to provide more accurate load forecasts for rate-setting; institute lower thresholds that trigger data center surcharges; institute modest EMPOWER program reforms; incentivize grid-enhancing technologies to increase capacity; provide retail choice with strict guardrails; and limit charges that can be passed to rate payers.

Yes. Public transit not only helps make transportation more affordable for everyone, it also reduces greenhouse gases and relieves traffic congestion.



Due to space limitations, only responses to the first three questions are printed. Responses to the remaining two questions may be found at VOTE411.org or lvmocomd.org.

District 15: No Republican candidates for State Senator

David V. Fraser-Hidalgo

D - Democratic / District 15

www.fraserfor15.org

In the 2025 legislative session, we passed a bill to study the impacts of data centers in Maryland. The results of that study are due in September 2026. It's important that we wait until we fully understand their potential impacts before making major policy decisions. At the very least larger load data centers need to be responsible and pay for their own power generation plant/facility.

This is due in large part to the rapid growth of data centers and speculation surrounding their development. Federal policy decisions, the cancellation of offshore wind projects and the administrations war on renewable energy development, they have reduced expected supply at the same time that large new data center/AI loads across the county come online. This is a regional problem not just MD. We must invest in new generation, modernize the grid, and reduce utility comp profits.

We must modernize our transportation infrastructure and expand access to mass transit. More efficient and affordable transit options reduce traffic congestion, lower pollution, and improve quality of life. We must also consider new transportation technologies such as autonomous cars, and robotaxis.

Candidates for State Delegate

Lily Qi

D - Democratic / District 15

lilyqiMaryland.com

Regardless of our personal opinions, data centers are integral to our economic competitiveness and quality of life. We can address the climate, energy, and community impacts of data centers without impeding this critical infrastructure. As a legislator, I have helped advance legislation that requires impact analysis for data centers and requires data centers to bring their own energy solutions. This is not a yes-or-no issue, but rather about how to do it responsibly and with community input.

Marylanders' energy sticker shocks result from skyrocketing energy demand driven by the electrification of our economy and lifestyles, inadequate energy generation, and rising transmission and distribution costs. It takes a multi-pronged approach to reduce costs in the short and long term. I have sponsored and passed bills to enhance energy generation and reduce the burden on the grid. I will continue to push for in-state production and hold utilities accountable for energy distribution costs.

Public transportation should be improved across the state. I strongly support dedicated funding for the Maryland Transit Authority and Metro, and for making our communities more walkable, bikeable, and transit-connected. As a representative of a suburban and rural district with no metro stops, I know the challenge of public transit access, especially in high-growth areas such as the Upcounty or rural areas like Poolesville where residents often have no options if they don't drive.

The following Republican candidate was invited to respond but provided no answers by the print deadline:

Peter Chan

See VOTE411.org for any late responses.

Candidates for State Senator and Delegates - District 16

See page 20 for details about the offices of State Senator and Delegate.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

District 16: No Republican candidates for State Senator

Candidates for State Senator

Candidates for State Delegate

Candidate

Party / District / Website

Data Centers

Data centers can bring some important economic benefits, but also have a negative impact on the power grid, water supply, and land use. Do you support the establishment of additional data centers in Maryland? Why or why not?

Utility Costs

What do you see as the factors contributing to escalating utility costs in Maryland? How will you address them?

Transportation

Should the availability of public transportation be improved across the state? Why or why not?

Lou James Bartolo

D - Democratic / District 16
www.loubartolo.com

I support data centers only with strong environmental guardrails. Maryland must require energy efficiency standards, renewable power commitments, and water conservation measures before approving new facilities. Economic development cannot come at the expense of grid reliability or environmental sustainability. Smart policies and community benefit agreements should be prerequisites, not afterthoughts.

Rising utility costs stem from aging infrastructure, insufficient grid investment, and inadequate renewable energy transition planning. I will push for stronger Public Service Commission oversight, expand utility assistance programs for low-income households, and hold utilities accountable through transparent rate review processes.

Absolutely. Reliable public transit reduces congestion, lowers emissions, and expands economic opportunity for working Marylanders who cannot afford cars. I will advocate for sustained Maryland Transit Administration funding, improved rural transit connectivity, and transit-oriented development, ensuring transportation equity reaches every corner of Maryland, not just higher-income corridors.

Tazeen Ahmad

D - Democratic / District 16
www.tazeenformaryland.com

I support the Data Center Impact Analysis and Report passed by the General Assembly to study the environmental, energy, and economic impacts of data center growth in Maryland. If the state moves forward, it must do so responsibly, ensuring developers help expand clean energy supply and locating facilities in appropriate commercial or industrial areas. Thoughtful planning will help Maryland capture economic benefits while protecting our power grid, natural resources, and communities.

Utility costs in Maryland are rising due to increased demand on the regional grid, especially from data centers, and our reliance on imported electricity. Because Maryland is part of the PJM Interconnection grid, residents often share costs from demand generated in other states, like Virginia. We must expand in-state energy production, including wind, solar, and storage, and work with utilities and regulators to ensure a fair, reliable, and affordable energy system for Maryland ratepayers.

Yes. Expanding public transportation creates more affordable, accessible, and sustainable communities. Reliable bus and rail service helps reduce traffic, lower transportation costs, and improve air quality while supporting walkable neighborhoods and environmental justice. I support the Transit and Housing Opportunity Act because it encourages housing and mixed-use development near rail stations, helping residents rely more on transit and fully utilize investments like the Red and Purple Lines.

Marc Korman

D - Democratic / District 16
www.marckorman.com

Data centers have significant costs: including high energy usage; direct environmental impacts; and noise and visual impacts. But there are also benefits for jobs and economic impact, such as increased property tax revenue. And many of the downsides will be felt whether the data center is in our state or nearby, because of our shared grid and ecosystem. The General Assembly overrode the veto of the data center study bill, now due by the end of the year. That should help inform our actions.

Regional data center growth, inflation, tariffs, and now military action in the Mideast are all driving up costs. We need to address this in a comprehensive way and not pretend that there are simple state level solutions to these challenges. But there are actions we can take as a state to increase renewable generation, alter what utilities can include in their rates, and take targeted affordability measures related to our state surcharges, which fund important programs but must be reasonable.

Yes, and I have led the way on this by helping to lead efforts to increase our transportation funding to support our transit programs, including funding for locally operated transit systems; reforming the Maryland Transit Administration; creating continuous funding for Montgomery County's Bus Rapid Transit program; and funding the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, which Maryland is a partner in. I also helped found the Transit Caucus in the General Assembly.

Candidates for State Senator

Candidates for State Delegate

Candidate

Party / District / Website

Data Centers

Data centers can bring some important economic benefits, but also have a negative impact on the power grid, water supply, and land use. Do you support the establishment of additional data centers in Maryland? Why or why not?

Utility Costs

What do you see as the factors contributing to escalating utility costs in Maryland? How will you address them?

Transportation

Should the availability of public transportation be improved across the state? Why or why not?

Sara N. Love

D - Democratic / District 16
saralove4md.com

I think that handled responsibly, allowing a controlled number of data centers in Maryland can be a win-win. We can get the economic benefits including property tax revenue and new jobs, while placing environmental restrictions (e.g. the size, the type of energy they bring, the amount of water used, etc.), and ensuring we place them strategically such as current brownfield sites and avoiding areas that would add to already overburdened communities.

Demand from data centers, price forecasting by utility companies, and higher capacity charges to ensure grid reliability are significant contributors to escalating costs. While most regulation of utility costs is at the federal and regional levels, the General Assembly has worked to bring down costs through: rebates, reducing the EmPOWER surcharge, requiring data centers to pay for their energy infrastructure upgrades, pausing forecasting for a year, and boosting solar.

The availability of public transportation should absolutely be improved across the state. Public transportation is environmentally friendly and cost-effective and can help in reducing traffic. Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland so reducing single occupancy vehicles on our roads will have a tremendous impact on our environment. I am a member of the General Assembly's Transit Caucus, where we work on legislation that will help public transit.

Sarah Wolek

D - Democratic / District 16
votesarahwolek.com

No. Data centers strain the power grid, drive up electricity rates for residents, consume significant water, & frequently disregard local governments & communities from decision-making about what gets built in their own backyards. The construction process itself brings significant environmental disruption. Maryland already has electricity price pressure tied to regional data center demand. These facilities also power AI infrastructure, which carries its own societal risks worth weighing before.

Rising utility costs are driven by several factors: First, surging demand from data centers and AI infrastructure is outpacing grid capacity. Second, federal retreat from clean energy investment has slowed the renewable supply. To address this, Maryland should impose stricter oversight on data center development, strengthen the Public Service Commission's authority over rate requests, and invest state resources in renewable energy to reduce our dependence on federal support.

Yes. Access to reliable public transportation is a basic equity issue, because where you live shouldn't determine whether you can get to work, school, or healthcare. What that looks like will vary by region, but the commitment should be statewide. Reducing car dependency also matters for protecting our environment. Equally important is investing in the quality of existing service (buses, bike lanes, metro, and metro access), which means supporting transit workers with fair wages and conditions.

Teresa Saavedra Woorman

D - Democratic / District 16
www.TeresaWoorman.com

I support a responsible approach to data centers in Maryland. While they can bring jobs and economic activity, they are also extremely energy- and water-intensive. Any expansion must include strong environmental standards, protect our power grid and water resources, and ensure companies pay their fair share for infrastructure upgrades so communities and taxpayers are not left footing the bill.

Utility costs are rising due to increased energy demand, aging grid infrastructure, fuel price volatility, and transmission constraints. We need a balanced approach that accelerates clean energy, improves grid reliability, and strengthens consumer protections. I support investments in efficiency, local energy generation, and modernizing the grid while ensuring utilities are accountable and ratepayers are not unfairly burdened.

Yes. Reliable public transportation connects people to jobs, education, and health care while reducing congestion and emissions. Maryland should invest in expanding and improving transit, including buses, rail, and regional connections, while making systems more frequent, reliable, and accessible. Strong public transportation also supports economic growth and more sustainable communities.

Candidates for State Senator and Delegates - District 16, 17

See page 20 for details about the offices of State Senator and Delegate.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidates for State Delegate

Ann Guthrie Hingston

R - Republican / District 16
www.annformaryland16.com

I support legislation that protects ratepayers, water supply, the grid and allows businesses to create jobs and pay taxes. Regulations are essential to force tech companies to provide their own power generation, limit noise, especially close to schools, protect water supply, and prevent construction on certain agricultural lands. Most important is the establishment and enforcement of compliance standards that are routinely enforced as problems arise and technology evolves.

We are paying for an aging water/sewage system of intertwined jurisdictional authorities immune to oversight, i.e. massive Potomac sewage pipe spill. Clean energy policies promote electricity use but wind, solar can't meet the demand. Such policies have forced reliable energy producers out of Maryland which now imports 40% of its energy. Also mandates to replace gas stoves, leaf blowers put financial burden on residents. Solutions: return to marketplace, build natural gas and nuclear power.

Let's focus on the transit needs and economic viability of Bethesda as a commercial center and its residents who provide major state and county tax revenue. Our livelihoods rely on a well-managed METRO system and roads with accessible parking. The State must act to expand American Legion Bridge, traffic flow on I-495, I-270, and remove obstacles that impede traffic, i.e. Little Falls Parkway road diet and unnecessary bike lanes on major arteries. Purple Line and MARC connections are welcomed.



Due to space limitations, only responses to the first three questions are printed. Responses to the remaining two questions may be found at VOTE411.org or Iwvmocomd.org.

Candidate Party / District / Website

Data Centers

Data centers can bring some important economic benefits, but also have a negative impact on the power grid, water supply, and land use. Do you support the establishment of additional data centers in Maryland? Why or why not?

Utility Costs

What do you see as the factors contributing to escalating utility costs in Maryland? How will you address them?

Transportation

Should the availability of public transportation be improved across the state? Why or why not?

Candidates for State Senator

Philip Cook

D - Democratic / District 17
www.philipformaryland.org

I don't think that data centers are a good idea for Maryland because of the major risks to the power grid, water supply, and land use. Data Centers have a huge environmental impact in the areas where they are located.

The escalating utility costs in Maryland are primarily driven by rapid increases in distribution rates for infrastructure upgrades, high capacity market charges and volatile natural gas supply costs. I support the Ratepayer Freedom Act to prohibit utilities from using ratepayer funds for non-essential expenses such as lobbying. Implementing policies that reduce peak load through improved efficiency as well.

Yes, the availability of public transportation be improved across the state. Having more available public transportation will allow less cars to be on the road allowing for better walking and biking infrastructure and reduction of traffic congestion. This will also be better for the environment.

Cheryl C. Kagan

D - Democratic / District 17
www.CherylKagan.org

I was dubious about bringing data centers to Maryland, but their arrival seems inevitable. As Vice Chair of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, I am working to ensure that there are guardrails to protect water quality, energy use, and neighboring communities.

PJM, the multi-state grid operator, is a large part of the problem. The reality is that Maryland currently has to import most of our power. We must increase supply so as to drive down costs. In the meantime, tighter oversight on the utilities and offering a break to our lower-income neighbors is needed.

I was an outspoken opponent of former Gov. Larry Hogan's proposal to widen I-270 and install toll lanes. We need both roads and mass transit. Funding for Metro, completion of the Purple Line, and flexible telecommuting will help address part of our traffic congestion.

Candidates for State Senator

Helene Meister

R - Republican / District 17
facebook.com/HeleneMeisterforaBetterMaryland

I'm not opposed to data centers, but Maryland should require them to pay the full infrastructure and energy costs they create. Large data centers increase electricity demand and can strain the grid. If grid upgrades such as new power lines, transformers, or substations are needed, companies should cover those costs rather than shifting them onto households through higher electricity rates. Any tax incentives for data centers should also be limited, transparent, and tied to clear public benefits.

Rising utility costs in Maryland reflect several pressures: growing electricity demand, including from data centers; the need to modernize aging grid infrastructure; and clean energy transition costs. Households should not be forced to choose between paying rent and electricity bills. We should expand reliable in-state generation, require large new users to pay the infrastructure costs they create, and strengthen Public Service Commission oversight to protect households from higher rates.

Yes. Reliable public transportation is essential for access to jobs, education, and services, and it helps reduce traffic congestion and transportation costs for households. Maryland should continue investing in transit while improving efficiency, including express or limited-stop train service so riders traveling longer distances can reach major destinations more quickly. Projects that improve east-west mobility, such as the Purple Line, can also strengthen regional connections.

(District 17 continues next page)

Candidates for State Delegates - District 17

See page 20 for details about the offices of State Senator and Delegate.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidates for State Delegate

Candidate

Party / District / Website

Data Centers

Data centers can bring some important economic benefits, but also have a negative impact on the power grid, water supply, and land use. Do you support the establishment of additional data centers in Maryland? Why or why not?

Utility Costs

What do you see as the factors contributing to escalating utility costs in Maryland? How will you address them?

Transportation

Should the availability of public transportation be improved across the state? Why or why not?

Julie Palakovich Carr

D - Democratic / District 17

www.juliepalakovichcarr.com

If more data centers are going to be built, we need more protections in state law. Otherwise, utility customers will pay more for electricity and there will be significant environmental impacts. Maryland should require data centers to self fund all of their needed utility infrastructure, including additional energy generation; to generate a portion of their energy needs with onsite renewable sources; to pay a higher electricity rate than other customers; as well as repeal existing tax breaks.

Data centers are the major cause of increasing electricity prices and that's not fair. New data centers are being built faster than energy production is increasing and much of this growth is happening outside of Maryland. This still impacts our energy prices because we are part of a regional energy grid. We need to enact state requirements on data centers (see my first response), pursue increased renewable energy generation in-state, and provide utility assistance to residents in need.

Yes. As Secretary of the Transit Caucus and a long-time rider myself, I know that public transit is an essential service for many. I have consistently voted for funding for Metro, the Purple Line, and local bus service. I fought for our county to receive ongoing funding for Bus Rapid Transit, including a forthcoming line along 355. We also need to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety to get people to transit stops safely. I sponsored Maryland's Vision Zero law and other roadway safety laws.

Christopher S. Reed

D - Democratic / District 17

www.reed4delegate.com

Data centers don't bring enough positive impacts to the state to outweigh the negatives. Sure, through their construction they employ individuals. But once they're built, the number of employees is miniscule. Their presence is unwelcome in Maryland. They are a strain on our already aging power grid, they drain our water supply, and they're an eyesore on the landscape. Maryland farmers are already dealing with residential expansion, they shouldn't have to deal with data centers too.

Escalating utility costs are driven by the rising regional electricity prices, and the aging infrastructure. Addressing this requires expanding energy generation to increase supply, and investing in modern grid improvement plans. The state needs to pursue a balanced energy planning that will strengthen reliability, while protecting rate payers from unnecessary regulatory or infrastructural costs.

Public transportation is a necessity that hasn't been allowed to flourish to its fullest potential. A great example is the DMV's former trolley lines that were extensive and went everywhere. Instead of growing from that point, they were torn out with the justification of the Metro replacing them. But many areas that were serviced then, are no longer. Then there are plenty of places that are left without a way to travel without a vehicle. I support the expansion of our public transportation.

Candidates for State Delegate

Candidate

Party / District / Website

Data Centers

Data centers can bring some important economic benefits, but also have a negative impact on the power grid, water supply, and land use. Do you support the establishment of additional data centers in Maryland? Why or why not?

Utility Costs

What do you see as the factors contributing to escalating utility costs in Maryland? How will you address them?

Transportation

Should the availability of public transportation be improved across the state? Why or why not?

Ryan Spiegel

D - Democratic / District 17

www.RyanSpiegel.com

I support regulations that ensure data centers do not contribute to unfair increases in utility costs for residents, pay for the cost of their impacts, and are limited to locations that will not create undue burdens for communities. I voted last year to override the governor's veto of legislation requiring a Data Center Impact Study. While I understand that these facilities may be necessary to support technological evolution, I am generally not a fan of having them in Maryland.

Escalating costs are the result of a combination of complex, interrelated factors including unusually cold winter temperatures, lack of accountability by the PJM Interconnection regional grid operator, cuts by the... Administration to federal clean energy programs, and "phantom load" from data center applications. We are addressing these issues with a comprehensive new bill called the Continuing the Next Generation Energy Act, which builds on laws we passed over the last couple years.

Public transportation is a public good and is relied on by hundreds of thousands of residents and workers. I was proud to serve as the Floor Leader on the Metro Funding Modification Act of 2026, which ensures consistent capital funding to maintain and upgrade the WMATA Metro system. As a member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation & Environment, I am deeply involved in ensuring that we invest wisely in public transportation projects across the state.

Joe Vogel

D - Democratic / District 17

JoeVogel.org

Maryland's data center expansion is directly linked to rising utility rates, as families effectively subsidize infrastructure for facilities that spike energy demand. This growth also threatens our water supply and agricultural land. We cannot prioritize expansion over energy affordability. I support innovation, but I will continue to champion policies that protect households from high bills and safeguard our environment against unregulated data center development.

Marylanders need immediate relief from skyrocketing energy bills. This crisis is fueled by transmission delays, data center growth, and utility greed. I'm fighting to hold companies like PEPSCO and Exelon accountable by banning their political contributions and "lavish meal" lobbying. I also supported measures to stop utilities from passing the costs of corporate bonuses and private jets onto ratepayers. We must force PJM to speed up energy connections and make data centers pay their fair share.

Traffic in Gaithersburg and Rockville isn't just an inconvenience, it's lost family time. Reliable, affordable public transit is the key to reclaiming that time, improving quality of life, and protecting our environment. I've voted to fully fund Metro and expand bus access so residents have real options. I will continue advocating for two-way, all-day, every-day service on the MARC Brunswick line, transforming it into a true regional transit backbone for our community.

District 17: No Republican candidates for State Delegate

Candidates for State Senator and Delegates - District 18

See page 20 for details about the offices of State Senator and Delegate.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidates for State Senator

Candidate

Party / District / Website

Data Centers

Data centers can bring some important economic benefits, but also have a negative impact on the power grid, water supply, and land use. Do you support the establishment of additional data centers in Maryland? Why or why not?

Utility Costs

What do you see as the factors contributing to escalating utility costs in Maryland? How will you address them?

Transportation

Should the availability of public transportation be improved across the state? Why or why not?

Jeff Waldstreicher

D - Democratic / District 18
www.jeffwaldstreicher.com

Data centers should undergo a rigorous permitting process for siting. They should bring their own power, so as to not increase costs for ratepayers. If they cannot bring their own power, they should pay a differential rate so that they--never ratepayers--bear the costs of their own electricity usage.

In the State Senate, affordability is my #1 priority. We are taking on greedy power monopolies head-on, including policies that lower costs for consumers. For example, I recently voted for legislation that would ban power company executives from billing their bonuses to everyday ratepayers.

I strongly support a both/and approach to investing in our infrastructure. We can and must invest in our Metro system to keep it safe, clean, and reliable. We must also ensure we're investing in our roads and bridges. This has been a tough winter, so we must show voters we can engage in basic government functions like filling potholes and fixing damaged roads.

Candidates for State Delegate

Aaron M. Kaufman

D - Democratic / District 18
www.aaronkaufmand18.com

Data centers are a complex issue as they bring jobs but also could strain our energy supply and could be harmful to the environment. That is why I was proud to support my colleague Brian Crosby's legislation to study the impact of data centers in Maryland. I look forward to the results of the study.

There are many factors, but I think the major reason for the higher utility costs is excessive executive compensation. That is why this year I was proud to co-sponsor and support HB 1 which limits how much power companies can pay senior executives using rate payer dollars.

Yes, as traffic congestion has such a negative impact on people's quality of life. That is why I have consistently voted to increase funding for Metro and Bus Rapid Transit.

Jared Solomon

D - Democratic / District 18
Twitter: @jaredsolomon

I am willing to consider data centers in Maryland as long as we have proper guardrails in place. Last year, the Maryland General Assembly (MGA) passed legislation requiring a detailed study from state agencies and the University of Maryland on the impacts of data centers in Maryland. That study is due to the MGA by this September and will help us navigate this issue. I strongly believe that data centers must be responsible for their own clean power generation.

