

Metropolitan Washington Council AFL-CIO
2018 CANDIDATE'S QUESTIONNAIRE

GENERAL INFORMATION:

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Candidate for: Maryland Senate, District 27

Campaign Committee Name and Address: Friends of Tommi Makila, PO Box 441525, Fort Washington, MD 20749

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Campaign Manager: Michael Oliver

Campaign Treasurer: Dionne Makila

Does your campaign accept PAC contributions? Yes (but only from ones whose priority issues align with mine)

Previously elected / appointed office: N/A

Office _____ Term _____ Office _____ Term _____

Have you ever received labor's endorsement? No When? _____

PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY YOU SEEK LABOR'S ENDORSEMENT: I am a strong progressive candidate. As a native Scandinavian, I fully understand the importance of unions and what positive force they are for working people. I believe my campaign would greatly benefit from labor's support, and I know I would be a good ally and advocate for labor in the Maryland General Assembly.

SIGNATURE:  DATE: 4/7/2018

Please return your signed questionnaire by Thursday, November 30, 2017 to the below address:
Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO
Attn.: David Dzidzienyo
815 16th St NW, Washington, DC, 20006

Submissions can also be e-mail to ad@mtcpeyo@dclabor.org

2018 Candidate Questionnaire

A. Workplace Rights: (Please answer by checking the box)

There are certain basic workplace rights that the unions and members of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO believe are fundamental and absolutely essential. Collective bargaining elections and representation are permitted for private sector employees, whereas for public sector employees in Maryland, legislation is required in order to have those same rights. Over the past decade, these rights have been given to many state, higher education and K-12 public school education employees and some county employees. However, thousands of public sector employees are still denied these rights.

1. Would you support comprehensive collective bargaining legislation that would provide collective bargaining rights (including exclusivity, binding arbitration and an independent labor board) for all public employees-local, county, school boards and state?

Support Oppose Not sure

What is your position on each of these fundamental rights?

2. The right of workers to organize and have union representation

Support Oppose Not sure

3. The right to freely exercise workplace rights free from harassment, intimidation and/or delays

Support Oppose Not sure

4. The right to bargain collectively with a legal obligation on both sides to negotiate in good faith

Support Oppose Not sure

5. The right to resolve differences in a fair, impartial and timely manner, including binding arbitration

Support Oppose Not sure

The National Labor Relations Act grants private sector workers the right to organize themselves and be represented by a union in collective bargaining negotiations. From time to time, opponents of collective bargaining propose legislation to curtail workers' bargaining strength and effectiveness. Under the innocuous sounding name of "Right-to-Work," this legislation purports to protect the rights of workers and improve the state's economic development climate. But the net result in Right-to Work states is that workers earn less, have fewer health care benefits and have higher job fatality rates. Right to Work laws prohibit workers from negotiating a "union shop" or "union security" clause in their contracts. Such a clause obligates those in the bargaining unit to pay their fair share of the collective bargaining representation costs. By wiping out that protection, Right to Work actually weakens the rights of working people.

6. Would you support Right to Work in Maryland?

Yes

No

Not sure

Opponents of the labor movement have tried in recent years to stifle labor's political and legislative voice through a friendly sounding proposal called "paycheck protection." It proposes to give rank and file members more control over how their dues money is spent. It does so by requiring unions to spend an incalculable amount of time and money jumping through bureaucratic hoops. The net effect is that it would make it virtually impossible for unions to represent their members in the political and legislative arenas.

7. What is your position on the so-called paycheck protection idea?

Support

Oppose

Not sure

Maryland's community colleges were established by state law and receive part of their funding from the state. Yet, unlike K-12 public school employees in each county, community college workers do not have the right to organize and engage in collective bargaining.

8. What is your position on granting collective bargaining rights to community college employees?

Support

Oppose

Not sure

When workers choose an exclusive collective bargaining representative, that union is legally obligated to represent every worker in the unit. Even when some people choose to be non-members, the union must represent them fully and fairly. In other words, those who pay dues are obligated to subsidize those who don't.

9. In your opinion, should a union be permitted to collect a service fee from non-members for the cost of union representation as long as there are protections for those who object on religious grounds?

Yes

No

Not sure

B. Health Care: (Please answer by checking the box)

The financial imperatives transforming the health care industry increasingly undermine the ability of clinicians to make health care decisions based strictly on the needs of their patients. This includes a pervasive practice by hospital corporations not to have on shift at all times a sufficient number of registered nurses taking care of patients, a practice which is dangerous for patients and studies show increases morbidity and mortality rates among hospital patients. Another manifestation of this problem is that Maryland has the longest emergency room wait times in the country, according to the US federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; one clear cause of this is understaffing in the ERs and other units of the hospitals. What steps would you pursue to protect and improve the quality of patient care in county hospitals and clinics? Do you support mandatory, minimum nurse-to-patient ratios in acute-care hospitals? Do you support measures to limit unsafe, premature discharges of patients or transfers from acute care hospitals to nursing homes or other sub-acute facilities? Do you support legislation to enact new protections for hospital patients warehoused in "observation status" with fewer protections accorded other patients?

