

## **I. Transportation**

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 would push for the full \$167M in dedicated funding, which appears likely to be passed at this point. Roughly 40% of Metro riders are government employees, therefore we must work hand-in-hand with our federal representatives to increase the amount of dedicated federal funding. Roughly 70% of WMATA costs are direct labor costs (salaries and benefits), and there will always be a downward pressure on wages that we must fight. We must directly address rising health insurance expenses, which drive up labor costs but do not put money in the pockets of workers.**

**I have 20 years of executive leadership experience in creating the necessary buy-in from colleagues to move projects forward and to negotiate in way that achieves outcomes. I have negotiated with corporations on behalf of workers successfully. I have spoken at 300 universities, including many business schools, about living wages and the rights to form independent unions. I will use both economic and moral arguments to gain the support necessary for our delegation to vote as a block on WMATA issues.**

2. In the last few months, there have been several major safety concerns that have been raised publicly?

**The state's infrastructure has been neglected for a very long time. We need to acknowledge this, and ensure that employees are not scapegoated for these failings. Metro needs to be fixed but we also need preventative maintenance so that workers are given the funding they need to keep our system up and running. Employees need the tools and resources necessary to do their jobs. Private contractors are not the answer.**

**Major safety concerns stem from the undercutting of safety, healthcare, and compensation standards, and elected officials need to take a stand. I will fight against the race to the bottom.**

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?

**Employees must be given the ability to raise safety concerns without the risk of harassment or other consequences. Employees must be included in the dialogue about plans for creating a culture of safety, and as elected officials, we must ensure that those voices are not muted. We also need to ensure that employee concerns for safety are addressed in a quick and comprehensive way. It is unacceptable for workers to have health and/or safety concerns in their place of employment.**

**These components must be tied to the funding stream coming from the state, otherwise there is no enforcement mechanism. We need oversight of the execution of these dollars, and we need to ensure that the strategic plan to address Metro's problems are executed according to plan.**

**When I co-founded a labor rights organization at the beginning of my career, I worked with the AFL-CIO to uncover labor abuses. It took a great deal of effort to have these abuses recognized and addressed. In 2018, we have the responsibility to our workers to ensure that employees are supported in one of the most progressive states in the county.**

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?

**Operator assault should carry much stricter penalties, and that must be established through legislation in the General Assembly. If the current Transit Assault bill in the General Assembly is not passed, I will sponsor legislation to this effect come January 2019. By creating strong enough consequences, we can begin to curtail the threats and abuse that operators deal with on a regular basis.**

**I would work with labor to identify best practices for addressing safety concerns and propose legislation tied to dedicated funding that ensures a culture of safety for workers at WMATA. All stakeholders need to share ownership for creating a culture of safety, and we need buy-in from all management, employees, and elected officials. Safety goals must be measured and evaluated, and treated like any other strategic business decision. Stronger safety policies and procedures must be established. We must have consistent accident follow-up aimed at preventing other accidents. We must have labor/union at the table to co-create a safety culture. Employees must be surveyed regularly to draw out concerns and suggestions.**

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?

**A significant part of "labor costs" is health insurance, which is outpacing revenues each year, and driving up the overall cost of projects. Benefit costs are growing 2.5 times faster than revenues. The response is for WMATA to attempt to decrease wages, but workers should not be penalized for the health insurance industry's greed. The General Assembly must deal directly with insurance companies to stabilize insurance rates, which will have a significant impact on costs associated with WMATA, our public schools, and any entity that employs union labor.**

**In terms of the narrative, the first argument should be an economic argument for union labor, and the second a moral argument. First, we need to re-frame the conversation around the benefits of a strong middle class for the rest of the county and the state. Yes, union labor is more expensive, but we need to make the argument for the value-added benefits of union labor – quality that can be trusted, a strong middle class that powers our economy, a pension that allows for security in retirement and therefore an economically-stronger retired population, etc. The narrative should also include the moral arguments based on American values and international human rights norms, which include the rights to freely associate and form independent unions.**

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 think it's critical to have all voices at the table, including and especially workers and others that would be most impacted. I support adding a seat to the WMATA Board for labor. I think it is very important to have oversight of the dedicated funding and how that funding will be spent. We need to identify ways to preserve labor jobs, which is critical to the health of our economy.**

**J. Bail Reform:**

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?


**It's a travesty that low-income individuals would spend additional time in jail for the same crime simply because of their economic status. Some residents in this situation have lost their jobs, their homes and their children because they did not have the ability to pay the cash bail. This is unjust, and it is counter-productive for us to push people deeper into poverty in this way. I support Bail Reform Efforts.**

**K. Confederate Monuments and Memorials:**

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?  
**These items belong in a museum, and only in a museum.**
3. Should there be legislation removing Confederate symbols from libraries, parks, streets, and public buildings?  
**Absolutely, and I would support such legislation.**

Candidate (Please Print Legibly): Leslie Milano

Signature: 

Date: March 31, 2018

Thank you.