Rising costs are driven by rising demand, delays in new generation, and changing national policies. These challenges plague communities across the US. I'm proud of the steps taken by the General Assembly to address these and we will do more next term. The RELIEF Act will at minimum save ratepayers \$150 a year by enhancing permitting for clean energy, streamlining energy relief programs, and closing transmission line loopholes. It also includes policy I worked on to enable balcony solar systems.

Public transportation is critically important for economic mobility and growth, it helps our environment and reduces greenhouse emissions, and it improves access to housing. I have been a strong advocate for increased funding and oversight for WMATA, which has helped dramatically improve service. I have been a leader in the House on improving the MARC rail system, passing several bills. Finally, I've helped bring significant resources back to the county to build out our Bus Rapid Transit system.

Candidates for State Delegate

Candidate

Party / District / Website

Data Centers

Data centers can bring some important economic benefits, but also have a negative impact on the power grid, water supply, and land use. Do you support the establishment of additional data centers in Maryland? Why or why not?

Utility Costs

What do you see as the factors contributing to escalating utility costs in Maryland? How will you address them?

Transportation

Should the availability of public transportation be improved across the state? Why or why not?

District 18: No Republican candidates for State Senator or Delegate



Due to space limitations, only responses to the first three questions are printed. Responses to the remaining two questions may be found at VOTE411.org or lvmocomd.org.

Kate Stein

D - Democratic / District 18
katesteind18.com

Data centers drive up costs for all ratepayers and employ few permanent workers once built. I support them only with conditions: energy self-sufficiency, industrial-only zoning, union labor, apprenticeship participation, and a tech-profits fund to support workers displaced by AI. No targeted tax incentives. I support the Utility RELIEF Act's data center guardrails moving through the legislature.

Rising costs stem from surging demand, retiring power plants, and an unaccountable PJM grid operator. In 2024, PJM capacity auction prices jumped 800%, hitting Maryland ratepayers in 2025. I will push for tiered rates that make heavy users pay more, incentivize local solar and wind, and support studying whether Maryland should reduce or exit its reliance on PJM.

Yes. Lack of transit perpetuates income inequality, blocks civic participation, and reinforces segregation. It is deeply troubling that our state capital is so inaccessible. I note the irony: Hagerstown now builds electric metro railcars for DC and Baltimore, yet has no operable passenger rail connecting it to the rest of Maryland. We must invest in rail and rapid electric bus statewide.

The following Democratic candidate was invited to respond but provided no answers by the print deadline:

Emily Shetty

See VOTE411.org for any late responses.

Candidates for State Senator and Delegates - District 19

See page 20 for details about the offices of State Senator and Delegate.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidates for State Senator

Candidate

Party / District / Website

Data Centers

Data centers can bring some important economic benefits, but also have a negative impact on the power grid, water supply, and land use. Do you support the establishment of additional data centers in Maryland? Why or why not?

Utility Costs

What do you see as the factors contributing to escalating utility costs in Maryland? How will you address them?

Transportation

Should the availability of public transportation be improved across the state? Why or why not?

Ben Kramer

D - Democratic / District 19
www.benkramer.org

Data centers can bring economic growth, jobs, and critical digital infrastructure. However, their significant energy and infrastructure demands must be borne by the companies that profit from them—not everyday ratepayers. Those who benefit from data centers should be responsible for covering the full costs of power, grid upgrades, environmental protections and related impacts to ensure residential and small business customers are not subsidizing private industry.

Escalating utility costs are driven by rising infrastructure needs, fuel volatility, and large new energy demands from facilities like data centers. While data centers support economic growth, their significant power use strains the grid. Costs can be reduced by requiring large users to pay for needed upgrades, improving energy efficiency, and investing in diversified, reliable energy sources that stabilize long-term prices.

Maryland can strengthen public transportation by expanding reliable, high-capacity options. This includes investing in Bus Rapid Transit, advancing the Red Line in Baltimore, and completing the Purple Line serving Montgomery County and Prince George's County. Modern transit reduces congestion, connects workers to jobs, lowers emissions, and strengthens regional economic growth.

Candidates for State Delegate

Charlotte Crutchfield

D - Democratic / District 19
www.voteforcharlotte.com

I'm concerned about establishing additional data centers because the state and local municipalities have not created enough safeguards and guardrails to protect our communities from rising energy costs, environmental impacts (noise/pollution) and changes in land use that are an outcome of data centers.

(1) Extreme weather; (2) Closure of the older fossil-fuel power plants combined with slower adoption of new lower-cost renewable energy; and (3) Utility companies that are investing in upgrades. Can be addressed with my support and vote for bills that strengthen protections against unnecessary rate increases, improving efficiency and accountability of state energy programs, and ensuring that large energy users bear the costs for their energy usage.

Yes, it could boost the State's economic competitiveness by connecting residents with jobs; reducing long commute times; creating an environmental/health benefit resulting in lower air pollution and generally promoting public health; and promoting reliability and efficiency with the public transit systems.

Sunil Dasgupta

D - Democratic / District 19
votesunil.com

MD should add data centers within a strong regulatory regime that requires commitment to investment in new power generation matching consumption, closed loop water use, and the use of brownfield land. I'd also work with legislators from other like-minded regional grid states to prevent free riding on the grid. Lastly, data centers are high-investment, low-employment, and use mature technology. MD should also target higher employment and cutting-edge breakthrough research and technology.

Causes: Data center, electrification demand; supply constraints from local and PJM permitting, capital costs. Short-term solutions: Extend electricity auction cap, demand PJM clear clean energy interconnection backlog, regulate data centers, energy subsidy. Medium-term: Seek fixes to PJM's governance model, bring the state back into resource adequacy planning, logroll demand management and permitting reform. Long-term: interstate compact on resource planning, demand management, renewables.

Reliable, frequent, safe, and affordable transit can change driving habits, energize economic development, and enhance land value. The challenge, the Purple Line shows, is the sheer size of required capital and only dense population centers can support the investment. Tying transit investment with affordable housing development could offset build costs and address housing shortage, but it is not a construction model we use. MD should also nudge VA and DC toward permanent WMATA funding.

Candidates for State Delegate

Candidate

Party / District / Website

Data Centers

Data centers can bring some important economic benefits, but also have a negative impact on the power grid, water supply, and land use. Do you support the establishment of additional data centers in Maryland? Why or why not?

Utility Costs

What do you see as the factors contributing to escalating utility costs in Maryland? How will you address them?

Transportation

Should the availability of public transportation be improved across the state? Why or why not?

District 19: No Republican candidates for State Senator

Sebastian Johnson

D - Democratic / District 19
www.sebastianjohnson.org

I do not support more data centers in our state. The tax revenue they generate is more than offset by their utility costs, they generate air and noise pollution, and their demand for electricity and water strain our infrastructure and drive up rates for residents. Worse, data centers create few permanent jobs and contribute to labor market disruption and contraction through the advancement of AI technologies. They give a short-term revenue boost at the expense of long-term economic prosperity.

Factors driving the rise in utility costs in Maryland include a lack of competition in the consumer electricity marketplace, increased energy demand from data centers, and red tape holding up new renewable energy projects. I support the Utility RELIEF Act, which will help to reduce electric bills in the short term by addressing these factors. The state should also expedite its approval process and pressure PJM (the entity that manages our grid) to streamline approval for new renewable projects.

Maryland needs to improve existing transit services and expand access to reduce dependency on automobiles. Increasing transit options and concentrating new development along transit corridors is a smart approach to growth that reduces emissions, curbs sprawl and traffic, and creates dynamic nodes of economic activity. My priorities include further integration of MARC and VRE commuter rail, and working to establish dedicated funding for WMATA and other regional transit investments.

Gabriel Sorrel

D - Democratic / District 19
www.mdresist.com

I do not, as the economic benefit is relatively small once construction of data centers is complete while the cost to our power grid and environment is continuous and significant. Furthermore, there is a high chance the market bubble for AI companies will pop in the next couple of years and we'll have data centers left incomplete or abandoned for lack of use.

I believe it is well known that AI data centers, particularly in Virginia, are driving up the cost for everyone on our shared grid. We should also acknowledge that recent state legislation has unfortunately driven a lot of energy producers out of the market, resulting in Montgomery County returning to a de facto monopoly. I believe Maryland must negotiate with Virginia to ensure data centers either provide their own power or are heavily taxed, while at investing heavily in local solar power.

Absolutely. Not only does public transportation provide a more environmentally friendly alternative to cars, there is plenty of research connecting inexpensive and readily available public transportation to increased economic activity in a region. Further, our roads are already overly congested and expanding highways will only worsen the problem in the long run.

Candidates for State Senator and Delegates - District 19

See page 20 for details about the offices of State Senator and Delegate.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidates for State Delegate

Vaughn Stewart

D - Democratic / District 19
votevaughn.com

Data centers bring some economic benefit, but I am deeply skeptical of expanding them without guardrails. They strain our power grid, water supply, and land. I support a moratorium until we have real answers. I voted for the Utility RELIEF Act, sponsored by the Speaker, which requires data centers to pay for their own energy infrastructure rather than shifting those costs onto Maryland families. Big Tech should not freeload on our grid at ratepayers expense.

Marylanders are paying more because utilities keep passing costs onto ratepayers, PJM has mismanaged the regional grid, transmission costs are rising, and Maryland has not built enough in-state power. We need immediate relief and structural reform. I support the Utility RELIEF package to return money to families, tighten oversight of utility cost recovery, and make data centers pay their own way, while also investing in more local clean energy so we do not retreat from our climate goals.

Yes, absolutely. I helped secure stable dedicated funding for Metro, which earned recognition as Transit Agency of the Year after a remarkable turnaround in safety and reliability. I support the DMVMoves framework to modernize Metro with \$460 million in new annual capital funding. MARC ridership is surging and I support expanding service to all-day, seven days a week. Reliable, affordable transit reduces congestion, cuts emissions, and connects our communities to opportunity.

Alec Stone

D - Democratic / District 19
Email: alec4delegate@gmail.com

With more than 40 data centers in Maryland and regulated by the state's Department of Energy, there needs to be more transparency on the financial investment. High levels of pollution as well as decreased employment rates in minority communities need to be addressed. Ultimately, the State has to weigh the cost of building to the community's benefit.

Fluctuating temperatures require more usage, causing energy bills to rise as utility companies charge consumers to deliver essential services. The companies' profit incentives are in building large-scale enterprises, then passing those costs on. The State Legislature should grant stronger oversight to the Public Service Commission, ensuring citizens have the necessary utilities at affordable rates and with reliable services.

While much of Maryland is suburban or rural, there are many jurisdictions with dense populations. In these communities, people rely on public transportation. Improvement and investment in bus, rail and metro services have the potential for environmentally sound, economically priced, and conveniently available systems that can help ease hurdles in commuting.

Christa Tichy

D - Democratic / District 19
christatichy.com

I support. They can bring investment and jobs to Maryland, but their development must not raise energy costs for Maryland families and small businesses. Also in ways that protect resources. These centers require enormous amounts of electricity and will drive the need for new power generation and grid upgrades. Maryland should ensure that large energy users like data centers pay the full cost of the power/infrastructure needed to serve them, rather than shifting those costs onto other ratepayers.

Energy costs in Maryland are rising because electricity demand is growing while supply has not kept pace. Several fossil fuel plants have retired without enough new generation to replace them. At the same time, PJM capacity prices are increasing due in part to projected demand from large users like data centers. Maryland, like PJM, has also struggled to efficiently bring new renewable projects online. We need to accelerate generation and ensure large new energy users pay their fair share.

Yes. Communities like those in District 19 rely heavily on public transportation, and many residents in urban areas depend on buses and Metro to get to and from work every day. Improving reliability and access is essential for economic opportunity. At the same time, Maryland must maintain a responsible balance between investing in transit and maintaining roads so rural and suburban residents can travel safely and efficiently.

District 19: No Republican candidates for State Delegate



Due to space limitations, only responses to the first three questions are printed. Responses to the remaining two questions may be found at VOTE411.org or lwmocomd.org.

Candidates for State Senator and Delegates - District 20

See page 20 for details about the offices of State Senator and Delegate.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidates for State Senator

Candidates for State Delegate

Candidate

Party / District / Website

Data Centers

Data centers can bring some important economic benefits, but also have a negative impact on the power grid, water supply, and land use. Do you support the establishment of additional data centers in Maryland? Why or why not?

Utility Costs

What do you see as the factors contributing to escalating utility costs in Maryland? How will you address them?

Transportation

Should the availability of public transportation be improved across the state? Why or why not?

The following Democratic candidate was invited to respond but provided no answers by the print deadline:

Will Smith

See VOTE411.org for any late responses.

Lorig Charkoudian

D - Democratic / District 20
lorigd20.com

I have introduced legislation to ensure that data centers in Maryland are good grid citizens and bringing on new clean energy to meet their load. I have also advocated with PJM (the regional grid operator) and FERC for cost allocation rules that ensure data centers pay their fair share. My goal with this legislation and advocacy is for Maryland to receive the economic benefits, while ensuring that our residents are not paying more for electricity and we continue to progress on our climate goals.

1) Utilities taking advantage of rate-making systems to increase profit at the expense of rate-payers; 2) PJM (regional grid operator) blocking the path for new clean (cheap) energy from getting online; 3) data center load growth increasing capacity costs; 4) overdependence on fossil fuels, which are volatile in global markets. I have led on legislation to reign in utility profits; bring on more low-cost/stable clean energy; ensuring data centers pay their fair share; & reforming PJM.

Public transportation is crucial for economic development, equity, access to economic opportunity, public health, environmental sustainability, and for thriving communities. Maryland must do better with our investment in public transportation to fully meet the potential. As the House Chair of the Transit Caucus, I have advocated for and will continue to fight for greater and more equitable investments in transit.

David Moon

D - Democratic / District 20
www.DavidMoon.us

Data centers should come with energy generation and water consumption solutions, rather than overburdening local infrastructure. Additionally we should ensure that local communities will actually enjoy longterm economic benefits from their presence, and that they are sited away from environmentally sensitive areas. Lastly, we should minimize noise pollution and other impacts on residential communities.

Energy costs are rising both nationally & internationally, so Maryland must promote in-state power generation, starting with the cleanest energy we can quickly bring online. We are underway getting renewable energy and battery storage implemented, as we weigh longer term solutions. But we must also demand Congress begin using its power to restore clean energy funding or Maryland that has been illegally withheld by the... administration

Giving residents & commuters a range of quick and convenient options to move around is key to a high quality of life for both transit riders and drivers. More transit ridership reduces or mitigates traffic growth, and new road design principles can be opportunities for expanded transportation options, such as transit lanes and access for walking or biking. Mobility is the lifeblood of our regional economy.

Candidates for State Delegate

Candidate

Party / District / Website

Data Centers

Data centers can bring some important economic benefits, but also have a negative impact on the power grid, water supply, and land use. Do you support the establishment of additional data centers in Maryland? Why or why not?

Utility Costs

What do you see as the factors contributing to escalating utility costs in Maryland? How will you address them?

Transportation

Should the availability of public transportation be improved across the state? Why or why not?

District 20: No Republican candidates for State Senator

The following Democratic candidate was invited to respond but provided no answers by the print deadline:

Jheanelle K. Wilkins

See VOTE411.org for any late responses.

District 20: No Republican candidates for State Delegate



Due to space limitations, only responses to the first three questions are printed. Responses to the remaining two questions may be found at VOTE411.org or lvmocomd.org.

Candidates for State Senator and Delegates - District 39

See page 20 for details about the offices of State Senator and Delegate.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

District 39: No Republican candidates for State Senator or Delegate

Candidates for State Senator

Nancy J. King

D - Democratic / District 39

Instagram: [senatornancy39](#)

Any new data centers must cover the cost of their electricity; local residents must not bear the burden of further rising energy costs from these facilities. We must also ensure that environmental impacts are mitigated and prioritize the escalating housing crisis when assessing land use. Data centers can create needed jobs and boost our local economy but our state and local governments must work together to ensure they do not threaten our communities.

Increased energy demand, a Republican led federal government who has cancelled clean energy projects Maryland is leading by example and I am fighting corporate interests and PJM to remove these barriers, lower costs and preserve our future. that would provide affordable and environmentally friendly electricity for years to come, and a regional grid operator in PJM that is prioritizing profits instead of approving new electricity projects has created unbearably high energy costs for Marylanders.

Our investments in public transportation like the Purple Line will finally connect some of our communities, but Upcounty residents in District 39 need to secure access in areas where the tracks do not reach. We need to increase bus routes and the roads that carry them to relieve congestion and give our residents the ability to access and grow the local economy. We must also continue prioritizing safe and widespread bike and pedestrian access.

Amar Mukunda

D - Democratic / District 39

[mukundaformaryland.com](#)

I was born and raised in Maryland. I won't let industry pressure damage our environment or raise costs for families. Unlike my opponent, I've refused all Big Tech donations and will oppose any datacenter that raises our utility or water bills. As a computer science and Stanford energy engineering graduate, I also know we can find a better path to modernizing our economy, resisting pressure from tech billionaires, building datacenters with 100% clean energy, and creating real local benefits.

Last year utilities spent over \$2.2 million lobbying Maryland legislators, including my opponent. Many states have banned utilities from donating to campaigns because it creates a conflict of interest. It's time for Maryland to change and elect leaders with a new vision. I'm not taking a penny of corporate money and will use my experience to help us deploy the low-cost solar and wind power we need while rewriting unfair rules so that datacenters can't pass their costs onto Maryland families.

Absolutely. Our country is far behind our peer nations. What we consider bold is standard in much of the world. We should extend the Red Line to Germantown and connect it to the Silver Line at Dulles, enable two-way, all-day MARC service, and invest in high-speed rail with stops in Clarksburg and Frederick. This isn't public transit vs. drivers. It's about giving parents more time at home with their children. Better transit means fewer cars on the road and shorter commutes for everyone.

Destiny Drake West

D - Democratic / District 39

[destinyforthepeople.com](#)

Data centers can support economic growth, but expansion must be carefully planned to protect the power grid, water resources, and surrounding communities. Maryland should require strong energy standards, transparent grid planning, and responsible siting so economic growth does not repeat the historic pattern of placing environmental burdens on already overburdened neighborhoods, often low-income communities and communities of color.

Utility costs are rising due to aging infrastructure, energy market volatility, and growing electricity demand on our regional grid. With an active young family at home, I personally understand the importance of managing utility bills to keep household budgets stable. Maryland should expand energy efficiency, strengthen consumer protections, and invest in clean energy that stabilizes long-term costs.

Yes. Transportation determines whether households can reach jobs, schools, and healthcare affordably. As a working mother commuting from Germantown into DC, I have experienced how unreliable transit threatens job stability, strains family budgets, and takes precious time away from loved ones. Maryland must expand reliable public transit so families can move safely and conveniently throughout the region.

Candidates for State Delegate

Gabriel Acevero

D - Democratic / District 39

[www.gabeacevero.org](#)

I do not support the establishment of additional data centers in Maryland. Data centers strain an already outdated grid, require massive water usage, and consume land that could otherwise support housing and community development. We can expand digital infrastructure without sacrificing environmental health. As Delegate, I have been focused on environmental justice to include supporting the Climate Solutions Now Act, which directs Maryland toward cleaner, community centered development.

Rising utility costs are a major concern and I have worked to address the energy monopoly in Maryland and predatory practices that drive these increases. Over the past several years, I have supported legislation to lower household energy burdens, strengthening consumer protection and expand programs that help low income families across our state such as the Community Solar Program, which lowers bills for renters and families who cannot install rooftop solar.

Yes, Maryland must improve and expand public transportation because it is essential to our economy, working families, students, seniors, and it's central to meeting our state's climate goals. As Delegate, I have consistently supported efforts to strengthen and modernize our transit system such as the Purple Line expansion as well as voting in favor of the WMATA (Metro) Funding Act of 2026. Investing in public transit is one of the surest ways to reduce traffic while spurring economic activity.

Candidates for State Delegate

George Lluberres

D - Democratic / District 39

[www.georgeformaryland.com](#)

I support economic growth with appropriate guardrails. First, Maryland needs to establish clear standards for high-energy facilities like data centers that protect our resources, strengthen the power grid, and that also align with our climate goals without adding burdens to already overburdened communities. Economic growth should not come at the expense of long-term sustainability.

Utility bills are rising because our grid is aging, fuel prices are volatile, and demand is going up. Maryland also imports about 40% of its electricity, which makes us vulnerable. The state needs to hold utilities accountable and require large users to pay for the upgrades they are driving, not make working families foot the bill.

Yes. Public transportation is an important way to expand opportunity and affordability. It reduces traffic, connects us to essential services, and gets us to work and school. Expanding reliable bus service, off-peak MARC trains, and safe walking and biking options will make our communities better.

Lesley J. Lopez

D - Democratic / District 39

[www.lopezformaryland.com](#)

I'm deeply skeptical of unchecked expansion. Data centers unfortunately prioritize corporate profit while straining our resources, like clean water and electricity. So I oppose new facilities unless they meet strict climate, water, and labor standards, and include community benefits without displacing housing or green space.

Energy costs remain one of my top priorities. Rising costs come from our aging infrastructure, climate-driven demand spikes and federal underinvestment in renewables. I believe that we should tackle costs with targeted grid modernization, expanded energy efficiency programs, smart rate design, and investments in distributed renewables and storage to reduce peak load.

Yes, let's expand reliable, multimodal transit statewide. It's clear that public transit reduces congestion (like on I270) and carbon emissions. Let's prioritize funding Metro, bus rapid transit where it makes sense, and align funding with land-use planning. In particular, we should continue to expand transit options that link people to jobs, schools, and healthcare, focus on rural and underserved communities, and coordinate transit planning with housing and workforce development

Greg Wims

D - Democratic / District 39

[gregwims.com](#)

I believe that data centers can be a real economic asset for Maryland — but not if everyday residents are left footing the bill for their energy demands. I want to hold these companies accountable for the infrastructure costs they create. I support any legislation that requires data centers to fund their own energy infrastructure upgrades, protecting Marylanders from absorbing the cost of big tech's impact on our grid.