Currently 28 million Americans, including 389,000 Marylanders, have no health insurance and tens of millions more across the country have inadequate insurance with high co-pays and deductibles that prevent them from seeking care. While this is an improvement from the number of uninsured people in the state before the passage of the Affordable Care Act and the expansion of Medicaid in Maryland, it is still unacceptable to the state's registered nurses. Over 10% of Maryland's population (i.e., over 600,000 people) still cannot afford to see a doctor.[1] This situation will get worse if CareFirst, the state's dominant health insurance carrier, obtains its requested 52% rate hike from the Maryland Insurance Administration. President Trump and Congressional Republicans have sought to make a bad situation much worse by attempting to pass (unsuccessfully thus far) new federal legislation that will deny care to an additional 22 million people, including those in Maryland dependent on Medicaid and the ACA exchanges. But even without these Republican proposed changes, the US still ranks poorly among industrial nations in a large number of health indicators, despite paying more per capita than most other OECD countries.

1. Do you believe that health care is a human right? Are you in favor of a publicly-administered, single-payer universal health care system? Will you champion legislation to implement such a plan in the State of Maryland?

Yes No Not sure

2. Nurses have some of the highest rates of work-related, musculoskeletal injuries of any occupation. Do you support legislation that would require that hospitals institute and utilize lift teams and lift equipment, and that also protects the rights of nurses to speak out regarding unsafe patient care practices?

Yes No Not sure

3. The rates of workplace violence in health care settings have risen to epidemic proportions. The Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that 48% of all non-fatal injuries from occupational assaults and violent acts occurred in healthcare and social service settings. Healthcare workers specifically are five times more likely, than all other major industries combined, to be the victim of assault. Thus far, California is the only state to have passed comprehensive workplace violence prevention legislation to protect registered nurses and other healthcare workers. In order to be effective, such a standard must mandate that every hospital develops a workplace violence prevention plan in conjunction with registered nurses that is unique to the needs of each unit, and is in effect at all times in every unit. It must include hazard identification and correction procedures, annual program evaluation, in-person training for all employees and sufficient staffing to respond to workplace violence incidents. Do you support the creation of a comprehensive workplace violence prevention standard for healthcare workers in Maryland?

Yes No Not sure

As health care costs continue to escalate, many Marylanders do not have access to affordable quality health care services.

4. What should the next Administration and General Assembly do to solve this problem?
- Leave it to the federal government to fix
 - Do nothing/monitor the situation
 - Adopt a state universal health care system
 - Provide coverage to the uninsured but leave private insurance plans in place
 - Other (please specify)

D. Education: (Please answer by checking the box)

1. Would you support returning to an all-elected Board of Education for PGCPSS?

Yes No Not sure

2. Would you support removing all authority of the County Executive from PGCPSS? Including returning the CEO position to that of Superintendent as outlined by the State.

Yes No Not sure

3. Will you as an elected official commit to providing a budget that will fully support the Prince George's public school system and the necessary resources needed?

Yes No Not sure

4. Do you support collective bargaining for teachers in Charter Schools?

Yes No Not sure

Maryland continues to have one of the best public education systems in the country. Much progress has been made since 1999 and the establishment of the Thornton Commission and the passage of legislation based on the commission's recommendations.

5. Do you support Full Funding for Thornton?

Yes No Not sure

C. Accountability/Economic Development: (Please answer by checking the box)

Good Jobs First has developed model legislation aimed at improving government transparency and accountability for subsidized economic development projects. Many states and municipalities have adopted the model legislation.

As an elected County official, will you introduce and support legislation to (Please check all that apply):

- Require company-specific reporting for each subsidy deal as originally granted, and annual reporting for each deal's actual outcomes with regard to jobs created, wages and benefits paid, capital invested, and other public benefits.
- Establish job creation standards for economic development projects receiving County subsidies, such as the number of new full-time jobs that must be created for a specified level of financial assistance
- Establish job quality standards for economic development projects receiving County subsidies, such as the number of hours that must be worked per week, provision of paid leave, provision of health insurance, apprenticeship participation, and wage standards
- Recapture or rescind subsidies if a recipient fails to achieve its job creation, wage and healthcare requirements
- Require annual reporting of companies receiving County property tax abatements and reductions
- Require a publicly accessible unified economic development budget that provides a comprehensive accounting of economic development spending all in one place

I. Transportation: (Please provide your response on a separate sheet).

1. Going into WMATA's FY2019 budget season, politicians, community groups, labor, and business groups have weighed in on the dedicated funding debate. If you are elected, what would you propose to provide WMATA dedicated funding, and how would you navigate the politics of the situation and unite the jurisdictions around your proposal?