Utility costs are rising because of surging energy demand from data centers, record-high electricity auction prices, and aging infrastructure. Too much of that cost being passed directly to residents. Utility companies have also been allowed to raise rates with little accountability. That's why I support the Utility RELIEF Act, which allocates \$100 million to lower energy bills. If this bill passes, Maryland families could save at least \$150 annually on their utility bills.

Yes. As a member of the House Transit Caucus, this is something I continue to discuss with my colleagues. Expanding public transportation to me is about creating good-paying jobs, strengthening infrastructure, and making sure every Marylander has reliable ways to move through their community. That said, expansion has to be done right. I'm committed to ensuring that modernization efforts don't come at the expense of transit workers. Technology should support our workforce, not replace it.

Robert T. Wu

D - Democratic / District 39

[www.voterobwu.com](#)

Approval of data centers in Maryland should be heavily scrutinized to ensure they do not conflict with competing land uses, and do not impact resources like power and water. They must not be sited near communities nor impact green spaces or agricultural areas. They should only use closed-loop cooling and not impact the water supply, and must not impact the power grid (Maryland is already experiencing a deficit in power generation. Data centers will only make it worse).

Maryland has a large deficit in consumption versus generation of electricity. We should focus on improving the efficiency of the power grid and responsibly expanding green energy, such as wind and solar. Nuclear is also a clean, efficient option if it is implemented thoughtfully. We should also focus on setting standards and incentives to help consumers conserve electricity and water and become more efficient in their use of our natural resources.

Yes. One hundred percent yes. Maryland has an abysmal record of investing in public transportation infrastructure. Recent investments in WMATA are encouraging, but it is not enough. And it is not just investment in public transportation that is needed. We also need more efficient land use to support more robust public transportation. In our area, for example, I would love to see the county move forward with bus rapid transit on Route 355 and we should push for better MARC service.



On the Ballot

Montgomery County Executive

(see candidates on page 33 - 35)

Duties

The Montgomery County Executive oversees the day-to-day operations of county departments. The Executive appoints the heads of departments and develops annual budgets, policies, programs and legislation for consideration by the County Council. The Executive implements laws, issues executive orders, appoints residents to boards and commissions and represents the county in external dealings.

How Elected

The County Executive is elected countywide.

Term

Four years, limited to two consecutive terms.

Salary

\$239,383 per year.

Website

montgomerycountymd.gov/exec/index.html

Who May Vote?

Registered Democrats may vote for one (1) Democratic candidate.

Registered Republicans may vote for one (1) Republican candidate.

Questions to the candidates for Montgomery County Executive:

- **QUALIFICATIONS:** How do your background and experience prepare you to be County Executive?
- **HOUSING:** What initiatives will you support to increase an affordable housing supply countywide?
- **BUDGET PRIORITIES:** Which operating budget revenue and spending items will you seek to increase and decrease and why?
- **SAFETY NET SERVICES:** What initiatives will you support, if any, to ensure that residents across the county receive safety net services?
- **PUBLIC SAFETY:** What policies will you support to ensure the safety of our large and diverse population?

See pages 33 - 35 for candidate responses. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

NOTE: Candidates were advised that references to other candidates or officeholders would not be published. Accordingly, these references have been deleted and replaced with ellipses (...).

Candidates for Montgomery County Executive

See previous page for details about the office of Montgomery County Executive.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidate Party / Website	Mithun Banerjee D - Democratic www.mithunbanerjee.com	Andrew Friedson D - Democratic andrewfriedson.com	Evan Glass D - Democratic www.evanglass.com
Qualifications	<p>Mr. Mithun Banerjee, a loving father, husband, & son, resides in Montgomery County, Maryland, with his wife and son. Faculty Member & a Research Assistant, with a distinguished career spanning Microsoft, Oracle, US Department of Veteran's Affairs, T-Mobile, Honeywell, etc. He has successfully managed multi-million dollar projects as a Program/Project Manager. He holds a Master's degree in Electrical Engineering from Lamar University, Texas (2004) & a Bachelor's Degree in Electronics & Communication</p>	<p>As Council President and a two-term Councilmember, I have a proven record of pragmatic leadership, delivering results without increasing taxes. I've led efforts to address housing affordability and modernize our economy. My fiscal and economic policy background and ability to build coalitions to deliver results positions me to lead our county in this unprecedented moment. I'm running for County Executive to ensure Montgomery County remains a place where everyone can afford to live and thrive.</p>	<p>Elected in 2018 as the first openly LGBTQ+ councilmember, I have drawn on my experience as a CNN journalist, federal contractor with the VA and nonprofit executive to deliver results for the community. I've led efforts to strengthen our economy, protect our diversity, and invest in our classrooms and students. By closing the gender pay gap, making buses free, and introducing the ICE OUT Act, I've been fighting and will continue to fight for a better future for all residents.</p>
Housing	<p>1) Provide Affordable Housing by Public-Private Partnership & Address Housing Issue 2) Address Housing-Homeless Issue by providing Public Housing on No-Profit-No-Loss Basis 3) Freeze Property Taxes for Properties Worth <\$1 Million & maintain a Balanced Budget 4) Reduce the Homestead Tax Credit Cap from 10% to 6% for all Residents 5) Provide Higher Homeowners Tax Credits to Seniors, Special Needs & Low Income Households & Provide Funding to Adult Protective Services & expand Services to Seniors</p>	<p>We have to make it cheaper and easier to buy, build, and rent homes in Montgomery County. That requires increasing housing options across the income spectrum by: expanding the Housing Initiative Fund and Housing Production Fund to build income-restricted housing; leveraging publicly-owned land for affordable housing; and reducing building costs with faster reviews and approvals. I will continue to create opportunities for walkable, inclusive communities through transit-oriented smart growth.</p>	<p>It is too expensive to live in Montgomery County. Our kids and grandkids cannot afford to live here and there are limited options for seniors looking to downsize. To increase affordable housing countywide, I support converting under-used office space to housing, building more homes near transit, and using public land for mixed-income housing. We must also strengthen our Housing Initiative Fund and partner with nonprofits and the private sector to build and preserve affordable homes.</p>
Budget Priorities	<p>1) Provide Free Childcare & Free Universal Pre-K by increasing Tax on Individual & Businesses Profiting \$1 Million+ per year by working with State Legislators 3) Make Montgomery Community College Tuition Free 4) Any Full Time Service Employees & Educators from Montgomery County & MCPS should get no less than \$60K & \$80K per year with Healthcare & Pension Benefits 6) Once elected, I volunteer to take \$120K as salary as County Executive instead of current salary ~232K & invest in MCPS Budget</p>	<p>Our budget must reflect our values while maintaining affordability for families and sustainability for future generations. I will prioritize core services: world-class schools, public safety, safety-net services, and sustainable infrastructure and increase investments in early childcare and economic development to grow our tax base so we can fund our priorities. I will also conduct a comprehensive review of departmental budgets to ensure efficiency as a responsible steward of your tax dollars.</p>	<p>I will expand much-needed services for seniors, invest in public transportation, protect our environment, and fully fund our public schools. I will also demand greater MCPS budget transparency and direct resources to where they are needed most—to support our students, teachers, and school buildings. At the same time, we must streamline government processes, reduce duplicative spending, and ensure revenues are fair, progressive, and sustainable.</p>
Safety Net Services	<p>1) Provide Legal Support to Stop illegal Deportation without Due Process 2) Provide Free Metro Bus Passes, Free Toll Passes, Free Parking Passes to Students, Special Need & Low Income Household 3) Provide Affordable Healthcare Assistance & Support Women Rights to Choose 4) Provide Affordable Housing by Public-Private Partnership & Address Housing Issue 5) Address Housing-Homeless Issue by providing Public Housing on No-Profit-No-Loss Basis 6) Freeze Property Taxes for Properties Worth <\$1 Million</p>	<p>We must leverage community-based, nonprofit partnerships with county government to strengthen our social safety net. My administration will increase investments in early childcare and mental health, address disparities in healthcare services, and improve our food system resilience to ensure no one in our county goes hungry. By bridging gaps in housing, healthcare, and food security, we can ensure every resident, regardless of zip code, has access to the stability and opportunities they deserve.</p>	<p>As the federal government cuts funding for critical programs, strengthening our social safety net will be among my highest priorities. I will work to protect food assistance programs, increase housing stability, expand healthcare access and senior services, while partnering with nonprofits and community organizations to ensure residents across Montgomery County can access the help they need. The county must do a better job of informing residents of all the programs and services we provide.</p>
Public Safety	<p>1) Provide Legal Support to Stop illegal Deportation without Due Process 2) Provide Affordable Healthcare Assistance & Support Women Rights to Choose 3) Reduce Crime, allow Graduate Students to join as Police-Intern to fill Vacancy 4) Provide Affordable Housing by Public-Private Partnership & Address Housing Issue & provide Public Housing on No-Profit-No-Loss Basis 6) Provide Higher Homeowners Tax Credits to Seniors, Special Needs & Low Income Households & Provide Funding to Adult Protective Services</p>	<p>Community-based policing requires trust, coordination, and communication with a robust street outreach network, mobile crisis response teams, and preventative measures. We will use all available tools to rein in ICE to protect immigrant neighbors, focus on addressing root causes and invest in youth programming. We will revisit changes to the SRO program with relevant stakeholders to address school safety and tackle police recruitment and retention, ensuring our department reflects our community.</p>	<p>Public safety starts with prevention. We must partner closely with all communities to respond effectively to their unique needs. Investing in mental health, youth programs, and economic opportunity saves resources later. We must strengthen partnerships with law enforcement agencies to ensure that every resident feels safe, supported, and protected. I led the expansion of the Police Cadet Program to help diversify our force and strengthen trust between law enforcement and the community.</p>

(continues next page)

Candidates for Montgomery County Executive

See page 32 for details about the office of Montgomery County Executive.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidate

Party / Website

Qualifications

How do your background and experience prepare you to be County Executive?

Housing

What initiatives will you support to increase an affordable housing supply countywide?

Budget Priorities

Which operating budget revenue and spending items will you seek to increase and decrease and why?

Safety Net Services

What initiatives will you support, if any, to ensure that residents across the county receive safety net services?

Public Safety

What policies will you support to ensure the safety of our large and diverse population?

Peter James

D - Democratic
peter4moco.com

These questions are for normal times. We are not in normal times. The threat to our democracy, privacy, livelihood and the survival of our species is at extreme risk. Go to peter4moco.com to understand who our enemies are, the threats we face and how protect us from these threats. I've worked for 50 years with AI and high tech. Building large entity's software systems and very complex technologies. Expert in macro-economics, monetary. I have consulted in hundreds of different knowledge domains.

I plan to issue housing backed bonds to fund renters to become home owners, rather than funding landlords to make them richer and keeping renters forever poor. Renters pay \$270K over 30 years for a 1BR apartment. That same home costs \$70K over 30 years if owned. Home ownership is the best path to generational wealth. I will provide home building robots, at cost, to construction workers and builders to build lower-cost homes in the County. I'd promote equity share leases for path to ownership

The County is spends hundreds of millions of dollars on ICE contractors that support... the Administration through contracts, county & pension fund investments. I will develop replacements for Oracle and other techno-fascist billionaires' systems. I will sell our government automation platform to other jurisdictions that don't want to fund... the Administration's agenda. This will produce billions in revenue for the County. Will cut \$1.2B MCPS planning budget, that will pay for 2,000 more teachers.

With the economy in collapse and Federal and AI-induced joblessness, there won't be funds to keep the services we now provide. I'll issue food, housing and healthcare bonds that will hold their value during hyperinflation and these bonds will circulate as money. . These bonds, combined with government platform sales and capital budget savings will provide the funding to increase much needed safety net services. Making workers owners of the technology that replaces them, brings prosperity

Suicides & overdoses are 3.75 times homicides and traffic fatalities. Renters and workers to owners will eliminate money stress.. End social media psychosis with platforms that don't degrade mental health. Smaller student friendly schools. Montessori schools have less violence and bullying, higher graduation rates and outcomes than. our current prison-like authoritarian schools. Build autonomous guideways that have Zero deaths and serious injuries, plus eliminate emissions and congestion.

Will Jawando

D - Democratic
willjawando.com

I grew up watching my family work for everything we had. My mom raised us on her own, moving five times before I was in eighth grade. That experience is what drives me. Today I'm raising three daughters and a son, and I want them to grow up in a county that works for everyone. I became a civil rights lawyer, served in the Obama White House, and have spent 8 years on the Council delivering on education, housing, and small business. My values and record qualify me to lead, especially now.

I know what housing instability does to a family because I lived it. Too many people in this county are one rent increase away from losing their home. We need to build real affordable housing near transit, protect renters from being squeezed out, and stop letting big developers set the terms while working families get priced out. My framework is Produce, Preserve, Protect: build workforce and truly affordable units, keep existing affordable housing in good condition, and defend renters' rights.

Our budget should reflect our values. I'll prioritize education, childcare, and services for working families. The wealthiest among us should pay a higher rate so middle-class families and elderly residents get relief. On the spending side, I'll take a hard look at corporate subsidies, developer giveaways, and management costs we can streamline. Every contract should be negotiated so taxpayers get a good deal, and every dollar should be transparent so residents can see where their money goes.

The administration cuts federal jobs, guts healthcare and sends ICE into our communities to terrorize our neighbors. This is not a normal moment. As County Executive, I will stand up to this administration and protect the people who call Montgomery County home. That means expanding mental health services, food assistance and workforce support. It means keeping our schools and county services safe and accessible for everyone regardless of status. When Washington abandons people, we must step up.

I lost my best friend to gun violence when we were 18. Public safety is personal to me. I believe in building real trust between communities and law enforcement through transparency and accountability. We set high standards, and that means we have to compensate and support our officers accordingly. We must invest in the root causes of crime: mental health, youth programs, housing stability. And every resident deserves to feel safe regardless of who they are or where they come from.

Shelly Skolnick

R - Republican
No website provided

Shelly received a civil engineering degree from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and a law degree from Boston University. After law school, Shelly worked for computer companies such as IBM and NCR. During the past 20 years, Shelly has led a law firm that specializes in adult guardianship proceedings. Shelly has lived in Montgomery County since 1975 residing in Rockville, Derwood, Olney, Silver Spring and now in Chevy Chase. Shelly's children attended Cashell ES, Redland MS and Magruder HS.

Shelly will make all housing more affordable by reducing the property tax rate for all housing in Montgomery County.

Shelly proposes to freeze total spending for the first year to the total for the prior year. County spending will be more efficient by ending very low priority items (such as public funding for politicians' campaigns), reducing funds for low priority items (such as grass cutting), offering free tuition at Montgomery College for students performing volunteer services (such as volunteer fire fighter) to the County Government, and safely implementing Artificial Intelligence in County Agencies.

Shelly will emphasize joint programs with non-profit organizations (such as food banks) to provide safety net services.

Shelly proposes free tuition at Montgomery College for students performing volunteer services (such as police aide, volunteer fire fighter, EMT aide) to the County Government. The volunteers will significantly increase the personnel at the first responder agencies; thus increasing the safety of the County's residents and visitors.

(continues next page)

Candidates for Montgomery County Executive

See page 32 for details about the office of Montgomery County Executive.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Esther Wells

R - Republican

VoteforEsther.com

As a Maryland CPA with a Master's in Taxation, I have the financial expertise and leadership experience to move Montgomery County forward. My career leading tax strategies for multi-national Corporations has generated multi-million-dollar savings. I will apply this rigorous private-sector discipline to balance costs with growth objectives, something Montgomery County needs. I plan to identify efficiencies, ensure fiscal discipline, accountability, transparency and oversight in our Government.

I will focus on streamlining the permitting process, reverse the recent 4.7% property tax rate hike, cut the annual cap on property assessment increases by 50% to align the county with surrounding jurisdictions, protect Single-Family Zoning, weaken rent control laws to stimulate new construction and grow the assessable base for property tax revenue. Housing becomes more affordable when Montgomery County Residents see their wages increase, and their taxes, fees and costs of living decrease.

Living in Montgomery County is quickly becoming financially unsustainable for our middle class. I will decrease the personal income tax rate from 3.2% to the state-mandated minimum of 2.25%, phase-out the local Working Families Income Supplement, decrease the County Fuel Energy Tax by 75% to lower utility costs, eliminate vacant positions, scale back Blueprint for education mandates that lack proven results, increase investments in public safety and economic development to attract businesses.

We have a moral obligation to ensure our safety net doesn't foster long-term dependency. I will prioritize fiscal accountability, oversight and transparency of Taxpayers' funds, audit current spending to eliminate waste and abuse, streamline services within County government, empower non-profit partners to deliver services more efficiently, promote economic growth, provide workforce development and financial counseling as requirements for receiving social services.

I will prioritize fully staffing our police department to improve response times, improve officer morale through enhanced wellness resources, restore funding for School Resource Officers (SROs) in MCPS to provide crisis support and safety during emergencies, strengthen juvenile justice laws to address repeat offenders, enhance coordination between police and residents to ensure every neighborhood feels safe and heard.

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On the Ballot

Montgomery County Council

(see candidates on pages 37 - 48)

Duties

The Montgomery County Council is the legislative branch of county government. The Council proposes and enacts legislation, adopts annual budgets, sets local tax rates and approves land use master plans and zoning ordinance changes. The Council makes appointments to the offices, committees and commissions that report to the Council and exercises oversight over county programs.

How Elected

The Council has 11 members elected at the same time to four-year terms. Four At-Large council members are elected countywide. Seven District council members are elected by the voters in their district.

Term

Four years, limited to three consecutive terms.

Salary

\$ 167,172 per year.

Website

montgomerycountymd.gov/council

Who May Vote?

Registered Democrats may vote only for one (1) Democratic candidate from your District and no more than four (4) Democratic candidates for At Large seats.

Registered Republicans may vote only for one (1) Republican candidate from your District; there are no Republican candidates running for At Large seats.

Questions to the candidates for Montgomery County Council:

- **QUALIFICATIONS:** How do your background and experience prepare you to be a member of the County Council?
- **HOUSING:** What initiatives will you support to increase an affordable housing supply countywide?
- **BUDGET PRIORITIES:** Which operating budget revenue and spending items will you seek to increase and decrease and why?
- **SAFETY NET SERVICES:** What initiatives will you support, if any, to ensure that residents across the county receive safety net services?
- **PUBLIC SAFETY:** What policies will you support to ensure the safety of our large and diverse population?

See pages 37 - 48 for candidate responses. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

NOTE: Candidates were advised that references to other candidates or officeholders would not be published. Accordingly, these references have been deleted and replaced with ellipses (...).

Unsure of your Council District? Go to <https://tinyurl.com/53fzxk6x> to find your Council District.

Candidates for Montgomery County Council At Large

See previous page for details about the office of Montgomery County Council.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidate Party / Website	Fatmata Barrie D - Democratic www.fatmatabarrie.com	Josie Caballero D - Democratic josieformaryland.com	Marc Elrich D - Democratic www.marcelrich.org
Qualifications	<p>As a special education and immigration law attorney, I have spent my career advocating for underserved families and helping them navigate complex systems to access opportunity. My work with children in need of special education, immigrant communities, and working families gives me a clear understanding of the challenges residents face. I will bring practical problem-solving and a commitment to making Montgomery County more affordable, responsive, and economically strong for all who call it home.</p>	<p>I'm a Navy veteran, public servant, and Director of Voting and Elections at Advocates for Trans Equality. Raised in a working-class family, I understand the challenges many residents face. My experience in the military and public service has prepared me to manage complex systems, work collaboratively, and deliver results in combatting the cost of living crisis, increasing housing, supporting educators, and growing economic opportunity for Montgomery County.</p>	<p>I served 19 years on the Takoma Park Council, 12 on the County Council and almost 8 as County Exec. I'm familiar with and worked on a wide range of issues. Being the Executive gave me a full view of government. I've been an advocate for affordable housing, having preserved and created over 9000 units, championed 2 successful minimum wage bills, and supported our healthcare and homelessness programs. I am supported by grassroots contributions because I have always been there for working families.</p>
Housing	<p>Montgomery County must increase housing supply while ensuring affordability for families; ensure our retirees and seniors can age in place. I support expanding mixed-income housing, working with nonprofit developers, and creating more pathways to homeownership for those who want it. However, renters must also be protected. We must also invest in reliable transit so residents can live throughout the county while staying connected to jobs, schools, and services.</p>	<p>I support requiring developers to include affordable units, but we must go further by expanding social housing, publicly owned, permanently affordable homes on public land. I also support workforce housing for public employees being priced out of our communities. If the private market won't build enough housing, the county must step in to ensure residents can afford to live here. We must also expand opportunities for non-profit housing developers.</p>	<p>During my term, we were more directly involved in affordable housing and we've built more than if we were only getting 15% of market projects. Deeply affordable housing needs subsidies, so I put hundreds of millions of dollars into creating them. I'll continue to pursue non-profit partnerships, support independent evaluation of zoning for racial equity impacts, raise the required ratio of affordable units, require 3-4 bedroom units in new projects, and require no net loss of affordable housing.</p>
Budget Priorities	<p>I support increasing funding for education, including special education and disability services, and strengthening safety-net programs like mental health and homelessness prevention. We should reduce unnecessary bureaucracy so businesses can come into the county and expand. I support investments in clean energy, workforce and economic development to create jobs and strengthen our tax base, and early intervention so families receive help sooner and the county reduces costly emergencies.</p>	<p>I support a more progressive tax system so wealthy residents and large corporations pay their fair share, while lowering the burden on working families and seniors. I would invest new revenue in job growth, including life sciences and partnerships with UMD, and in housing near job centers. My focus is a fairer tax code and targeted investments that strengthen our economy and workforce.</p>	<p>Spend priorities: Affordable housing, access to healthcare, build Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), services to prevent homelessness, advance early childhood education and MCPS needs, expand job training to upskill our workforce, and invest in protecting the environment. Revenue priorities: Expand the taxbase with strategic investments and adopt a commercial tax code similar to Northern Virginia (where commercial property pays substantially higher taxes & revenues are used to build the infrastructure)</p>
Safety Net Services	<p>I support strengthening early intervention programs so residents receive help before crises occur. This includes expanding mental health services, substance abuse treatment, housing stability programs, and outreach; including for students, so residents understand what resources are available. Investing earlier helps families stay stable and reduces long-term costs for the county. Ensuring our safety-net programs are fully staffed is crucial.</p>	<p>I will expand funding for proven programs like SHaRP to prevent homelessness and include single adults. I support emergency rental assistance, food access, childcare, and legal aid, especially for vulnerable communities. I will partner with trusted community organizations to deliver services quickly and ensure all residents can access support without fear or barriers.</p>	<p>My budget for FY27 focuses on improving access to health and mental health care, fully funding our schools, ending and preventing homelessness, increasing support for working families, investing more in Early Childhood Education, increasing workforce training, and making major investments in affordable housing. We expanded food programs and have made Ride-On buses free. I will continue to prioritize safety net services and these areas as a councilmember.</p>
Public Safety	<p>Public safety requires prevention, accountability, and community trust. I support strong partnerships between communities and law enforcement, increased mental health crisis response, and prevention programs that address root causes of crime. Community meetings with law enforcement are also important. Ensuring officers and public safety employees can live in the communities they serve can strengthen community relationships and build trust.</p>	<p>I will ensure public safety by strengthening restorative programs, mental health supports, and community-based interventions, keeping police focused on serious crimes. Police are overburdened solving social problems that should be the focus of the county government, so funding holistic approaches that prevent harm, address root causes, and support schools and neighborhoods will make Montgomery County safer for everyone.</p>	<p>We improved officer training to address public concerns with positive results. We improved pay and recruiting is up. We invested in tech to create more deterrents and strengthened cooperation with businesses and the public. I have also strongly invested in fire/emergency services. Addressing poverty, housing instability, youth programming, along with multiple civilian crisis intervention teams that provide a more appropriate response to people in crisis, help us get to the root causes of crime.</p>

(At Large candidates continue next page)

The following Democratic candidates were invited to respond but provided no answers by the print deadline:

Radwan Chowdhury

Muhammad Arif Wali

See VOTE411.org for any late responses.

Candidates for Montgomery County Council At Large

See page 36 for details about the office of Montgomery County Council.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidate Party / Website	Dana Eugene Gassaway D - Democratic gassawayforcouncil.com	Scott Evan Goldberg D - Democratic VoteScott.org	Hamza Khan D - Democratic www.khanforcouncil.com
Qualifications	<p>As a resident of Montgomery County for 51 years, a descendant of a family that has been in the county since the 1700's, a former teacher, a small business owner, former candidate for school board, and past council candidate, I feel that I have a very real and honest perspective on how things work in this county and what needs to be done to make our county one in which we all can be proud to call home.</p>	<p>Being a dad, husband, attorney, entrepreneur and substitute teacher offers excellent perspectives to be a great legislator. The Council has 2 attorneys, with 1 leaving, our legislative branch needs lawmakers versed in the law. I serve on the Boards of Directors for the Montgomery Parks Foundation, YMCA of Silver Spring, Bethesda Chamber of Commerce, Workforce Development Board and previously on the Western County Citizens Advisory Board and as Chair of the Montgomery County Democratic Party.</p>	<p>My life has been dedicated to public service, with over 20 years of electoral and public policy experience. As a lifelong Montgomery County resident, I've built broad coalitions—from national anti-hate efforts to advancing immigrant protections through the Maryland Trust Act, criminal justice reform through the Juvenile Restoration Act, and environmental protection through the Save Ten Mile Creek campaign. I've also advocated for these issues in national media and hold a master's in Democracy &</p>
Housing	<p>I feel this is very complex in its intricacies, and, even though I am strongly against the development of more undeveloped land, I clearly see the need for affordable living space. In fact, in my last campaign, I called for the use of eminent domain, with respect to the old Lake Forest Mall site, and the building of 1200 to 1300 1/16 of an acre homes on this site. I feel it is important to look at large tracks of developed sparsely used land and repurpose it for residential use. Due to the ov</p>	<p>To solve the affordable housing crisis, we need an "all of the above approach." This includes using government owned land to build multi-family housing, increasing the Housing Production Fund to \$150 million, instituting a "shot clock" system in the planning & permitting processes for predictability and accountability, intelligent zoning, increasing density near high volume modes of transportation and growing infrastructure to accommodate more housing.</p>	<p>We must expand housing supply with practical reforms. I support increasing supply through mixed-use zoning near transit and creative solutions achieved through broad consensus. I will increase the Housing Opportunity Fund, inventory county-owned land for development, and partner with trusted nonprofits to build affordable housing. I also support ensuring our policies reflect today's housing needs while balancing growth, affordability, and community priorities.</p>
Budget Priorities	<p>My major budget priorities are first making the budget understandable clear and precise. I often use the analogy of a fifth-grade student wanting to know how much his/her school system spends on school supplies for their particular school; I believe the county budget should be so clear and transparent that anyone can see how and where the funds go. Additionally, I believe we should work toward a budget that returns excess funds back to the taxpayers, in the event of a surplus</p>	<p>In the last 8 years, the county's budget has shot past \$6 billion, \$7 billion and now \$8 billion in spending while housing is more expensive, graduation rates are dropping, traffic is worse and being a pedestrian has never been more dangerous. The Council & Executive need to task the Inspector General to measure programs and eliminate ones that are no longer relevant. We don't have to raise your property taxes, income taxes, water bill and solid waste fees, which is being proposed right now.</p>	<p>Montgomery County faces serious budget challenges. I will not balance the budget on the backs of our most vulnerable residents, nor rely on raising taxes as a cure-all. I will stand with small businesses, workers, and marginalized communities to develop common-sense solutions that strengthen our economy and increase revenues within our existing fiscal realities, while ensuring spending is accountable, efficient, and focused on delivering real results.</p>
Safety Net Services	<p>In my last campaign, I was the only candidate to bring up the idea of having an emergency fund that would allow residents to preserve their way of life, in the case of extreme situations, for six months, and, in fact, the local government has requested funds from the state to help with this very issue; however, again, I made this a major issue in my first run for council. I believe there are too many people on the verge of financial crisis, based on the extreme uptick in the cost of living</p>	<p>One of Montgomery County's core competencies is a strong social safety net but it could always be better. When our neighbors are at their most vulnerable, we don't make it easy to access the spectrum of services from housing, to food, to medical care, to mental health care, to job training so they can get back on their feet. I'll implement a Navigator case management system so people only have to work with 1 person to get all the services they need.</p>	<p>Montgomery County faces serious budget challenges. I will not balance the budget on the backs of our most vulnerable residents, nor rely on tax increases as a cure-all. I will stand with small businesses, workers, and marginalized communities to develop common-sense solutions that strengthen our economy and increase revenues within our existing fiscal realities, while ensuring spending is accountable, efficient, and focused on delivering real results.</p>
Public Safety	<p>It is my view that public safety begins with bilateral communication between the first responders i.e. police, and other emergency services through involvement and personal contact. Additionally, I feel that emergency workers need to become familiar with the people in the communities they serve. Thus, I would push for more community outreach suggest that emergency personnel become involved in the communities where they work. With police, I would like to see a return to foot patrols</p>	<p>Law enforcement experts cite 2 top pieces to a safe society: 1) economic opportunity, and 2) a well-trained police force with appropriate staffing levels. My focus will be on supercharging our economy so people feel hope and know they can be prosperous. Our police force is 200 officers short for a community our size. Officers that choose to serve elsewhere cite a lack of support and respect from Montgomery County's civilian leadership for why they didn't come here. I will support the police.</p>	<p>Public safety means ensuring every resident feels safe in their home and community. I support a balanced approach that builds trust across our communities, while investing in prevention, mental health resources, and community-based solutions. I also support cultural competency training to ensure services reflect our county's diversity. By focusing on collaboration, accountability, and smart resource allocation, we can keep Montgomery County safe and welcoming.</p>

Candidates for Montgomery County Council At Large

See page 36 for details about the office of Montgomery County Council.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Matt Losak

D - Democratic

No website provided

I have more than three decades of professional experience and skills working in a senior capacity in public policy and government including serving as Chair of the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board for three terms, the Tenants Work Group, founding the Montgomery County Renters Alliance and Renters United Maryland. I have held senior positions for nonprofit and govt. and have earned a BA in English and MA in Poli. Sci. and Govt. I served in the Peace Corps as a teacher in southern Africa.

I am committed to ensuring that renters, who now represent nearly 40% of county residents, can rely on reasonable rent increases, code compliance enforcement and quality housing. I will look to strengthen and expand rent stabilization, enactment of good-cause eviction protections to ensure no one is evicted from their home without a stated, justifiable reason, and will improve enforcement and outreach efforts by county government to protect and preserve our existing affordable housing stock.

I will continue to support funding for services for the neediest in our county with an eye toward addressing the sources of issues to avoid recurrences and become less of a cost down the road. I am also committed to prioritizing essential and critical services including public safety, infrastructure development and maintenance (yes, pot hole maintenance tool!) while also looking at investment of public dollars that produce tangible economic growth.

I continue to believe in and support programs that maintain housing stability. Housing stability is central to community health, welfare and prosperity. This includes rent stabilization, enforcing renters' rights and enforcement services to secure those rights. No one in our county should go hungry and I will fight to ensure that food availability for those in need is maintained, especially in our growing senior communities, and school meal programs.

I support community policing and presence including foot and bicycle patrols. In addition, direct police outreach, engagement and relationship building in rental and neighborhood housing, business communities and with civic organizations provide important information sharing for more effective policing and public safety. I also support maintaining police engagement in schools, particularly in high schools, but ensuring limitations to ensure common discipline be the responsibility of educators.

Jim McNulty

D - Democratic

jimcmnulty.org

Twice elected to the Gaithersburg City Council, I'm one of the only At-Large candidates with local government experience—and a track record of pragmatic leadership that delivers results—in a city with no public debt, robust job growth and one of Maryland's lowest property tax rates. As a realtor, I understand housing affordability. I have lived and worked all over the County, from Silver Spring to Germantown, coached youth baseball, served as HOA president, and founded a PTSD support group.

I'll work to expand housing access at all income levels, and streamline the permitting process to bring down costs and encourage new investment, so more of us can afford to live here. I'm also proposing a \$40M Workforce Housing Downpayment Assistance Fund to help working families overcome a major obstacle towards buying their first home. The program would offer zero-payment, zero-interest loans up to \$40K for teachers, healthcare workers, first responders, and long-time renters who qualify.

I favor smarter budgeting, not tax hikes. Montgomery County has a \$7.6 billion budget—there's room to cut waste without cutting services. I'll prioritize efficiency reviews to find savings, then reinvest strategically in programs that grow our tax base: economic development, workforce training, housing production, and transportation improvements so we spend less time in gridlock. I'll protect funding for direct social services and the nonprofits our most vulnerable neighbors depend on.

Families needing help wait on average more than four years to receive a housing (HOC) voucher. How is that a safety net? I will support efforts to reduce the backlog and bring real housing assistance to those who need it. I will also expand access to mental health services for both adults and youth, and protect funding for our nonprofits who provide crucial services in all corners of the county, including senior services, food insecurity, and job training.

I'll repair the fractured relationship between the County Council & MCPD while rebuilding staffing to address critical vacancies. I support expanding mobile crisis teams so mental health professionals—not just police—respond to behavioral health emergencies. I'll strengthen community policing that builds trust between officers and neighborhoods. Having founded a PTSD support group after surviving a hostage situation, I understand the importance of both public safety and crisis intervention.

Jeremiah Pope

D - Democratic

www.popeforcouncil.com

Raised by my grandparents in a small town, I learned early the importance of family, community, and looking out for your neighbors. Those values guided me to a career in public service. I have spent my professional life working to make government work for people, including serving as Chief of Staff in the Maryland General Assembly and working for leaders in Congress and former DNC Chair Tom Perez.

The initiatives I would support to increase the supply of affordable housing countywide include allowing more housing options near transit centers while protecting the character of our neighborhoods and the Agricultural Reserve from overdevelopment. I will fight to protect renters, support safe and clean housing, expand first time homebuyer credits, and encourage the conversion of vacant commercial space into housing to help meet the growing demand.

Given the uncertainty facing our country, it is too early to predict which operating expenditures should increase or decrease. My priority will be fully funding public schools and supporting the development and preservation of affordable housing through the County's Housing and Community Affairs Departments. I do not support raising taxes until we conduct a full review of spending and ensure transparency, accountability, and that taxpayer dollars are delivering real results for residents.

With inflation and the rising cost of living, many families in Montgomery County are struggling. I support strengthening our safety net by ensuring access to healthcare through programs like Montgomery Cares, preventing homelessness through rental and utility assistance, and supporting seniors, people with disabilities, and working families through childcare subsidies and other essential services.

I support a balanced public safety approach that focuses on prevention, intervention, and enforcement. We must ensure our police and first responders have the resources they need to keep communities safe, while also investing in youth programs, mental health response services, and community partnerships that prevent crime before it happens. Safe communities require both accountability and opportunity.

Laurie-Anne Sayles

D - Democratic

www.sayles4moco.com

The daughter of Jamaican immigrants, my public health, federal service, and education equipped me with skills and experience for effective public leadership. In 2017, I was historically elected to the Gaithersburg City Council and again in 2022 to serve countywide. Now, as the only at-large incumbent running for reelection, I bring proven leadership and a strong record of SMART policies, advancing education, economic growth, small business support, housing affordability, and mobility for all.

I am committed to expanding Montgomery County's affordable housing supply through key initiatives. I support the O.P.E.N. Zoning Text Amendment to speed approvals for mixed-use developments, secured funding for the Housing Initiative Fund and the Department of Housing and Community Affairs, co-sponsored rent stabilization legislation, and advocate for zoning reforms that encourage diverse housing types near transit. These steps aim to make housing more accessible countywide.

I am committed to prioritizing economic development and essential services in the operating budget. I will increase funding for affordable housing through the Housing Initiative Fund to support low-income families and expand investments that promote local businesses and job creation in underserved and transit-accessible areas. Moreover, I will reduce non-essential discretionary spending to redirect resources to critical programs, ensuring our budget advances equity and strengthens our community.

I am committed to ensuring our residents can access essential safety net services like the \$1 million emergency fund I advanced for Health and Human Services to stabilize critical programs, including culturally appropriate senior nutrition and in-home support for vulnerable residents. I'll continue prioritizing increasing behavioral health and crisis services in underserved communities and fostering strong collaboration between County agencies and nonprofits to improve access and effectiveness.

I will leverage my local and County public safety experience to advance policies that keep our County's diverse communities safe. My priorities include building on the Safe and Vibrant Communities Work Group, enhancing conversations between residents and police, supporting transparency and cultural competency through the Police Advisory Commission, expanding mental health resources and interventions, and investing in youth programs that create opportunity and reduce antisocial behavior.

(At Large candidates continue next page)

Candidates for Montgomery County Council At Large

See page 36 for details about the office of Montgomery County Council.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidate

Party / Website

Qualifications

How do your background and experience prepare you to be a member of the County Council?

Housing

What initiatives will you support to increase an affordable housing supply countywide?

Budget Priorities

Which operating budget revenue and spending items will you seek to increase and decrease and why?

Safety Net Services

What initiatives will you support, if any, to ensure that residents across the county receive safety net services?

Public Safety

What policies will you support to ensure the safety of our large and diverse population?

Prabu Selvam

D - Democratic
www.prabuselvam.com

I am a U.S. Air Force veteran who served as an officer in Afghanistan. Today I work as an emergency physician and nonprofit leader coordinating humanitarian relief in the U.S. and abroad. These roles require collaborative leadership and advocacy in high-stakes situations. As a husband and father born and raised in Montgomery County, I'm committed to bringing steady, accountable leadership and real results to the County Council.

We must increase housing supply to bring down costs. I support zoning reform to allow more multi-family housing and strengthening the MPDU program so developments of 10+ homes include units affordable to those earning under 70% of AMI. I will expand the Senior Property Tax Credit and invest more in the Housing Assistance Fund to help first-time homebuyers so working families and young families can build their futures in Montgomery County.

We must grow our economy while spending wisely. I support expanding small-business grants, workforce training at Montgomery College, and creating a one-stop permitting office for entrepreneurs. I also support zoning reform to grow industrial and innovation spaces across the county. We can reduce waste by consolidating county IT contracts. When budgets are tight, I will prioritize children, seniors, low-income families, and healthcare access.

The purpose of government is to provide a strong safety net in times of crisis. I support expanding community health services, and emergency housing and financial assistance for families at risk of becoming unhoused. We must better coordinate reliable transportation options for seniors. We must also strengthen legal aid services for immigrant families and ensure all students have access to mental health services and strong parental engagement in their education.

As the son of immigrants born and raised in Montgomery County, I believe safety starts with strong communities functioning as a single diverse family. We must protect immigrant families and strengthen trust between police and residents by recruiting officers from the communities they serve. I also support dedicated unarmed security staff in every school. Montgomery County must continue standing firmly against hate so every resident feels safe and respected.

Karla Silvestre

D - Democratic
karlasilvestre.com

•Elected twice as Board of Education president during my eight-year tenure, and 13 years at our community college connecting residents to education to help them build and grow their careers. •Experience in county government and education leadership, budget oversight, workforce preparation, and a deep understanding of our diverse communities. •Immigrant, committed to a welcoming community and parent of MCPS graduates. •Focus on opportunity, transparency, and pragmatic problem-solving.

•Build more housing options for different income levels, seniors, and young people starting out (starter homes, in-law suites/basement apartments, townhouses, and senior housing). •Increase mixed income housing near transit and job centers. •Work with nonprofit builders to bring truly affordable housing for our lowest income residents. •Make it easier to build housing by reforming bureaucratic processes, speeding up development/reducing costs

•Prioritize investments with the broadest impact that expand opportunity including public education, job placement assistance, and services for residents affected by the . . . Administration. •Support strengthening small businesses to grow our commercial tax base so residents are not carrying an outsized share of the tax burden. •Evaluate investments in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and maintain strong fiscal stewardship to protect the County's high credit rating-AAA bond rating.

•Improve the coordination of safety net services so residents can easily access support when they need it and enhance proactive outreach so the most impacted can access services. •Continue working with trusted faith and community organizations to deliver culturally effective services across our diverse county. •Prioritize workforce training programs, affordable childcare, safety net health clinics for the uninsured, food security programs, and supporting seniors aging in place.

•Community-based policing to build trust, behavioral health response teams, and de-escalation training. •No collaboration between police/local agencies and ICE. •Positive Youth Development programs and other social programs to address root causes of crime. •Grow our own police force so they come from our community and reflect our diversity. •Improve data collection on response times, stop data and use-of-force information.

Steve Solomon

D - Democratic
www.VoteSteveSolomon.com

I am a lifelong resident of Montgomery County. I have spent the last several years as a member and leader in numerous civic and community groups. I have served on boards, committees, and volunteered for nonprofits and advocacy groups. Currently I serve on the Library Board, the Sports Advisory Committee, and am a board member for the Montgomery County Sports Hall of Fame.

We have several old shopping malls that need development (White Flint, Lakeforest, Glenmont). They are near metro stations and should have housing and retail. We need to keep funding the Housing Production Fund. We have numerous commercial buildings that are mostly vacant. That's a problem on its own, but we can convert many of those into housing.

Growing our economy is one of my top priorities. We need to make it easier for small businesses to start and succeed in Montgomery County. This is done by simplifying our permitting and inspection process. This will provide more money for libraries, parks, rec centers, schools, infrastructure, and senior services.

I would continue to fund the Office of Food Systems Resilience, as well as food assistance programs in schools and for families that qualify for it. We also have numerous nonprofits in Montgomery County that partner with the government to feed, clothe, house, and provide critical services to residents. I volunteer weekly for a food pantry that feeds hundreds of Montgomery County families.

We have a shortage of police officers in Montgomery County. The funding is there but officers are retiring or leaving faster than we can recruit and hire more. That needs to be addressed. Also, we must intensify our traffic and pedestrian safety protocols and essential infrastructure repairs.

Candidates for Montgomery County Council At Large

See page 36 for details about the office of Montgomery County Council.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Lelia B. True

D - Democratic
true4moco.com

West Point graduate, Army veteran, Masters in Business, Operational leader, strategic consultant, and former Head of School, I've managed \$190M+ budgets, built strategic plans, commanded in combat, and led through a pandemic. I'm a MoCo parent, neighbor, coach, and teacher. I bring executive discipline, deep community roots, and real leadership experience. That's what this moment demands.

Housing costs are pushing teachers, firefighters, and young families out of MoCo. I'll streamline zoning and permitting to lower the cost of building new units, incentivize mixed-income development near transit, and push for county-backed housing assistance to keep teachers and essential workers in our community. Housing must be part of every economic conversation — when families can't afford to stay, we all lose.

My top revenue priority is improving economic strength in the county by bringing more businesses of all levels into the County. My spending priorities are education particularly early childhood, affordable housing and the supports we need to grow healthy businesses. I also believe county government must be more efficient. I'll insist on a transparent, community-driven process so residents understand priorities and tradeoffs before decisions are made.

Our families need to be able to access food, mental health, childcare, and housing stabilization services. I'll strengthen coordination between county agencies, nonprofits, and faith communities so services reach residents quickly and are available across the entire county. We need to treat nonprofits and faith communities as important partners in providing key services to our residents.

I support well-trained, community-connected law enforcement and more transparency in how our law enforcement resources are used. I also support co-responder programs pairing officers with mental health professionals. I'll also invest in prevention: youth programs, economic opportunity, and mental health services that address the root causes of crime.

Vicki Vergagni

D - Democratic
VICKIV4US.COM

- As a citizen, successfully led 7 changes to state/county public policy, benefitting vulnerable populations. - Track record of success in business and non-profit with responsibility for financial bottom lines. - Financial bottom lines: start with highest-dollar area where waste can be controlled, define "musts," reduce overhead. - Collaborate to succeed: identify/educate stakeholders on issue, show them benefits from shared solution. - Common-sense follow-up on policy implementation.

- Homeownership should be affordable. - Basic (not luxury) housing; renovate existing housing, then new development. - Focus first on affordable homeownership to create legacy wealth for families: provide loans from revolving down payment program, assist new owners with home management for 7 years; renovate existing housing if financial break-even; then new development. - Focus second on affordable rental units: renovate existing units if financial break-even; then new development.