I fully support the recent decisions by Maryland, Virginia and DC to provide nearly \$500 million in additional dedicated funding to the Metro. A well-functioning and viable Metro is crucial for the whole DC Metro area. Assuming there are no late setbacks in securing this additional funding, we should observe for a few years what the impact of the additional funds will be. If further financial resources are needed in the future, I would be open to pursuing the issue. If other organizational problems with the Metro persist, we may need to pursue structural changes to Metro governance.

2. In the last few months, there have been several major safety concerns that have been raised publicly?
3. ATU Local 689 leadership and members. From operator assaults to issues with the 7000 series trains, the public has seen that WMATA management doesn't seem to be able to create a true safety culture at WMATA. How would you work with and support employees who raise safety concerns and are ignored?

Some type of an independent reporting system for safety concerns should be established. Reports from such a system should be regularly published, including information about actions that were taken to address the issues that were raised.

4. In addition, how would you work with labor to help tackle the larger issue of establishing a safety culture at WMATA and solving some of the recent safety issues, like operator assault, that have been brought to the forefront?

Besides an independent safety concern reporting issue mentioned above, I would like to establish some type of a safety working group where employees could freely share their concerns with decision-makers (responsible politicians, not WMATA management).

5. With the recent revelation that WMATA and ATU Local 689 have reached an impasse in negotiations due to their inability to agree regarding the employee's defined benefit pension, many politicians and advocates for privatization have tried to make a case for lowering "labor costs" by eliminating hard earned, very basic worker protections. How would you champion worker protections and change the narrative surrounding "labor costs" and defined benefit pension costs?

For existing employees, every effort must be made to keep promises that were made regarding defined benefit plans. The narrative here should be about fairness: promises given to workers must be kept. In an ideal world, moving forward I would prefer a defined benefit plan for new employees as well. However, I am concerned that promises given today in the form of defined benefit plans cannot be kept due to future fiscal constraint and thus workers

are likely to get "stiffed." Defined contribution plans can be more secure, but they must be as generous as possible and include provisions such as automatic enrollment.

6. In the last six months, there has been a lot of discussion surrounding the possibility of the establishment of a federal control board to run WMATA. If that happened, the possibility of eliminating legally binding labor contracts would become a reality, endangering thousands of workers. What are your thoughts regarding the takeover of a federal control board and would you be open to adding a labor seat to the WMATA Board?

I do not support a federal control board. If organizational challenges and problems at Metro continue despite the recent promises of additional dedicated funding, some changes to the organizational structure could be pursued. But I don't believe federal control is the answer. I would support adding a labor seat to the WMATA Board.

J. Bail Reform: (Please provide your response on a separate sheet).

Under the current money bail system, judges in Maryland typically set financial conditions of release, with little consideration as to whether the defendant can meet them. Defendants must then either pay the court or a commercial bail bondsman to get out of jail. Those who can't afford bond often remain incarcerated until their cases go to trial, sometimes for periods of weeks or longer.

1. Maryland's highest court approved key changes to the state's bail system, setting into motion a reform designed to keep defendants from languishing in jail before trial simply because they're poor, do you support Bail Reform Efforts?

Yes, I support bail reforms. The money-based bail system has huge negative impacts on individuals, and it disproportionately impacts low income defendants and communities of color. Instead of money-based bail, we should pursue alternatives that have proven effective, such as use of citations, risk assessments, and different bond arrangements.

K. Confederate Monuments and Memorials: (Please provide your response on a separate sheet).

At the federal level, legislation is being proposed that would prohibit the use of taxpayer funds for the creation, maintenance, or display of any Confederate symbols on Federal property. The Federal proposal defines "Confederate symbol" as a Confederate battle flag, any symbol or other signage that honors the Confederacy, any monument or statue that honors a Confederate leader or soldier or the Confederate States of America. Localities across the nation are having this debate.

2. What is your position on this matter?

I am a historian by training. Because of my appreciation for history, I would be hesitant to support any summary and large-scale removals of historical monuments, including confederate monuments and memorials. I believe local officials should primarily be responsible for decisions about such removals. As a general approach, I prefer adding interpretative markers to monuments that are out of step with our current cultural and moral values. As deplorable as the motives of those people who erected many of these monuments were, those deplorable motives are part of our history and

removal of monuments does not make the associated dark history go away. Balance and context can also be added by erecting new monuments alongside the old monuments. However, all these types of questions are specific to the monuments and the history they represent. There surely are monuments that I would support removing (for example, I feel removal of the Roger Taney statue from Maryland State House grounds was appropriate), but I would like to leave such decision to local officials.

3. Should there be legislation removing Confederate symbols from libraries, parks, streets, and public buildings?

Consistent with my above answer (#2), I would not be supportive of such sweeping legislation.

Candidate (Please Print Legibly): TOMMI MAKILA

Signature: 

Date: 4/7/2018

Thank you.