- County Council needs to be realistic about its demands of citizens. - No increase in time or dollar taxes; review each to assess/decrease burden on each group. - Identify/fund only the "musts" until County cuts back expenses and lowers time and dollar taxes to be regionally competitive. - Evaluate overhead of every agency; ask employees/customers how to streamline processes to give desired result, quantify savings. - Start with highest-dollar area where waste can be controlled.

- People, regardless of income, are the County's #1 potential resource and should be treated as such. - Use a metric to identify those in need of services. - Expand resources to fund basic food, clothing, shelter, IT, transportation and medical/dental programs. - Assess how equitably applications for services affect those in homes with individually v. master-metered utilities. - Collaborate with more community-based organizations to provide as many services as possible.

- Build a team: RECRUIT, RECRUIT, RECRUIT; offer competitive salary, choice of benefits, flex hours, location; hire those interested in the work -- not the pay. Train, save time/money to support teamwork and celebrate each person. - Deploy personnel by population (e.g., number of residents; needs such as ambulances, criminal activity). - Increase use of technology (e.g., cameras, drones, listening devices). - Increase police in high-crime areas: business districts, multi-family homes.

Sherwin Wells

R - Republican
voteforwells.org

I have a Master's Degree from Liberty University in Human Services Counseling Crisis & Trauma Response. I am currently pursuing a Juris Doctor from American Institute of Law. I am a Mortgage Broker as well as a Real Estate Broker in Maryland. I have over 25 years of experience in the financial services field and I have worked with the public, underwriting their situation and finding practical solution to address their needs. I have a comprehensive understanding of government and public service

Same Day & Expedited Permitting Process: Apply before midday and representatives of the various reviewing agencies will begin processing immediately. No more delays when employees are on payroll. Update Zoning & Use tables to allow for a level playing field for all and not just the developers who have thousands of dollars to apply for special exceptions. Zoning text amendments cater to developers and friends of the politicians and neglect the other landowners and businesses from exceptions.

Decrease Property Taxes on residents because we do not have a budget crisis. We have an accountability crisis and the current county council representatives have failed us. Increase funding for the police to put School Resource Officers back in the schools to prevent and deter and more school shootings and the response times would be quicker saving countless lives should something occur. Review compensation plans for all county positions and conduct performance reviews and department reports .

Expand access to mental health services through community-based programs. Increase funding for food assistance programs to combat food insecurity. Enhance affordable housing initiatives to prevent homelessness. Strengthen partnerships with local nonprofits to provide comprehensive support. Promote job training and employment services for underrepresented communities. Homeless residents are making encampments under bridges and camping out in the woods. We need to nurse them back to productivity.

Ensure the Police is full funded and staffed. School Resource Officers assigned to each school and "clear" backpack policy. Implement comprehensive community policing strategies to build trust between law enforcement and residents. Increase funding for mental health services to address underlying issues contributing to crime and safety concerns. Enhance emergency preparedness programs to ensure all communities are equipped for natural disasters and emergencies. See something say something now.

Candidates for Montgomery County Council District 1

See page 36 for details about the office of Montgomery County Council.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

District 1

Candidate

Party / Website

Qualifications

How do your background and experience prepare you to be a member of the County Council?

Housing

What initiatives will you support to increase an affordable housing supply countywide?

Budget Priorities

Which operating budget revenue and spending items will you seek to increase and decrease and why?

Safety Net Services

What initiatives will you support, if any, to ensure that residents across the county receive safety net services?

Public Safety

What policies will you support to ensure the safety of our large and diverse population?

Drew Morrison

D - Democratic / District 1
www.morrisonforcouncil.com

I am ready to tackle the range of policy issues before the Council and to work across the state and region to achieve our goals. I grew up in D1, served in the D1 Councilmember's office, and have worked in the private sector and at the state level. I know the importance of responsive constituent service. I've also managed multi-billion dollar budgets and driven policy change on transit, workforce and economic development, housing, and the environment.

I believe in building housing in the right places and better leveraging the resources available to us. Existing sites like the White Flint Mall are ripe for redevelopment to ensure we grow without causing county residents unnecessary growing pains. I will reform how Low-Income Housing Tax Credits are administered in Maryland, so Montgomery County can implement more projects to create affordable housing. I will leverage publicly and non-profit owned land to make more projects possible.

In this year's budget, I oppose raising taxes and fees. It is not the time to make it more expensive for families and retirees to live here. I will work to drive economic growth to support investments and efficiency in County government to do more with less. As we rebuild our base, I will work to enhance funding for where we've fallen behind: early childhood education and workforce training; transportation, park, and community infrastructure; senior programming; and clean energy initiatives.

I support universal pre-K because quality early childhood education prepares young people for school and sets the foundation for a successful life. I will work to help more families access childcare subsidies. We should restore the County's full Working Families Income Supplement - resources that go directly to support those in need in achieving self-sufficiency. We must also focus in particular on providing services and aid to our immigrant community in this challenging time.

I support expanding civilian positions in the Police Department so officers on the street can focus on public safety amid significant staffing shortages, and in order to reduce emergency response times. I will support our combined volunteer-career fire and emergency system because it provides significant advantages. I support restoring School Resource Officers to high schools on a full-time basis. These highly-trained professionals build positive relationships with students and prevent violence.

Debbie Spielberg

D - Democratic / District 1
debbiespielberg.org

I bring 15+ years of experience in the Montgomery County Council and Executive Branch where I now serve as Special Assistant to County Executive Marc Elrich. I've worked on raising the minimum wage, tenant protection, land use, banning gas-powered leaf blowers and cosmetic pesticides, and County budgets. I know how to turn residents' concerns into effective policy. I have been endorsed by Sierra Club, CASA In Action, former MD Attorney General Brian Frosh and former Treasurer Nancy Kopp.

I will focus on preserving and producing affordable housing. Trickle-down economics of simply building more housing will not address affordability, and in some cases threatens existing affordable housing. I support strengthening the MPDU program and using public resources wisely - including tax incentives and public property - to deliver a high percentage of affordability in production of new housing. I also support down-payment assistance for home ownership, which helps build wealth.

I will prioritize funding for education, affordable housing, and environmental protection while ensuring public dollars are spent responsibly. I will support incubators, which are targeted government investment in job and business growth. Also, development should contribute fairly to fund the infrastructure that it requires. I will work to eliminate duplication between county agencies and the independent Planning agency, which wastes resources in both the public and private sector.

A strong safety net helps keep families stable, which is critical for our schools and workforce. I support affordable housing efforts, food assistance, and health services, including dental. I support the "SHaRP" program focused on long-term housing solutions. As shown during Covid, working with community partners enhances outreach and increases trust. The county must ensure services are accessible, culturally competent, and available to residents regardless of income or background.

Public safety requires both effective policing and strong community investments. I support community policing, accountability, and ensuring first responders have the resources they need, including good pay and crisis intervention teams. I support using technology to help our officers, including drones as first responders, with the appropriate privacy protections. I also support prevention, including youth programs, mental health services, and stable housing which address root causes of crime.

Julie Yang

D - Democratic / District 1
www.julieyang.org

I am many things: a parent, an educator, an immigrant, a community activist, and a long-time MoCo homeowner. My most visible role is as a tested and trusted elected leader on the Board of Education. With fiscal responsibility for half of the county's budget, I have governed at scale, navigating tough challenges and delivering results. My most important role is to listen, defend our values, uplift our communities, and fiercely advocate for a thriving future full of opportunities.

I grew up in a house without running water and rented for years. I know firsthand that an affordable home allows families to learn, work, and live in stability. We should increase housing near transit and commercial corridors, strengthen MPDU offers, and streamline the permitting process. Smart infrastructure planning can add units while preserving the feel of our neighborhoods. As President, I led the transition of underutilized land, such as the Stone Street site, to be used for housing.

My American dream started with 2 suitcases and very little money, so I know the importance of economic opportunities and an education that meets the workforce of the future. As an educator, I want to continue to strengthen our schools while investing in biotech, cybersecurity, quantum computing, and skilled trades to develop those jobs here. We spend less than \$10 per resident on economic development and it's not enough. We can do better to grow our tax base before defaulting to higher taxes.

Montgomery County already has strong safety-net programs that we should continue to expand and improve upon. For example, the Rapid Rehousing program helped 690 households exit homelessness, with 67% moving to permanent housing and participants increasing their income by 22%. More than 66,000 residents still rely on SNAP food assistance. I support expanding housing stability programs and workforce training, so families can stay housed, access food, and build long-term economic security.

Although violent crimes have returned to pre-pandemic levels, non-violent crimes have not. To ensure our communities are as safe as possible, we need everyone to play their part in prevention and accountability. Strong communities with trusted law enforcement officers, who reflect their neighborhoods, improve public safety. Additionally, I support expanding behavioral-health crisis response teams and investing in youth engagement and after-school programs, so we can deter potential problems.

Candidates for Montgomery County Council District 1, 2

See page 36 for details about the office of Montgomery County Council.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Reardon “Sully” Sullivan

R - Republican / District 1

www.reardonsullivanformoco.com/

My background is rooted in engineering, technology, and business leadership. Over the course of more than 30 years as a business owner, I have built organizations, managed budgets, met payrolls, and navigated tough economic challenges. Running a business requires discipline, accountability, and the ability to solve problems quickly and effectively. Those same skills are essential in government, and I believe my experience gives me a perspective that is currently missing on the County Council.

I support smart rezoning and increased housing near Metro stations. By partnering with Metro, we can convert underused surface parking lots into high-rise housing that brings residents closer to transit. I also support reforming county mandates to make affordable housing easier and more cost-effective to build. Finally, I champion “Guardian Housing” initiatives that help provide housing for our first responders.

County spending is out of control, and we must take a closer look at where our money is going. During our review of County finances, we found more than 50,000 disbursements to “ghost vendors,” totaling over \$320 million. We should consider: • Using AI to identify and eliminate redundant and costly regulations • Eliminating vacant positions rather than cutting essential services • Consolidating overlapping departments • Optimizing and improving the bus system • Replacing local green mandates

I believe that when residents fall on hard times, the community should be there to help them get back on their feet. I support maintaining a strong safety net delivered efficiently, responsibly, and in a way that reaches residents in every part of the County. • Focus on making existing services easier to access and better coordinated. • Foster strong partnerships with nonprofit organizations, faith communities, and local healthcare providers.

Public safety starts with a simple promise: everyone in Montgomery County deserves to feel safe in their neighborhood, their schools, houses of worship, and public spaces. I support a comprehensive approach to public safety that combines effective policing with prevention and community partnership. That means ensuring our police department has the funding, staffing, technology, and training needed to respond quickly to crime while also strengthening transparency and accountability.

Candidate Party / Website

Qualifications

How do your background and experience prepare you to be a member of the County Council?

Housing

What initiatives will you support to increase an affordable housing supply countywide?

Budget Priorities

Which operating budget revenue and spending items will you seek to increase and decrease and why?

Safety Net Services

What initiatives will you support, if any, to ensure that residents across the county receive safety net services?

Public Safety

What policies will you support to ensure the safety of our large and diverse population?

District 2

Marilyn Balcombe

D - Democratic / District 2

MarilynBalcombe.com

I was elected to the Montgomery County Council in 2022. I am currently the Council Vice President and have had a successful first term. Prior the Council I was the CEO of the Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce for 17 years. I was also the founding CEO of BlackRock Center for the Arts. I live in Germantown and have been active in my community for over 30 years .

While we need affordable units, the have a significant gap in the supply of housing at all levels. While on the Council we have provided a large number of incentives including conversion of commercial buildings to residential buildings, providing new zoning to increase multi-family housing, and allowing housing on property with religious institutions.

Overall we need to increase our economic base. We cannot continue to raise our tax rates, we must add more jobs to our community. It is difficult to identify budget decreases as we have so many needs in our community.

We have a remarkable safety net in Montgomery County. The challenge is to make sure that all residents are aware of these services and there are no obstacles in receiving services. We also need to make sure that services are geographically equitable. If a County program or nonprofit receiving county funds has been established to serve the entire County, we need to ensure all residents have access.

We are currently experiencing significant vacancies in our police and fire departments. We need to ensure that Montgomery County has competitive compensation to recruit and retain employees.

District 2: There are no Republican candidates running for this office.

Candidates for Montgomery County Council District 3

See page 36 for details about the office of Montgomery County Council.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

District 3

Candidate

Party / Website

Qualifications

How do your background and experience prepare you to be a member of the County Council?

Housing

What initiatives will you support to increase an affordable housing supply countywide?

Budget Priorities

Which operating budget revenue and spending items will you seek to increase and decrease and why?

Safety Net Services

What initiatives will you support, if any, to ensure that residents across the county receive safety net services?

Public Safety

What policies will you support to ensure the safety of our large and diverse population?

Jud Ashman

D - Democratic / District 3
VoteJud.com

I have nearly two decades of local government experience in elected office, including the last 12 years serving as Mayor of Gaithersburg. During that time, I have worked on budgets, economic development, housing, public safety, and infrastructure, while collaborating with county, state, and community partners. That experience has given me a practical understanding of how local government works and I have a long track record of delivering outstanding results for residents.

First, we need to increase the overall supply of housing. This is the only sustainable way to lower housing costs. That means looking carefully at our zoning laws and permitting processes. We should continue strengthening and fully utilizing our MPDU program, which has been one of the most successful inclusionary housing policies in the country. We should expand public-private partnerships that leverage County resources to support the development and preservation of affordable housing. And more.

Montgomery County's budget should prioritize core services such as education, public safety, transportation, and health and human services. I support targeted investments that strengthen our economic competitiveness, including infrastructure, workforce development, and support for small businesses and entrepreneurs. At the same time, we should continually review programs to improve efficiency and eliminate duplication while growing the tax base through economic and housing growth.

I support continued investment in the County's safety-net services, including food assistance, housing stability programs, behavioral health care, and support for seniors and people with disabilities. I also support strong partnerships with nonprofit providers, who often deliver these services most effectively. As our population grows and changes, we must ensure these programs remain accessible, well-coordinated, and responsive to community needs across the entire county.

I support a balanced public safety approach that includes strong, well-trained law enforcement, effective emergency services, and investments in prevention. That means supporting community policing, behavioral health response programs, violence prevention initiatives, and safe infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists. Our policies should ensure every resident - regardless of neighborhood, background, or income - feels safe and respected. That's how we've done it in Gaithersburg.

Allison Eriksen

D - Democratic / District 3
allisonformoco.com

My career involved managing millions of dollars in federal programs focused on keeping people alive and helping them get back on their feet. I understand responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars, legislation and how it is implemented, and how to build relationships needed to get the job done for the greater good. The purpose of government is to serve its people; I feel that the government has drifted away from this purpose and I intend to put in the work to bring it back.

I support implementing a land value tax and/or a vacancy tax. A Land Value tax disincentivizes land owners from keeping land undeveloped in the hope of higher future prices, while vacancy taxes encourage reintroduction of existing (but currently unsuitable) housing to be refurbished and brought back onto the market. We need to continue to encourage the building of more "missing middle" housing, like townhouses, duplexes, and triplexes that provide varied housing options with reduced footprints.

I would increase the budget for Public Safety/Office of Emergency Management. I believe that in the current political climate, a blue county in a blue state will not receive the support it would have previously, should a large-scale emergency occur. I support investing in the County's capacity and planning for when the county has to make up for federal government failures, be it failure to provide new funding in the event of an emergency, or failure to pass a budget and fund vital programs.

I would look into the county's hiring practices and capacity, which seems to be very slow or poorly managed. Understaffing and overworking staff contributes to ineffective service provision for residents who are entitled to the programs their taxes fund. I want to improve transit to help people across the county reach the services they need. Finally, the county should do everything in its power to help people feel safe accessing services without fear of being detained or harassed by immigration.

I support protecting residents from violations of their constitutional and human rights. Our county is stronger and more vibrant because of the immigrant and multiracial communities that come together here. I spoke in support of the County Values Act and support efforts by the County to protect immigrant residents and inform them of their rights and services that are available to them. We should work to ensure that immigrant, LGBTQ+, and all vulnerable communities are safe in Montgomery County.

Izola "Zola" Shaw

D - Democratic / District 3
izola4progress.org

I serve on Rockville's City Council, overseeing policy and a \$190M budget for 70,000 residents. I worked for 20 years in the federal government, led nonprofits in French-speaking West/Central Africa, and spearheaded successful efforts to raise Montgomery County's minimum wage with a broad community coalition. I hold a BA from Howard University and an MA in Economics from Johns Hopkins University. I'm running to keep fighting for working families.

I'll push for building more affordable units, investing in older properties, expanding housing vouchers, and modernizing zoning near transit. I support strong tenant protections and public-private housing partnerships. As a commissioner on the Housing Opportunities Commission overseeing a \$400M budget, I have hands-on experience and a deep commitment to housing throughout the county, especially for working families and seniors. HOC is building thousands of affordable housing units.

I'll prioritize funding for affordable housing, schools, childcare, mental health, public safety, and essential services, while cutting administrative waste. I support raising revenue by asking more from billionaires who've received federal tax breaks, so our tax system is fair. My goal is to invest wisely, strengthen communities, and ensure help reaches those who need it most.

I'll support expanding food assistance, healthcare, rental aid, utility help, emergency cash support, and workforce training. I'll improve how we connect residents with these services, strengthen nonprofit and county partnerships, and invest in language access and outreach so everyone, especially seniors, families, and immigrants, can get the help they need when they need it most.

I support community policing, mental health crisis response, violence prevention, and youth outreach. I will invest in police training, build trust with all our communities, address root causes of crime with anti-poverty and safety net programs, and support housing for first responders to strengthen their ties with the community. My goal is safety for all.

(District 3 continues next page)

Candidates for Montgomery County Council District 3, 4

See page 36 for details about the office of Montgomery County Council.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

District 4

Ricky Fai Mui

R - Republican / District 3

RickyFMui.com

I've developed a strong combination of real work experience, relevant academic and professional credentials and leadership demeanor to lead the government and the community. I've audited financial programs, driven process improvement, restructured federal agency systems, and implemented new technology for multiple federal agencies at the enterprise level. As a former Naval Officer, I have led large operational teams. I've leveraged my M.B.A. background to decipher financial and budget analyses.

It would be wise to analyze a combination of options. Prefabricated construction units minimizes construction costs, are relocatable, and are designed to be stackable. Another option may upgrade the zoning for our local malls into integrated residential and commercial units, very similar to the resorts, where residents enjoy living, shopping and dining within the facility. We can attract employers and salaries that enables our residents to purchase existing homes instead of renting or leasing.

We must manage the massive 45% MCPS administrative overhead. Whereas a few years ago, we had 11 MCPS executives earn over \$185K/year, there's 100+ positions making \$185K/year in 2025. The failing academic performance does not justify the grossly inflated salaries; instead, all MCPS salaries should be contingent on performance metrics. Alternatively, our Fire Departments are understaffed and missing critical equipment. Our school facilities need CIP funding. Let's prioritize our spend!

We may all require some form of socially funded safety net services; due to life's unexpected health turns, loss of mental faculties, or loss of employment. Our social services will be geared to work cooperatively, triggered by a established process pipeline, to minimize errors. The expectation is that we optimize the use of public funding, apply metrics to gauge effectiveness, set goals and recovery timelines and to focus on helping our individuals and families return to self-sufficiency.

I will lead redress of existing grievances against previous passed laws by applying a metric similar to Rotary's 4-Way Test: Is it the Truth? Is it Fair to all? Does the law build up our community? Will the law be beneficial? All new laws must promote mutual respect and mutual public safety (i.e., noise, reckless driving, injuries to children, etc.). And lastly, support our law enforcement in their function to alleviate chaos, dangers and aberrant behaviors; and connect social welfare services.

Paula Bienenfeld

D - Democratic / District 4

www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100082538902169

I have lived here for almost 35 years, first in Rockville's West End, then in North Bethesda's Luxmanor neighborhood, and now in Silver Spring's Seven Oaks neighborhood. My professional career as an environmental and historic preservation consultant and my decades long successful experience as a community advocate on schools, traffic, and transparency make me the clear choice to represent District 4. I am your neighbor and I am committed to addressing the needs of our diverse neighborhoods.

Affording a home purchase is the key to building generational wealth, something all our families want. We are a large county, so I support extending housing locations across the county (ag reserve excepted) rather than limiting hyperdensity to our District 4 neighborhoods. Equity means equity. I oppose disruptive rezoning that advantages investors but not our neighborhoods. Finally, I am committed to true transparency and neighborhood consultation before zoning plans are unveiled as a done deal.

Providing services we depend on is challenging without financial controls. I want to eliminate redundancies; push to attract high-target corporations to increase revenue; decrease property taxes and fees, including property recordation fees, to increase affordability; decrease excessive admin. costs (e.g., MCPS: 45 percent overhead); rebalance employment with more jobs in the private sector; push to attract businesses so taxes on gov. employees salary and property are less central to revenue.

Effective safety net services are critical for residents who need help through difficult times or help getting established in a new career or a new country. But these are threatened by other less important expenditures, like admin. costs and nobid contracts that drain our budget. I support more family facing school employees and programs; effective nonprofits; neighborhood outreach; medical support; free school lunches; free no questions asked meals for kids on weekends, distributed at libraries

I have four key issues: schools; minority communities under threat; general assaults; dangerous roads and pedestrian deaths. Schools: support close coordination with principals regarding SROs; minority communities: support communities to stop ICE's illegal arrests and protect religious schools and houses of worship; general assaults: police presence in all neighborhoods; roads: increase hardened bicycle pedestrian infrastructure based on neighborhood knowledge of where infrastructure is needed.

Kate Stewart

D - Democratic / District 4

www.votekatestewart.com

I serve as the District 4 Councilmember and chair the Government Operations and Fiscal Policy and Audit Committees. In 2025 after a unanimous election, I served as Council President. Last year, I received the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' highest award for public service in recognition of my work on regional collaboration, to address homelessness, and my advocacy for long-term funding for metro. Before serving on the Council, I was the Mayor of Takoma Park for seven years.

We are in a housing affordability crisis. We must make housing affordable for our workforce and the next generation. We need to advance zoning changes and tax incentives. I led the FAITH ZTA enabling faith institutions to build affordable housing on their property, supported zoning changes to allow workforce housing along transit corridors, and also supported tax credits incentivizing conversion of office to residential. I will continue to support efforts to build more affordable housing.

We need to fund the essentials – education, programs to address housing and food insecurity, and with cuts to medicaid, we need to ensure residents have the healthcare they need. Last year as Council President, I was proud of the budget we passed which funded our schools, safety net services, and left the County with healthy reserves without raising taxes.

We need to work with departments and ensure funding for programs that have shown success, such as the SHARP program, which moves unhoused families out of our shelters and into supportive housing. We also need to support our local non-profits as they provide essential services to residents as their federal funding is gutted by the federal administration. This is work I led on the Council last year when we put forward a \$7.75mill supplemental to assist residents during the government shutdown.

Given the current federal administration's harmful and cruel policies targeting members of our community, it is essential we do all we can to support residents. It is why I voted for the Trust Act which codifies into law our policy that our local police department and other agencies do not assist with civil immigration enforcement. During my term, I have also worked closely with the police department to address safety issues and residents' concerns and we have seen a decrease in crime.

Peter "Rocky" Whitesell

D - Democratic / District 4

RockyWhitesell.com

My background spans laboratory science and public policy, most recently serving as a policy analyst at the National Institutes of Health. I've worked directly on large public budgets and within major organizations, but I've also spent years hands-on in laboratories and understand how policies affect people on the ground. Good science requires weighing evidence clearly and honestly, yet it never loses sight of improving lives. That perspective guides how I approach public service.

To urgently increase housing supply countywide: increasing the Housing Initiative Fund and supporting the Housing Opportunities Commission's use of gap financing; expanding transit-oriented zoning near major hubs; allowing more missing-middle housing and duplexes, quads, and townhouses; moving key reviews and community input earlier so projects are less financially risky; and proactively engaging with the community to find the most minimally disruptive areas to focus.

I will prioritize funding for housing supply tools such as the Housing Initiative Fund, frontline services residents rely on, fair pay for the workers delivering those services, and ensuring schools can address safety issues immediately rather than waiting for major renovations. My priority is that core services reach a high and equitable standard in every community before the county pursues new discretionary initiatives.

I want to particularly focus on addressing gaps. People who need help rarely fit neatly into the categories and requirements many programs operate within. If we can give workers across safety net services as much flexibility and discretion as possible, it could greatly increase the impact and reach of their work. Expanding forums for coordination with county non-profits can help here too.

Frankly and definitely, the largest single threat to the safety and security of our residents is the current federal administration. It must be explicit policy for county law enforcement to intervene, peacefully, when federal agents clearly violate residents' civil rights. Federal agents have substantial leeway by precedent, but it is not unlimited, and we cannot leave it solely to unarmed civilians to defend the rights generations of Americans fought and died for. Non-cooperation is not enough.

There are no Republican candidates running for District 4.

Candidates for Montgomery County Council District 5, 6

See page 36 for details about the office of Montgomery County Council.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

District 5

Candidate

Party / Website

Charles Kirchman

D - Democratic / District 5

No website provided

I am a lifelong county resident and married with 2 children. I have spent my career in the private sector in the IT field. At my previous residence I served 13 years on the condominium Board of Directors in a community of over 500 homes. I have years of experience working with diverse people, managing budgets, finding cost efficiencies, reviewing and negotiating contracts.

The County works at cross purposes in regard to affordability by raising property, income and utility taxes. The county should continue to promote MPDU construction and rental assistance. The current plan of higher density zoning in existing neighborhoods is detrimental to their character and the burden falls on the middle & working class neighborhoods. Increased density zoning in the county must require developers to purchase TDR's to protect farmland in the agricultural reserve.

The economy continues to be a challenge for the state and county governments as well as the citizens of Montgomery County. The default answer from the county cannot be additional increases in property and income taxes. Initially I propose a flat budget across all departments with a review over the next year to analyze opportunities for savings and efficiencies. We have a great county government, but it cannot live beyond its' means.

When budgets are strained safety net programs tend to suffer disproportionately. My goal would be to maintain the current level of funding in all programs and continue leveraging relationships with non-profits to maximize the effectiveness of programs. Reducing homelessness and maintaining the free lunch programs for students would be my top priorities.

To ensure safety in the county the police department needs a fully staffed patrol division to properly respond to calls for service. The county police have the necessary budget but are unable to fully staff the department. To increase patrol staffing an analysis of the department is needed to identify roles that can be handled by civilians and create other roles that would be a hybrid that would be armed and have investigatory powers but not the same level of training as a patrol officer.

Josephine Salazar

R - Republican / District 5

www.JosephineSalazar.com

With integrity, honesty and effective public service, I proudly served our Nation as a Federal Career employee for 32 years.

First-time homeowner grants, low-income housing tax credits, innovative financing and affordable housing initiatives.

Operating a budget revenue by keeping tax rates stable and improving infrastructure. At the same time maintaining and improving essential services. A priority lowering Property Taxes. Increased escrow accounts due to property taxes appear as second mortgages. County residents are burdened with heavy handed increased taxes. Many county residents are on fixed incomes. Especially senior citizens, disabled and retirees.

Food giveaway programs by partnering with the food industry. Also, Health Clinic services partnering with Hospitals and Clinic Care consortiums for preventative health screenings. Inviting health care related businesses to invest in Montgomery County.

Multi-lingual personnel for outreach to inform county residents of safety and law enforcement initiatives. Using multi-media and in-person visits to all Montgomery County Residents. Researching what will improve the safety of our diverse community. Partnering with agencies and professional outreach counselors trained in resolving community conflicts. The solution diffusing a conflict prior to escalating violence. Provide Civics Classes to residents to gain a culture of respect and understanding.

District 6

Natali Fani-Gonzalez

D - Democratic / District 6

NataliForCouncil.com

I am the President of the Montgomery County Council and Chair of the Economic Development Committee. Before joining the Council, I was the Vice-Chair of the Planning Board and also a business owner managing a Public Engagement firm on social and environmental justice issues. My first job out of college was working for CASA, the immigrant rights group, as their advocacy manager on immigration and low-income workers' rights. I live in Wheaton with my husband and our 2 children, both MCP5 students.

I have a strong record increasing housing supply in the county, particularly deeply affordable housing units. My first action when I joined the Council in 2022 was to champion the preservation of the 345-unit Westchester West apartments in Aspen Hill to prevent displacement. Furthermore, I was the author of the Rent Stabilization law, spearheaded the effort to expand housing types such as duplexes/triplexes along transit corridors, and ease half empty buildings-to-residential conversions.

Protecting the most vulnerable communities is a key budget priority for me to increase, this involves homelessness prevention as well as access to health-care and healthy food programs. Protecting the parks department is also crucial for me as this is part of having healthy communities with access to green-spaces. Regarding decreasing budget items, I'm looking into defunding non-essential vacant positions to reallocate funds to higher priority areas.

I'm proud to have voted - and championed - comprehensive/multi-sector approaches to deliver safety net services focusing on food security, housing, healthcare, and financial stability. Key initiatives include the Montgomery Cares program for uninsured health services, expanded food recovery networks, and emergency rental assistance. I have been a strong advocate for building urban farms in my district including on Loiederman Middle School, Glenmont Forest, and Kemp Mill Elementary School.

I led the County Council to pass the Trust Act, a bill that states that our local police cannot act as immigration agents. I have organized several public safety walks and townhall meetings with neighbors and the police department throughout my district; these efforts have been critical in building trust with our community and the police. I have also worked closely with Fire and Rescue teams, including organizing a youth townhall meeting on Public Safety to recruit the next generation.

Qualifications

How do your background and experience prepare you to be a member of the County Council?

Housing

What initiatives will you support to increase an affordable housing supply countywide?

Budget Priorities

Which operating budget revenue and spending items will you seek to increase and decrease and why?

Safety Net Services

What initiatives will you support, if any, to ensure that residents across the county receive safety net services?

Public Safety

What policies will you support to ensure the safety of our large and diverse population?

The following District 5 Democratic candidate was invited to respond but provided no answers by the print deadline:

Kristin Mink

See VOTE411.org for any late responses.

Candidates for Montgomery County Council District 6, 7

See page 36 for details about the office of Montgomery County Council.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Sonia A. Garcia

D - Democratic / District 6

www.soniagarciaforcouncildistrict6.com

I hold a Ph.D. in Molecular Medicine and built my career as a scientist+Program Analyst at the National Institutes of Health specializing in turning complex ideas into structured, equitable, actionable programs that align community objectives with real impact- keeping collaboration, communication, and community at the core. As a daughter of Salvadoran immigrants, a product of MCPS, and a life-long Wheaton resident, I bring both lived experience and evidence-based leadership to the County Council.

I support preserving existing affordable housing and building new homes that working families can actually afford. This includes closing loopholes in housing programs, tying affordability standards to local incomes, and requiring strong anti-displacement protections. Development must also include infrastructure planning so growth does not overwhelm schools, roads, and public services while ensuring long-term housing stability across Montgomery County.

Montgomery County must prioritize fiscal responsibility, especially as federal job losses and economic uncertainty affect many residents. I will focus spending on infrastructure, schools, and essential services that provide clear public benefit. I will also review long-term tax abatements and incentives for developers that lack measurable outcomes to ensure taxpayer dollars are used responsibly and residents are not left footing the bill.

Safety net programs only work if residents know about them and can access them. I will strengthen multilingual outreach, partner with trusted community organizations, and improve coordination between County agencies. Services must be culturally competent and accessible to all residents, including seniors, immigrants, and working families. Government must meet people where they are and ensure support reaches those who need it most.

As someone born and raised in one of Montgomery County's most diverse communities, I know public safety means both strong emergency response and prevention. I will support full funding for fire and rescue services and invest in infrastructure such as stormwater systems and safe housing. I will also work to strengthen trust between public safety agencies and the communities they serve so every resident feels safe and protected.

Louella Tham

R - Republican / District 6

www.votelouella.com

I am : • an immigrant from childhood who loves our community • lived most of my life in MoCo • high school at Springbrook, Kennedy • degree in Linguistics and Arts at UMCP • experience in Financial, Green Energy, Natural Foods and Contract negotiation • a salesperson who meets people in my community in person everyday and am in touch with what their wants and needs are • a Volunteer VP at my HOA, at my local RWRC community groups I am bless, GOD put the desire in me to help make MoCo better

Initiatives such as ZTA's, SLA's that have performance goals with measures build in for accountability are important because it appears initiatives in the past might have started with good intentions but results in people's lives here NOT benefiting then we need to hold the parties responsible accountable and get them to correct so we the People can be happy here. We need to keep traffic pattern, water, energy to serve the People first in mind when building.

Increase budget in helping: •Small business •Businesses who use resource from within Montgomery County •First-time homebuyers •Innovative composting Decrease budget: •illogical renewable energy stipend •Incoherent transportation budgets •credit for large businesses

All life saving food, shelter medical and mental health safety net services.

Policies that keeps Police and Hospitals well funded and educated with our Bill of Rights so they can protect us as our Constitution dictates. The beauty is our Bill of Rights and Constitution applies the same with a diverse population or otherwise as long as you are American.

District 7

Van Free

D - Democratic / District 7

Vanfreefordistrict7.com

I served 16 years as a Montgomery County career firefighter, responding to emergencies and working directly with residents in every type of neighborhood. That experience taught me how county decisions affect real people. After an injury ended my service, I became a small business owner. I understand budgeting, managing employees, and solving problems. I will bring a practical, service focused perspective to the Council.

Montgomery County must expand housing options so working families can afford to live here. I support increasing housing supply near transit, streamlining permitting, and encouraging responsible development that includes workforce housing. We must also preserve existing affordable housing and reduce barriers that slow construction. Teachers, firefighters, nurses, and service workers should be able to live in the communities they serve.

The county budget should prioritize the core services residents rely on every day. I support strong funding for public safety, education, infrastructure, and programs that help vulnerable residents. At the same time, we must carefully review spending, eliminate inefficiencies, and ensure taxpayer dollars are used responsibly. A disciplined budget protects services while keeping Montgomery County economically competitive.

A strong county makes sure residents can get help during difficult times. I support investments in food security, housing stability, mental health services, and job training. The county should strengthen partnerships with nonprofits and community organizations that already serve residents effectively. Services must be accessible in every part of the county so families can get support before problems become crises.

Public safety requires strong staffing, training, and community trust. I support fully staffing fire and rescue services, ensuring police have the resources and training they need, and expanding behavioral health crisis response programs. We should invest in prevention, coordination between agencies, and community engagement so residents in every neighborhood feel safe and supported.

Sharif Hidayat

D - Democratic / District 7

votesharif.com

My background and experience includes over twenty years of public service working with HOA's, Civic Associations and Non-profit organizations to ameliorate public safety and quality of life issues. I have a proven track record of collaborating with community members, local businesses and non-profits to solve complex issues. Our campaign is self funded. Therefore, I'll be able to truly represent District 7 residents vs. the typical "pay for play" politician that District 7 has been used to.

I would partner with organizations like Habitat for Humanity. I would mobilize local volunteers and fundraising through donations rather than taxes, this model supports low-income households while fostering community involvement. I will donate my time to help dig the ditches and hammer the nails to provide affordable housing for those most in need. There is no need for taxpayers to flip the bill for affordable housing when there are so many of use that are willing to donate our time for free.

Public Safety and Education will see increases in their budgets for the obvious. We have to have safe streets and safe communities to live in and work. Funding for education is always a good investment for our community. Youth development will also see an increase in spending. MCPS's procurement office will be getting a rude awaking if I am elected. MCPS has squandered millions of dollars from taxpayers with no real accountability. Google moco school electric bus scandal to know what I mean.

Having served as a Police Officer, I know first hand the importance of ensuring that our Safety Net Services remain fully funded. The Crisis Center, Mobile Crisis Unit, and Family Justice Center will continue to receive funding for the important work that they do. Montgomery County is fortunate to have an extensive network of non-profits, faith based organizations and civic associations that provide the heavy lifting when it comes to food insecurities and social services.

I support public safety policies that keep residents informed, engaged and accountable. Montgomery County is fortunate to have a police force that is as diverse as the community it serves. Policies that cultivate community trust and engagement are policies I support. Policies that alienate or handicap officers from doing their jobs effectively are policies that I won't support. Holding Criminals accountable to the community should remain the primary focus of law enforcement professionals.

(District 7 candidates continue next page)

Candidates for Montgomery County Council District 7

See page 36 for details about the office of Montgomery County Council.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidate

Party / Website

Qualifications

How do your background and experience prepare you to be a member of the County Council?

Housing

What initiatives will you support to increase an affordable housing supply countywide?

Budget Priorities

Which operating budget revenue and spending items will you seek to increase and decrease and why?

Safety Net Services

What initiatives will you support, if any, to ensure that residents across the county receive safety net services?

Public Safety

What policies will you support to ensure the safety of our large and diverse population?

Dawn Luedtke

D - Democratic / District 7

www.dawnluedtke.com

My prior experience as both a private practice attorney and Assistant Attorney General, as well as my nine years service in executive branch of State government have informed my work in my first term on the County Council. My education and workforce experience as well as my personal life experience assist with my decision-making, my attention to detail, my focus on the rule of law, my community engagement and outreach about the role of local government, and my passion for serving the community.

I have already supported and will continue to support 1) strategic zoning changes to allow for flexibility in housing types along major corridors and near transit; 2) office to residential conversion; 3) funding our Housing Production Fund for development in public/private partnership of affordable multifamily dwelling units, and 4) working to insist on clear, articulable standards and processes with the Department of Permitting Services to ensure easier time to delivery of units.

My assessment of our operating budget focuses on making sure the County continues to deliver core government services which means ensuring salaries and operating capacity for those services, while evaluating the departments to ensure there's no duplication of services, assess overhead vs. benefit costs to make more of the tax investment go directly to services to residents, and hold the executive branch agencies accountable for fiscally sound decision-making in the delivery of services.

My priority safety net services focus on bolstering our food insecurity programs, investments in our services to end and prevent homelessness to reduce instability for our children and families at-risk of becoming homeless or for those entering permanent supportive housing, and for our primary care coalition/Montgomery Cares partners providing health and dental services to our uninsured/underinsured residents emphasizing preventive care and minimizing ER visits for residents of all ages.

I have been a staunch supporter of our entire public safety ecosystem and will continue to support recruitment and retention efforts, community engagement and outreach with our public safety professionals, ensuring they have the appropriate resources to perform their work, and to support force multiplier resources like the Drone as First Responder and Real Time Intelligence Center programs for MCPD, and our mobile med and mobile crisis services for MCFRS and our behavioral health unit in DHHS.

Harold Maldonado

R - Republican / District 7

www.haroldmaldonado.com

My background as an economist, with specialization in fiscal policy, an intelligence professional, and project manager has prepared me to evaluate complex policy, financial, and economic issues. I have produced economic analysis used by senior decision-makers and managed multimillion-dollar federal programs and teams. This experience gives me the analytical discipline, fiscal oversight, and leadership needed to make responsible policy decisions and ensure effective use of taxpayer resources.

My experience analyzing economic systems and housing markets shows that increasing supply is the most effective way to reduce housing costs. I support expanding diverse housing options, streamlining zoning and permitting, and encouraging transit-oriented development to increase supply where infrastructure already exists. I would also support public-private partnerships and incentives that help developers build quality housing while protecting fiscal responsibility and economic stability.

I support creating a county fiscal accountability office modeled on a "DOGE-style" efficiency review/audit (without mass layoffs) that uses data to audit programs and identify waste, duplication, and underperforming spending. Funds from reduced or inefficient programs should be redirected to core priorities like public safety, schools, infrastructure, and housing supply. I would focus on growing revenue through economic growth and business investment rather than increasing taxes on residents.

I support strengthening the county's safety-net services while improving accountability and access for residents who need them most. This includes better coordination between county agencies and community organizations so families can more easily access housing, food, and family assistance programs. I also believe the strongest long-term safety net is economic opportunity, so I would support policies that encourage job creation, small business growth, and workforce development across the county.

Crime is out of hand in the county and based on this reality, I'd support strengthening law enforcement resources and ensuring officers have the staffing, tools, and support necessary to respond effectively to crime. I'd increase the police budget and start removing the Accountability Board that impedes police work. Finally, I'd prioritize manpower in the police force rather than the drone program as I feel police presence is the best deterrent for crime.



On the Ballot

Judge of the Circuit Court – Sixth Circuit

(see candidates on page 50)

Duties

Circuit Court Judges preside over jury and bench trials in the Circuit Court, which hears major criminal trials with a right to a jury, and civil cases (involving more than \$30,000). They also handle family law matters like divorce and custody and decide appeals from lower courts. The Sixth Circuit Court serves Montgomery County.

How Elected

Judges of the Circuit Court are elected countywide. When there is a vacancy, the Governor appoints a person to fill the office from a list recommended by a judicial nominating commission, which reviews each applicant's qualifications and experience. Each newly appointed judge will appear on the ballot in the first election occurring at least one year after the vacancy. Attorneys who are members of the Maryland Bar may also run to challenge a newly appointed or sitting judge.

Term

Fifteen years, no term limit. Mandatory retirement age of 70 years.

Salary

\$214,433 per year.

Website

montgomerycountymd.gov/cct

Questions to the candidates for Judge of the Circuit Court:

- **EXPERIENCE:** How does your experience prepare you for the duties of this judgeship?
- **PRIORITIES:** What are your priorities for this judgeship?
- **CHALLENGES:** What are the greatest challenges facing the Maryland court system and how should they be addressed?

See page 50 for candidate responses. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Who May Vote?

You must be registered with the Republican or Democratic party to vote for a candidate for Montgomery County Circuit Court Judge.

Democrats and Republicans may vote for no more than 4 (four) candidates.

Candidates for Judge of the Circuit Court

See page 49 for details about the office of Judge of the Circuit Court.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidate Website	Sharon V. Burrell www.ElectSittingJudgesMCS.com	Victor M. Del Pino www.electsittingjudgesmcs.com	James J. Dietrich Electsittingjudgesmcs.com
Experience	<p>I was appointed to the Circuit Court in 2008 by Governor O'Malley and reappointed in 2025 by Governor Moore. I have presided over matters in every division of the Court, handling a wide range of cases, including high profile and complex civil and criminal cases. I have taught other judges on a variety of topics at the Maryland Judicial College.</p>	<p>My experience of over 20 years as a prosecutor, defense attorney and as an Associate Judge in the District Court has prepared me well for the Circuit Court. As an attorney I litigated countless bench and jury trials. Over the past six years as a District Court Judge I have presided over thousands of cases. I have used extensive litigation experience to prepare adequately for my role in the Circuit Court. Presiding for the last 6 years has also shown my character and temperament daily.</p>	<p>Temperament, legal acumen, and integrity are the hallmarks of a good judge. My 27 years as a prosecutor have prepared me for this judgeship by instilling these qualities in me, along with a deep commitment to public service. A judge must also serve as a leader in the legal community; a path I have already begun through my work as an adjunct law professor, where I have had the privilege of shaping the next generation of lawyers.</p>
<p>How does your experience prepare you for the duties of this judgeship?</p>	<p>My priorities are to continue to serve the court as I have always done, with integrity and patience and to fairly and impartially apply the law to each person that comes before me. I serve as the chair of the Judiciary's Equal Justice Committee and understand the importance of the court's responsibility to administer justice fairly to all.</p>	<p>Providing fair and impartial justice to ensure that all parties are heard and have access to the Courts. Also, enhancing the public trust the community has with the Court. Community engagement is vital through education and outreach. An additional priority is attempting to reduce delays in management of the docket.</p>	<p>My priority is that every person who comes before me feels they have had a full opportunity to present their case, that they have been heard, and that I have treated them fairly, with respect, and in accordance with the law.</p>
Priorities	<p>What are your priorities for this judgeship?</p>	<p>Access to the Courts continues to be a challenge. The Courts must continue to be proactive on developing innovative ways to insure that all have access to the Courts and justice. Anyone that wishes to be served by the Court must be aware of how to access all services available regardless of the type of case.</p>	<p>Like all public institutions, it is important that the Maryland court system serve well every member of the public that comes before it. As the sheer volume of cases increases and the issues within them grow more complex, the challenge is to maintain the same high quality of service the court system has always provided — efficiently and effectively.</p>
Challenges	<p>What are the greatest challenges facing the Maryland court system and how should they be addressed?</p>	<p>Courts are still trying to address the backlog caused by the pandemic, which results in delays in hearing some cases. To address this matter courts often double or triple book cases in hopes that one or more cases will be resolved prior to the court date. Mediation and other dispute resolution processes could be increased to assist in this process.</p>	
Candidate Website	Catherine H. McQueen www.electsittingjudgesmcs.com	Marylin Pierre www.pierreforjudge.com	
Experience	<p>Prior to my appointment to the bench in 2024, I spent 23 years in private practice, handling hundreds of hearings in civil, family, and guardianship matters. A large percentage of the Circuit Court's docket involves family law, and I bring substantial experience in that area. I have also worked extensively with individuals facing high levels of stress, as well as mental health and substance use challenges. Drawing on that experience, I maintain a calm, steady, and compassionate demeanor.</p>	<p>Sixty percent of the court's cases are family law. I have represented clients in family law cases: divorce, custody, child support, visitation, access, paternity, adoption, domestic violence, marital property, prenuptial, postnuptial, and separation agreements for over 34 years. I have represented clients in criminal law, juvenile law, civil law, and probate cases. I am an immigrant, a former military police officer, and a former chair of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Commission.</p>	
<p>How does your experience prepare you for the duties of this judgeship?</p>	<p>The most important qualities a judge can bring to the bench are fairness and respect for all who appear before the Court. I am committed to ensuring that every party is heard and treated with dignity. I also plan to draw on my extensive experience with guardianship matters to serve the community in this growing and evolving area of the law.</p>	<p>My priorities are restorative justice (where applicable), fair sentencing in accordance with the law, and treating people in my courtroom with compassion, dignity, and respect, regardless of who they know or how much money they have. The Justice Policy Institute's report states that Maryland incarcerated a higher percentage of its young Black males than any other state in the country due to extensive sentencing. Fair, consistent, and predictable sentences reduce crime and cost taxpayers less.</p>	
Priorities	<p>What are your priorities for this judgeship?</p>	<p>The greatest challenge facing the Maryland court system is securing the resources necessary to ensure efficient and equal access to justice for everyone and to protect the safety of everyone who works in and accesses the court system.</p>	
Challenges	<p>What are the greatest challenges facing the Maryland court system and how should they be addressed?</p>	<p>In my experience, the greatest challenges facing the Maryland court system are cultural sensitivity and flexibility to improvement. Montgomery County is one of the most diverse counties in the United States. I think judges should spend more time in the community they serve. Spending time with people from diverse groups, different genders, life experiences, and socioeconomic backgrounds increases relatability and reduces bias.</p>	



On the Ballot

State's Attorney

Duties: The Montgomery County State's Attorney prosecutes crime in the county. The State's Attorney also educates the public about criminal justice issues, addresses inequality, promotes fairness in and access to the criminal justice system and furthers the efficient use of criminal justice resources.

How Elected: The State's Attorney is elected countywide. Candidates must be members of the Maryland Bar.

Term: Four years, no term limit.

Salary: \$259,148 per year.

Website: montgomerycountymd.gov/sao

Questions to the candidates for State's Attorney:

- **QUALIFICATIONS:** How do your background and experience prepare you to be State's Attorney?
- **PRIORITIES:** What are your highest priorities for allocating resources?
- **DISCRIMINATION:** What specific actions will you take to avoid bias in prosecutions?
- **ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION:** Under what circumstances would you support alternatives to incarceration for adults and juveniles?

Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidate.

Who May Vote?

Registered Democrats may vote only for one (1) Democratic candidate.

There are no Republican candidates running for this office.

Candidate

Party / Website

Qualifications

How do your background and experience prepare you to be State's Attorney?

Priorities

What are your highest priorities for allocating resources?

Discrimination

What specific actions will you take to avoid bias in prosecutions?

Discrimination

What specific actions will you take to avoid bias in prosecutions?

The following Democratic candidate was invited to respond but provided no answers by the print deadline:

John McCarthy

See VOTE411.org for any late responses.

There are no Republican candidates running for this office.



On the Ballot

Clerk of the Circuit Court

Duties: The Clerk of the Circuit Court oversees the office that performs administrative duties for the Circuit Court. The Clerk's office maintains records of court proceedings and county records such as deeds, issues business and marriage licenses, performs civil wedding ceremonies and administers the Oath of Office to elected officials, judges and certain county employees.

How Elected: The Clerk of the Circuit Court is elected countywide.

Term: Four years, no term limit.

Salary: \$146,500 per year.

Website: montgomerycountymd.gov/cct/about-us/clerk.html

Questions to the candidates for Clerk of the Circuit Court:

- **QUALIFICATIONS:** How do your background and experience prepare you to be Clerk of the Circuit Court?
- **DIVERSITY:** How will you ensure that the office staff interact in a culturally sensitive manner with all county residents?
- **CHALLENGES:** What is the biggest challenge facing this office and how will you address it?

Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidate.

Who May Vote?

Registered Democrats may vote only for one (1) Democratic candidate.

There are no Republican candidates running for this office.

Candidate

Party / Website

Karen Bushell

D - Democratic
www.VoteKarenBushell.com

Qualifications

How do your background and experience prepare you to be Clerk of the Circuit Court?

With more than 25 years of experience in the Montgomery County Judiciary, I bring a deep understanding of court operations. I have served as Clerk of the Circuit Court since 2021 and was elected by the voters of Montgomery County in 2022. Previously, I served as Chief Deputy Clerk for seven years. I am also a graduate of the Institute for Court Management, a nationally recognized program that strengthened my knowledge of court leadership and administration.

Diversity

How will you ensure that the office staff interact in a culturally sensitive manner with all county residents?

My office reflects the diversity of our county, with 190 employees of varied ages, backgrounds, and experiences. This diversity, including within my management team, helps foster an inclusive workplace where cultural awareness is valued. By maintaining a diverse staff and promoting respect, professionalism, and ongoing awareness, we ensure our team interacts with all residents in a culturally sensitive and respectful manner.

Challenges

What is the biggest challenge facing this office and how will you address it?

The biggest challenge facing the Clerk's office has been the transition from a paper-driven system to the Maryland Electronic Courts (MDEC) case management system. While the Maryland Judiciary completed statewide implementation in 2024, the work of adapting processes and supporting staff, judges, attorneys, justice partners, and the public continues. With strong leadership, clear communication, and training, I will ensure the office continues providing efficient service to our community.

There are no Republican candidates running for this office.



On the Ballot

Register of Wills

(see candidates on page 54)

Duties

The Montgomery County Register of Wills assists the public with administrative processes concerning estates of deceased persons and safeguards wills of living persons. The Register helps the public to prepare required forms, maintains a permanent record of estate proceedings, collects Maryland inheritance tax on estates and probate fees and refers to the Circuit Court any matters requiring judicial action.

How Elected

The Register of Wills is elected countywide.

Term

Four years, no term limit.

Salary

\$169,000 per year.

Website

registers.maryland.gov/main/montgomery.html

Questions to the candidates for Register of Wills:

- **QUALIFICATIONS:** How do your background and experience prepare you to be Register of Wills?
- **PUBLIC EDUCATION:** How will you educate the public about meeting the legal requirements for wills and estates?
- **DIVERSITY:** How will you ensure that the office staff interact in a culturally sensitive manner with all county residents?
- **CHALLENGES:** What is the biggest challenge facing this office and how will you address it?

See page 54 for candidate responses. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Who May Vote?

Registered Democrats may vote only for one (1) Democratic candidate.

Registered Republicans may vote only for one (1) Republican candidate.

Candidates for Register of Wills

See page 53 for details about the office of Register of Wills.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidate Party / Website	Alan S. Bowser D - Democratic www.alanbowser.com	Paul J. Dollahite D - Democratic www.dollahite-row2026.com	Barbara Ebel D - Democratic www.barbaraebel.com
Qualifications How do your background and experience prepare you to be Register of Wills?	I am a graduate of the Georgetown University Law Center. For more than 30 years, I have practiced law in the State of Maryland, and specifically in Montgomery County. My practice has focused on family law and wills, trusts, and estates. I have been the "family lawyer" for hundreds of our Montgomery County neighbors. I have assisted families with wills, the powers of attorney, trusts, and probate. I have worked very closely with the the Office of Register of Wills.	I currently serve as Register of Wills, appointed unanimously by the Judges of the Circuit Court after a thorough vetting process. I have 17 years of experience in the Register of Wills office as Court Administrator and 13 years as a Maryland attorney focused on estates and trusts. I am the first attorney to hold this role in Montgomery County and the only candidate vetted by the Court. My experience ensures knowledgeable, efficient service for families.	I am an experienced public administrator with over 25 years in public service, ready to serve as the Register of Wills. My background includes over 20 years of leadership focused on enhancing community well-being. I've successfully connected residents to essential services and ensured regulatory compliance while managing teams. By streamlining processes, I aim to improve accessibility and efficiency. I committed to serving all residents of Montgomery County with integrity and compassion.
Public Education How will you educate the public about meeting the legal requirements for wills and estates?	Since I strongly believe that the Office of the Register of Wills should be proactively engaged with the Montgomery County community, I would take the initiative to organize seminars through the County to educate the public about estate planning and meeting the legal requirements for wills & estates. While the ROW does not provide legal assistance to community members for estate planning, we can help educate them about its value, through in-person meetings & online technology.	I prioritize public education through community speaking engagements and accessible resources. Our office offers live chat, phone, and email support to guide residents through the probate process. Our website offers extensive information on probate administration, including our booklet on Administering Estates in Maryland and all required forms. All information is available in multiple languages, including Spanish.	The Office of the Register of Wills in Montgomery County can employ several strategies: Workshops: Monthly sessions on wills and estate planning with expert speakers. Online Resources: Provide FAQs, and downloadable guides. Modernization -online tools to increase access. Social Media: Share educational content and host live Q&A. Partnerships: Collaborate with local libraries and senior centers for outreach. Printed Materials: Distribute brochures.
Diversity How will you ensure that the office staff interact in a culturally sensitive manner with all county residents?	The Montgomery County Register of Wills of Wills Office already has the reputation as being "the best" in the State of Maryland. My long experience with that Office is that it is professional, compassionate, and culturally sensitive when dealing with grieving families. My pledge to Montgomery County residents is that, under my leadership, the Office will continue to do so,	We serve a diverse community and provide equitable access for all Montgomery County residents. Our diverse staff of Black, Latine, Asian, and LGBTQ+ deputies speak multiple languages, including Spanish, French, Korean, Russian, Tagalog, and Polish, and we use the Maryland Judiciary Language Line and Court translators for additional support. We emphasize treating every resident with care, compassion, and fairness, creating a respectful and welcoming environment.	Several strategies are essential: Training and Education: Implement ongoing cultural competency training and language resources for staff.Resource Development: Create multilingual materials and establish cultural liaisons to bridge gaps between staff and residents. Community Engagement: Set up feedback mechanisms and partner with local cultural organizations to understand community needs. Inclusive Practices: Promote diverse hiring and customer service policies focused on respect and empathy.
Challenges What is the biggest challenge facing this office and how will you address it?	In my experience, the biggest challenge for the Office is to continue to make the probate process more understandable and accessible to people from every community. A commitment to proactive community engagement to help educate the public about estate planning and probate will help to address that challenge. We can expect more technological change in how the Office manages and provides information for the public, so we need to remain committed to helping residents better understand the process.	The public typically learns about us when they lose a loved one and need to administer their estate. The biggest challenge is informing the public about the function of our office before they need us, and the importance of having a will. Another challenge is to modernize the office while maintaining personal service. My goal is to make probate easier to navigate, without sacrificing the responsiveness and care residents rely on.	The biggest challenge facing the Montgomery County Register of Wills is budget instability due to the proposed elimination of Maryland's inheritance tax, which has historically funded operations. This phase-out risks substantial cuts to staff salaries and resources, impacting service delivery. To address this, we will advocate for alternative funding models with state legislators, streamline operations for cost savings, prioritize technology upgrades through grants, and enhance community engage.

The following Republican candidate was invited to respond but provided no answers by the print deadline:

T. Dolores Reyes

See VOTE411.org for any late responses.



On the Ballot Sheriff

Duties: The Sheriff's office is the enforcement arm of the county's courts. The office carries out court orders, delivers summonses and executes bench warrants related to child support, domestic violence, evictions, fugitives and extradition. Sheriff deputies transport and supervise inmates and ensure courthouse safety. The Sheriff's office does not perform police or corrections functions because Montgomery County has separate County Police and Corrections Departments.

How Elected: The Sheriff is elected countywide.

Term: Four years, no term limit.

Salary: \$200,547 per year.

Website: montgomerycountymd.gov/sheriff

Questions to the candidates for Sheriff:

- **QUALIFICATIONS:** How do your background and experience prepare you to be the Sheriff?
- **TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT:** How will you recruit and train staff to ensure safe and unbiased interactions with the public?
- **CHALLENGES:** What is the biggest challenge facing this office and how will you address it?

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Who May Vote?

Registered Democrats may vote only for one (1) Democratic candidate.

There are no Republican candidates running for this office.

Candidate

Party / Website

Will Milam

D - Democratic

www.willmilam.com

With 22 years in law enforcement, I rose to Chief Assistant Sheriff, overseeing operations, budgets, training, and professional accountability. I led nearly 400 employees, commanded critical incidents, and implemented policies that improved safety and trust. I hold a B.S. in Criminal Justice and completed Harvard Law School's Police Union Leadership Program. I bring proven executive leadership, operational experience, and a commitment to community policing, ready to serve as Sheriff on day one.

I will recruit candidates with integrity, sound judgment, and a strong commitment to public service, ensuring the agency's demographic makeup reflects the community. Our outreach efforts will attract qualified applicants who strengthen community trust. Training will focus on de-escalation, constitutional policing, and crisis intervention. Safe, unbiased interactions will be reinforced through strong supervision, clear expectations, and ongoing professional development.

The biggest challenge is the collapse in morale and workplace culture, which has driven a staffing crisis and weakened performance. I will lead with integrity, clarity, and optimism, setting high standards while supporting the employees who meet them every day. I believe leadership is about inspiring excellence, listening with respect, and building a culture where all feel valued and empowered. Together, we will restore pride and deliver professional, compassionate service to the county.

Maxwell Cornelius Uy

D - Democratic

www.maxuy4sheriff.com

As the 62nd Montgomery County Sheriff, and the first Asian-American to hold this position, I feel I am eminently qualified to continue serving as Sheriff. I have served with the Sheriff's Office, since June 1994, serving in every Division within the Sheriff's Office to include the Administrative Services, Civil & Criminal, Family, and Court Services Divisions. I have held leadership positions throughout the office, to include as Chief Deputy for the prior Sheriff before being elected in 2022.

The need for properly trained law enforcement officers is a priority for me. As Sheriff, I ensure that relevant, ongoing training that stresses de-escalation is provided through both entry level recruit and in-service classes. Additionally, I ensure that each prospective employee is thoroughly vetted and provided with clear expectations on how members of the Sheriff's Office will treat residents, with compassion, dignity, and respect.

Staffing in the Sheriff's Office continues to be one of the biggest challenges. This also presents a wonderful opportunity to grow the Sheriff's Office with sworn and non-sworn members from our diverse community. As Sheriff I created an expanded recruiting team, attended more community and recruitment events than ever before throughout the region. This has been beneficial from a recruiting standpoint, as well as fostering increased trust with our immigrant communities in the Montgomery County.

Qualifications

How do your background and experience prepare you to be the Sheriff?

Training and Recruitment

How will you recruit and train staff to ensure safe and unbiased interactions with the public?

Challenges

What is the biggest challenge facing this office and how will you address it?



On the Ballot

Montgomery County Party Central Committees

(see candidates on page 57)

Duties

The Montgomery County Democratic and Republican Central Committees direct the day-to-day operations of the local Democratic or Republican Party. The Central Committees recommend candidates to the Governor to fill vacancies in the General Assembly when a Delegate or Senator from Montgomery County resigns or dies in office and to fill vacancies at the County Board of Elections and certain other county agencies. County Committee members also are members of their State Party Central Committees, which in turn helps choose the leaders of the National Democratic and Republican Committees.

How Elected

Party Central Committee members are elected in each state legislative district.

Term

Four years, no term limit.

Salary

None.

Website

mcgcc.org (Democratic) and mcgop.com (Republican)

Questions to the candidates for Party Central Committees:

- **SPECIAL ELECTIONS:** When a vacancy occurs in the General Assembly, the Party Central Committee appoints someone to complete the rest of the term. Do you support special elections to fill these vacancies?
- **GENERAL ASSEMBLY VACANCIES:** What criteria will you use to choose a person to fill a vacancy in the Maryland General Assembly?
- **MOTIVATION:** Why do you want to serve on your party's Central Committee?
- **VACANCY SELECTIONS:** How can you ensure that your appointment decisions serve the best interest of the community when filling vacant positions?

Go to **VOTE411.org** or the LWVMC website, **lwvmocomd.org**, for candidate responses.

Who May Vote?

Registered Democrats may vote for up to eight (8) At Large Democratic candidates and up to two (2) Democratic candidates in state legislative districts 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 39. In district 9, voters may choose only one (1) Democratic candidate. Party policy requires that no more than 50 percent of the members can be elected from the same gender.

Registered Republicans may vote for up to four (4) At Large Republican candidates and up to two (2) Republican candidates in state legislative districts 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 39. In district 9, voters may choose only one (1) Republican candidate.



Candidates for Montgomery County Party Central Committees

See previous page for details about Montgomery County Party Central Committees.

Go to **VOTE411.org** or the LWVMC website, **lwvmocomd.org**, for candidate responses.

Candidates for Democratic Central Committee At Large

Vote for up to eight (8)

Samir Ahmed (Male)	Manie Bellot (Female)
Bill Bien (Male)	Deborah S. Belsky (Female)
Joshua Fischer (Male)	Sarah Brand-Wiita (Female)
Johvet “Jovy” Lopez Ramos (Male)	Marjorie Goldman (Female)
Eric Luedtke (Male)	Debra Johnson (Female)
Marko G. Rivera-Oven (Male)	Rosarie Tucci (Female)
Andrew D. Saundry (Male)	Gabrielle Zwi (Non-Binary)

Candidates for Democratic Central Committee By District

District 9/9A

Vote for no more than 1 candidate

Christa R. Geraci (Female)
William E. Mount (Male)

District 14

Vote for no more than 2 candidates

Tana Crumbley-Hassan (Female)
Liza Smith (Female)
Arthur Edmunds (Male)

District 15

Vote for no more than 2 candidates

Saman Qadeer Ahmad (Female)
Andrea Lauren Shedler (Female)
Colin C. Richard (Male)
William Roberts (Male)
Milan Alexander van Dam (Male)

District 16

Vote for no more than 2 candidates

Bama Athreya (Female)
Jim Michaels (Male)

District 17

Vote for no more than 2 candidates

Denise Henderson (Female)
Jennifer Guzman Hosey (Female)
Jayson L. Spiegel (Male)

District 18

Vote for no more than 2 candidates

Shruti Bhatnagar (Female)
Teresa Ramirez (Female)
Edward Fischman (Male)

District 19

Vote for no more than 2 candidates

Iris Veronica Jimenez (Female)
Simon Weaver (Male)
Kenneth A. Romero (Male)

District 20

Vote for no more than 2 candidates

Jimmy Lee Anderson (Male)
Pamela F. Lockett (Female)

District 39

Vote for no more than 2 candidates

Hashan Chowdhury (Male)
Zane H. Jones (Male)
Marc Anthony Robles (Male)
Lisette Orellana Engel (Female)
Saher Kataria (Female)
Emilee Towey (Female)

Candidates for Republican Central Committee At Large

Vote for up to four (4)

Marcus Alzona
Dan Cuda
Gregory Decker
Reardon “Sully” Sullivan

Candidates for Republican Central Committee By District

District 9/9A

Vote for no more than 1 candidate

Fitzgerald Mofor

District 14

Vote for no more than 2 candidates

Josephine Salazar

District 15

Vote for no more than 2 candidates

Peter Chan
Del Lamiman

District 16

Vote for no more than 2 candidates

Sharon Creed
Monte Gingery
Chris Haas

District 17

Vote for no more than 2 candidates

Paul Agle
Brigitta M. Mullican
Jackie Sackstein
Maurice Ward

District 18

Vote for no more than 2 candidates

Martine Baker
Raul I. Carmouze
T. Dolores Reyes

District 19

Vote for no more than 2 candidates

Anita Mpambara Cox
Jeffrey Don Rubin

District 20

Vote for no more than 2 candidates

Kenneth B. Dalecki
Alice Harron

District 39

Vote for no more than 2 candidates

Tracy A. Colligan
Amy D’Elia



On the Ballot

Montgomery County Board of Education

(see candidates on pages 59 - 62)

Duties

The Montgomery County Board of Education sets policies that govern the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). The Board selects the superintendent of schools, adopts budgets, establishes curriculum guides and school boundaries.

How Elected

All Board of Education members are elected countywide to four-year terms, with each of the five numbered districts represented by a member who must live in that district and two At-Large members who may live anywhere in the county. The terms are staggered, with one At-Large and two or three District members elected every two years. The Board also includes a student member who is elected every year by all MCPS secondary students.

Term

Four years, no term limit.

Salary

\$25,000 per year.

Website

montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boe

Who May Vote?

Elections for Board members are nonpartisan. All voters, regardless of the district they live in or party affiliation, may vote for one At-Large candidate and one candidate for District 3.

The two candidates receiving the most votes in the Primary Election for At-Large seats and for District 3 seat will appear on the General Election ballot in November. **Districts 1 and 5 each have one candidate running for office and therefore will not be on the Primary ballot.** They will move directly to the General Election ballot in November.

Questions to the candidates for Board of Education:

- **QUALIFICATIONS:** How do your background and experience prepare you to be a member of the Board of Education?
- **DIGITAL LITERACY:** What programs will you propose, if any, to ensure that students are able to distinguish reliable information sources from mis- and dis-information?
- **OPPORTUNITY/ACHIEVEMENT GAP:** What programs will you support to optimize achievement for all students across the county?
- **LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:** What strategies will you support to promote safe and respectful learning environments?
- **CHALLENGES:** What do you see as the biggest challenge facing the school system and how will you address it?

See pages 59 - 62 for candidate responses. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

NOTE: Candidates were advised that references to other candidates or officeholders would not be published. Accordingly, these references have been deleted and replaced with ellipses (...).

To find your Board of Education District, visit **voterservices.elections.maryland.gov**, select the *Lookup Your Voter Info* tab and provide your voter information. Then click on *My Voting Districts*.

Candidates for Montgomery County Board of Education At Large

See previous page for details about the office of Montgomery County Board of Education.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidate Website

Wylea Chase
www.wyleachase.com

Brenda M. Diaz
diazforboe.com

Qualifications

How do your background and experience prepare you to be a member of the Board of Education?

With well over 25 years as an educational advocate and parent committed to equity and accountability, I also bring lived experience and a data driven mindset. I understand the urgency behind MCPS opportunity gap and the importance of transparent leadership. My advocacy approach centers student outcomes, listening to families and educators across our diverse county, and working collaboratively to ensure every child has the opportunity to succeed and thrive.

Veteran bilingual educator with 20+ years teaching pre-K through high school— Spanish, ESOL, U.S. History, and Government to AP— across D.C. and Maryland, I bring classroom depth, curriculum expertise, and civic scholarship as a James Madison Fellow, Buchwald Fellow, and two-time NEH Landmark participant. I served as Spanish Curriculum Coordinator, founded Heart of Joy Learning, served as MCEA building representative, and navigated MCPS as a mother of three. I know this system from every angle.

Digital Literacy

What programs will you propose, if any, to ensure that students are able to distinguish reliable information sources from mis- and dis-information?

Our students must be guided to learning not just how to access information but how to evaluate it. I support strengthening digital literacy and media literacy appropriately across all grade levels. Teaching students to verify sources, recognize bias and think critically is key. Partnering with media specialists/librarians, educators, and technology experts can help to ensure our students are prepared to recognize and navigate mis and dis information responsibility.

The best defense against misinformation is a knowledge-rich curriculum rooted in primary sources, grammar, logic, and rhetoric from the earliest grades. When students investigate the Founding Documents, weigh competing historical arguments, and practice evidence-based writing, they build the critical thinking that transfers to evaluating any source. I support embedding these skills across social studies, science, and ELA—developing informed citizens, not students dependent on digital checklists.

Opportunity/Achievement Gap

What programs will you support to optimize achievement for all students across the county?

Closing opportunity gaps starts with honest data and targeted support alongside measurable accountability metrics. I support early literacy interventions, expanded and high dosage tutoring and enrichment, culturally responsive teaching, and stronger and inclusive family engagement. Parents and caregivers have to be made aware, early and often, if their children aren't reading and math proficient in order to properly engage and support their children.

Every child deserves rigorous, content-rich education regardless of zip code. I support knowledge-rich curriculum, whole books and textbooks in every classroom, grade-appropriate assignments that empower parents to help at home, and explicit math instruction. Teachers must be masters of their content – their knowledge is our students' greatest resource. With only 54.9% of Grade 3 students proficient in reading and 50.4% in math, we cannot wait. Strong teachers and curriculum close gaps.

Learning Environment

What strategies will you support to promote safe and respectful learning environments?

Students learn best when they feel safe, respected, and valued. I support restorative practices, strong (equitable and culturally competent) behavioral supports, and clear expectations and shared definitions for respect across differences. Our schools should reflect the diversity of Montgomery County while fostering belonging, accountability, and positive relationships among students, educators, and families.

Safe schools require restored School Resource Officers (SROs) — trusted relationship-builders endorsed by MCPS principals — consistent enforcement of the Student Code of Conduct, a Teachers' Bill of Rights to restore order and discipline, and urgent infrastructure repairs. Safe buildings produce focused students; crumbling ones produce distracted ones. When adults invest in students' physical environment, students invest back. Safety and pride become shared. Excellence in academics follows.

Challenges

What do you see as the biggest challenge facing the school system and how will you address it?

One of the biggest challenges facing MCPS is ensuring strong academic outcomes for all students while addressing the ever widening opportunity gaps for our most marginalized students. We must confront the data with transparency; this should include scaling what we already know works as evidenced by some of our more high performing schools. Let's focus resources where they will make the greatest difference for our students and educators.

MCPS faces an academic and safety crisis: only 22% pass Algebra I MCAP; Grade 3 reading at 54.9%, math at 50.4%. A student was shot at Wootton; a gun found at Gaithersburg High. The absent Community Engagement Officer proves we need dedicated SROs back in every school. The current BOE rubber-stamps budgets, dismisses parents, defers maintenance, and threatens neighborhood schools. I will change that — demanding transparency, restoring SROs, repairing buildings, and protecting our communities.

(At Large candidates continue next page)

Candidates for Montgomery Co. Board of Education At Large, District 1

See page 58 for details about the office of Montgomery County Board of Education.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidate Website

Omar Lazo
www.omarlazo4boe.com

Tiffany E. Wicks
drwicksforboe.com

Qualifications

How do your background and experience prepare you to be a member of the Board of Education?

My background combines public service, financial oversight, and firsthand experience as a parent of three students in Montgomery County Public Schools. I serve on the Montgomery College Board of Trustees overseeing budgets, planning, and accountability. As a small business owner and chair of the Montgomery County Workforce Development Board, I work with educators and employers to connect education with career opportunities and promote fiscal responsibility and transparency.

I am both professional and personally invested in being on the Montgomery County School Board. I have been an educator for 17 years, starting as an elementary teacher, then a school counselor, and now a professor. I also have a Doctorate of Education that was focused on K-12 education. I am also a mother of 3 children in Montgomery County schools. The success of MCPS is also success for my children and my community's children. I want to help strengthen MCPS's legacy of greatness.

Digital Literacy

What programs will you propose, if any, to ensure that students are able to distinguish reliable information sources from mis- and dis-information?

Students must learn not only how to use technology but how to evaluate information critically. I support expanding media literacy so students can identify credible sources, recognize bias, and avoid misinformation. MCPS should work with librarians and educators to teach these skills early. Teachers also need meaningful training and practical tools so these lessons are taught consistently across all schools.

Digital literacy is important for students in an age where anything can be found on the internet. MCPS has a strong digital literacy program called Your Characters Count, and there is a strategic focus on internet safety and AI. However, there are supplemental curricula that are underutilized. Programs such as Common Sense Media focuses on how to navigate factual information versus misinformation. This is crucial to students' academic work and development of personal beliefs and values.

Opportunity/Achievement Gap

What programs will you support to optimize achievement for all students across the county?

Closing opportunity gaps requires high expectations and equitable access to resources. I support expanding early learning and strengthening reading and math in the early grades so students get help quickly when needed. We must ensure access to rigorous courses, career and technical programs, and dual-enrollment opportunities with Montgomery College. Equity also means every school has safe facilities, strong leadership, and the resources students need to succeed.

The achievement gap is a holistic issue. Support for early intervention is crucial to prevent students from falling behind. One way to address this strategically would be adopting intervention Math curriculum at all levels for However, we also need to assess the basic needs and emotional needs of students. This comes through more provision of food assistance services, increasing clinics at schools at different levels to help families access medical, dental services and mental health services.

Learning Environment

What strategies will you support to promote safe and respectful learning environments?

Students learn best when they feel safe, respected, and supported. I support clear behavioral expectations, strong mental health resources, and restorative practices when appropriate. Schools must address bullying and harassment and ensure facilities are safe and well maintained. Safe schools also mean students feel they belong, with clear accountability for racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, discrimination based on sexual orientation, or other forms of hate.

Students and staff should be equipped to provide and foster a safe and respectful learning environment. Strategies such as increased professional development on cultural competence and trauma-informed care is paramount for educators. Restorative justice training for staff and administration keeps students accountable and helps increase follow through with discipline. Finally, multidisciplinary threat assessment teams in each school cluster allow for decreased violence and increased safety.

Challenges

What do you see as the biggest challenge facing the school system and how will you address it?

One of MCPS's biggest challenges is rebuilding trust while managing financial pressures and growing student needs. We must strengthen transparency and accountability in budgeting so resources support student learning. I will work to balance the budget and create a stable, sustainable financial plan that protects school facilities and infrastructure. Every student must have access to a high-quality education, regardless of their zip code.

One of the largest issues facing the school system is the lack of budgetary transparency and follow-through with proposed expenses. As a school board member, I want to create measures of accountability and quarterly reporting of how the proposed budget has been used and how community members can raise questions and concerns about how expenses are used. I want to create the ability for the community to know where their tax dollars are going and how students are benefitting from what's spent.

District 1

District 1 has one candidate running for office and therefore will not be on the Primary ballot. The candidate will move directly to the General Election ballot in November.

Candidates for Montgomery County Board of Education District 3

See page 58 for details about the office of Montgomery County Board of Education.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

District 3

Candidate Website

Sharon Creed
www.sharoncreed.org

Brett DiResta
votediresta.com

Andrew Frykman
frykman4boe.us

Qualifications

How do your background and experience prepare you to be a member of the Board of Education?

My years as a businesswoman in Montgomery County have given me firsthand insight into the challenges and opportunities facing our schools. As an affinity group facilitator at my child's school and a parent of two children who graduated from MCPS elementary schools, I understand our community well. My experience in business administration and parent advocacy prepares me to support strong academics, fiscal responsibility, and safe, inclusive learning environments.

As a 3-time MCPS parent, an educator, a small businessman, and a political professional, I am prepared for the Board of Education. I've spent decades in my community as a PTA member, a Little League baseball coach, and a member of the Nominating Committee for Montgomery College Board of Trustees. For 16 years, I've been an adjunct professor, lecturing at GW and the University of San Francisco. In politics, I've spent 3 decades working on campaigns opposing... strongman figures.

I attended and recently graduated from MCPS schools after 11 years. I've lived through the gap between what Board policy says and what students actually experience. Perspective like that is rare in a Board member, and it's exactly what this county needs. Similarly, I have been reflecting on what my education prepared me for, and my goal is to help shape the education of current and future generations based on my recent experience in MCPS.

Digital Literacy

What programs will you propose, if any, to ensure that students are able to distinguish reliable information sources from mis- and dis-information?

I would support integrating AI-powered media literacy tools in classrooms to help students analyze sources, detect bias, and identify misinformation. Students can compare claims with verified databases, evaluate credibility indicators, and recognize deepfakes. These tools should be paired with lessons on how AI works, its limits, and ethical use so students learn to question and verify information.

Keeping our children ahead of the digital curve is a cornerstone of my campaign. AI isn't coming; it is already here. We need to prepare our kids for the future. I will push for a modern curriculum that helps familiarize students with AI without making them overly reliant on it. Digital literacy also means protecting our kids from the current online landscape. We must help kids identify and use trustworthy sources while removing harmful technology, such as phones, from the classroom.

A new programme is not the answer. Evaluating sources, reasoning with evidence, and differentiating argument from fact are all life skills that MCPS already teaches or reinforces in every English, history, and science class. If MCPS is teaching these subjects well, students are building that capacity. My focus would be on ensuring they are.

Opportunity/Achievement Gap

What programs will you support to optimize achievement for all students across the county?

I support expanding early literacy and numeracy programs, targeted tutoring for struggling students, and enrichment opportunities for advanced learners. Investing in high-quality teachers through professional development, using responsible AI and technology, and strengthening after-school and summer learning can help close achievement gaps. Data-driven instruction and strong partnerships with families will help ensure every student succeeds.

I believe we need to demand both equity and excellence. To that end, I support the regionality study, which provides equal access to key programs to all students, regardless of their zip code. We need to make midterms and finals standard again across the county. Too many of our kids are entering college at a disadvantage. Lastly, we need to enhance current pathways for students who won't be attending college. MCPS needs to provide options for every student, not just those attending college.

Optimising achievement is a laudable goal, though it means executing the basics well: safer classrooms, empowering our wonderful teachers, and reporting performance correctly. Not necessarily a new programme. Gaps exist; I want to understand why before proposing solutions. Historically, the Board has pushed for new initiatives over best practices before honestly addressing that. I support transparency that makes underperformance visible and accountable.

Learning Environment

What strategies will you support to promote safe and respectful learning environments?

I support clear behavior expectations, restorative practices, and strong anti-bullying programs so every student feels safe and respected. Expanding mental health services, training staff in conflict resolution, and encouraging student leadership will strengthen school culture. Partnerships with families and community organizations will help promote accountability, respect, and well-being for all students.

There has been an unfortunate rise in bias, especially antisemitism, in MCPS. It is incumbent on the Board to work to eradicate these issues. I want to pass a county-level bill like Maryland's Stop the Hate Act, which seeks to dismantle antisemitism through education. I would also work to improve antibias training, making it part of continuing education, so teachers can spot trouble early, ending it before it metastasizes.

Safe and respectful learning environments are critical to learning. Recently, MCPS has become inconsistent in expectations and consequences, and students have lost faith in the system. Teachers need to know that the administration has their back, and students need to understand that in MCPS, disrupting a classroom has consequences. I support clear and consistent enforcement of the Code of Conduct.

Challenges

What do you see as the biggest challenge facing the school system and how will you address it?

The biggest challenge facing Montgomery County Public Schools is closing persistent achievement gaps while maintaining high standards for every student. I support targeted tutoring, stronger early literacy programs, and responsible use of AI tools to personalize learning. Strengthening support for teachers, using data to guide instruction, and partnering with families will help ensure all students have the opportunity to succeed.

MCPS faces several challenges - from overcrowded classrooms to disappointing test results to the rising tide of hate and antisemitism. In my view, our biggest sin is the over \$1 billion backlog in repairs to fix our crumbling schools. Montgomery County schoolchildren should not be attending class in portables or dilapidated buildings. If elected, I will work to increase bonding to help pay for needed repairs. In addition, I will also look for efficiencies of scale for construction.

The biggest challenge is a Board that has simply lost focus. Whilst the MCPS budget has been steadily growing, standards have slipped, classroom order is declining, and families struggle to get honest answers about how their child is performing. That doesn't sound right. Addressing that starts with the Board being willing to ask hard questions, demand honest answers, and govern with conviction. That's what I will be doing.

(District 3 candidates continue next page)

Candidates for Montgomery County Board of Education District 3, 5

See page 58 for details about the office of Montgomery County Board of Education.

Responses were limited to 500 characters. Responses appear exactly as submitted by the candidates.

Candidate Website

Sally A. McCarthy

www.sallymccarthy.org

Cassandra "Cassi" Sung

www.cassandrasung.org

Qualifications

How do your background and experience prepare you to be a member of the Board of Education?

I'm a lifelong resident & committed to public education. I'm the daughter of MCPS teachers; Wootton grad; married to MCPS graduate; mom of MCPS graduates. My professional & volunteer career is in education. I have a PhD in Ed Policy from UMD, worked in state government relations & higher ed policy research, adjunct UMD faculty. I spent 14 years working w/ Montgomery County Council of PTAs in board roles. Created & lead joint MCPS -community work groups for facilities, safety & school climate.

My background in legal marketing has prepared me well for the Board of Education, I specialize in breaking down silos, making data accessible, and aligning diverse stakeholders around shared goals. I bring that same collaborative, data-driven approach to education leadership. As a neurodivergent mom of two with a daughter just entering kindergarten, I have both the professional skills and deep personal investment to ensure Montgomery County schools work for every child.

Digital Literacy

What programs will you propose, if any, to ensure that students are able to distinguish reliable information sources from mis- and dis-information?

Schools should challenge and transform students' passive data use into active, critical use by infusing skills into daily instruction, including the ability to scrutinize content for misinformation, misuse & potential harm. I support digital safety, guardrails on classroom tech use, AI & research-based best practices. I would require an annual public review of the recently adopted BOE Ed Tech Policy in order to align w/ current research & adapt to meet changes in technology & curriculum.

Digital literacy means teaching students to question not just what information says, but why it's being presented that way - critical thinking skills essential for life. Rather than reinventing the wheel, I'll champion proven models like Finland's disinformation education curriculum and advocate for embedding media literacy across all subjects, helping students confidently distinguish reliable sources from mis- and disinformation.

Opportunity/Achievement Gap

What programs will you support to optimize achievement for all students across the county?

Addressing the opportunity/achievement gap requires a comprehensive focus on early learning. I support budgets w/ strategic approaches in grades Pk-3 like reducing class size, adding Special Ed Resource & Math content professionals. MCPS must fully implement new reading curriculum at all levels & allot teacher prep time for upcoming new math mandates. Secondary students must receive accessible supports & timely information about transitioning to the massive, new MCPS Regional Programs Model.

Promoting safe, respectful learning environments means focusing on the positive. I'll support School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS), strengthen home-school communication and partnership, and deepen the cultural competency our educators already bring - building on their commitment to ensure every student and family feels truly seen, celebrated, and supported. When schools reflect their communities, everyone thrives.

Learning Environment

What strategies will you support to promote safe and respectful learning environments?

School climate & physical building safety requires a layered approach. Safe & respectful class climates begin w/ full implementation of hate/bias professional learning & curriculum content changes, with ongoing data review by BOE w/stakeholder input. Physical safety requires budget investments in building maintenance, training & support for security & school staff, annual school security reviews & following the required data reviews of the Superintendent's agreement w/ local law enforcement.

Promoting safe, respectful learning environments means focusing on the positive. I'll support School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS), strengthen home-school communication and partnership, and deepen the cultural competency our educators already bring - building on their commitment to ensure every student and family feels truly seen, celebrated, and supported. When schools reflect their communities, everyone thrives.

Challenges

What do you see as the biggest challenge facing the school system and how will you address it?

MCPS's primary challenge is prioritizing & budgeting for schools with unrelenting fiscal constraints & safety issues. I am not deterred; I am fully committed to the work. My approach is a shift in oversight, collaborating while asking questions, demanding ongoing, data based assessment, sticking to timelines, willingness to scale up successful programs & sunset the unsuccessful, seeking inclusive input, work w/ County to craft solutions & make difficult decisions that don't hold us back.

The biggest challenge is rebuilding our post-COVID community, children's socialization and families' support systems were fractured in ways we're still feeling. I'll address this by strengthening wraparound supports: free after-school intervention, feeding programs, and parent workshops that equip families as partners in learning. I'll also champion responsible AI guardrails, evidence-based literacy support, and social-emotional learning that builds ethics, empathy, and community.

District 5

District 5 has one candidate running for office and therefore will not be on the Primary ballot. The candidate will move directly to the General Election ballot in November.

Contact Information

League of Women Voters of Montgomery County:

27 Wood Lane
Rockville, MD 20850
Web: lwvmocomd.org
301-984-9585
Email: lwvmc@lwvmocomd.org

Montgomery County Board of Elections:

18753 N. Frederick Avenue, Suite 210
Gaithersburg, MD 20879-3121
Mailing address: PO Box 4333,
Rockville MD 20849-4333
Web: 777vote.org
Web: elections.maryland.gov

24 hour information:
240-777-VOTE (8683)
Tel: 240-777-8500
800-222-VOTE (8683)
FAX: 240-777-8560
MD Relay/TTY: 1-800-735-2258

Obtaining Future Voters' Guides

To receive a *Voters' Guide* for future elections:

- Go to the LWVMC website (lwvmocomd.org) and click on the VOTE drop-down menu.
- Select the *Voters' Guides* option.
- Follow the directions to receive the *Guide* as a printed copy or email link when candidate responses are available.

Two Ways to Help The League

Join LWVMC. Here's Why:

The women and men (yes, men) of the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County promote good government through nonpartisan, grassroots volunteer work. We examine issues, educate the community, register voters, and participate in advocacy. Membership includes our monthly newsletter.

Donate to the League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters works to keep government power in the hands of the people by helping residents become educated, active and engaged in public policy decisions. Help support the publication of this *Voters' Guide*, candidate forums, the **VOTE411** website, and our Voter Hotline

Join or contribute online at our website lwvmocomd.org and pay by credit card or complete and mail the form below:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

Dues Amount: Select the annual dues amount you wish to pay. **The recommended rate is \$75.00**, but you may choose a higher or lower amount (a minimum of \$20). Dues payment are split among your local, state and national Leagues. Attach a check payable to the *League of Women Voters of the United States*.

\$75.00/year

Choose your own amount (minimum \$20): _____

To donate to LWVMC, attach a separate check payable to the *League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, MD*.

Mail to: LWV Montgomery County, MD
27 Wood Lane
Rockville, MD 20850

LWVMC is a 501(c)(3) organization. Your donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

A copy of the current financial statement of the LWVMC is available by writing us at the address above or by calling (301) 984-9585. Documents and information submitted under the Maryland Solicitations Act are also available, for the cost of postage and copies, from the Maryland Secretary of State, State House, Annapolis MD 21401, (410) 974-5534.

VOTERS' GUIDE 2026 PRIMARY ELECTION

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lwvmocomd.org

Why Vote?

Your Vote Makes A Difference! It's about...

Community: balancing priorities such as health, housing, and parks

Education: strengthening the quality, performance, and safety of the schools

Environment: protecting natural resources and ecosystems

Money: how your taxes are spent

Transportation: balancing the needs of drivers, transit riders, cyclists, and walkers

Public Health: protecting and improving the health of individuals and communities

You Have Three Ways To Vote! See page 4 for details.

The League thanks all those whose generous support makes it possible for us to provide the *Voters' Guide* and other services to Montgomery County residents, especially the following donors who each contributed \$1,000 or more in the past year.

For the Voters' Guide

Elaine Apter
Linna Barnes
Nancy Bliss
Carol Blackburn
Bee Ditzler
Virginia Downes
Mike S. Gerecht

David and Anita Gross
Judith A. Kellogg
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Kathy J. McGuire

The Meakem Group

Robert Baker and Jacob Melamed
Stephenie and Edward Moczydlowski
Judy Morenoff
Bridget D. Newton
Traci Richmond
Joan B. Siegel
The Stuart Family
Ralph Watkins
David and Katie Young

For the Voters' Guide in Spanish

Greater Washington Community Foundation

Watkins Voter Empowerment Fund

2026 PRIMARY ELECTION: TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 2026, 7AM - 8PM