

# Metropolitan Washington Council

**AFL-CIO**

# 2018 Prince Georges/Montgomery Counties

**PRIMARY ELECTIONS**

**CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

# Overview:

# The Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO, is comprised of 180 local unions representing working people in all public industry sectors. The Metropolitan Washington Council AFL-CIO’s priorities are outlined below:

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##### creating family sustaining jobs for all;

##### investing in education, infrastructure, healthcare and transportation;

##### improving the lives of workers through education, quality job training, career

##### advancement and livable wages with good benefits;

##### ensuring fair, progressive tax policies;

##### making high-quality, affordable healthcare available to everyone;

##### holding corporations and government more accountable to ensure that the public good

##### is served by taxpayer dollars; and

##### ensuring that a worker’s universal right to organize and to bargain collectively for

##### wages, hours and conditions of work are maintained and enforced.

### Metropolitan Washington Council AFL-CIO

### 2018 CANDIDATE’S QUESTIONNAIRE

**GENERAL INFORMATION:**

Name **Tom Hucker**

Address **10 Stockton Road**

City / County **Silver Spring**  Zip **20901**

Phone: \_**240-481-4825**\_ Mobile **240-350-5104** Email **Tom@TomHucker.com**

Candidate for**:** **Re-election to the Montgomery County Council, District 5**

Campaign Committee Name and Address: **Friends of Tom Hucker, 10 Stockton Road, Silver Spring**

Campaign Committee Phone: **240-481-4825** Email / Web **Tom@TomHucker.com**

Campaign Manager: **Dave Kunes,** [**dave@tomhucker.com**](mailto:dave@tomhucker.com)**, 240-350-5104**

Campaign Treasurer: **Dennis Desmond**

Does your campaign accept PAC contributions? Yes

Previously elected / appointed office**:**

Office: Maryland State Delegate Term 2006-2010, 2010-2014

Office: County Council Term 2014-2018

Have you ever received labor’s endorsement?

**Yes. I have been endorsed by the Metropolitan Washington AFL-CIO and your major affiliates and unaffiliated locals in every election since 2006.**

**PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY YOU SEEK LABOR’S ENDORSEMENT:**

Because I have stood with labor unions for over 25 years in the fight for economic justice for working families. Major corporations and special interest groups have enough people on their side, labor and working families needs somebody fighting for them. As Paul Wellstone used to tell us, the others are with the Rockefellers and I’m with the little fellers.

I have already been endorsed by:

* CHOICE/Washington, DC Building and Construction Trades Council
* UFCW Local 1994/MCGEO
* UFCW Local 400
* Montgomery County Public School Retirees Association
* National Organization for Women
* Sierra Club - Montgomery County Chapter
* Montgomery County Career Firefighters - IAFF 1664
* Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Fighters
* Montgomery County Education Association/nea
* Progressive Democrats of America - Maryland Chapter
* Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 35 (Montgomery County)
* Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 30 (Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Police)
* Laborers Local 657
* Latino Democratic Club
* LGBTQ Democratic Club
* Green Democrats of Montgomery County
* Coalition of Asian-Pacific American Democrats
* Teamsters Joint Council & Teamsters Local 730
* National Nurses United
* 32BJ SEIU
* SEIU 500
* SEIU MD/DC State Council
* Jews United for Justice
* Progressive Maryland
* And I’ve received a 100% rating from NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland

SIGNATURE: DATE: 5/4/2018

**Please return your signed questionnaire by Friday, May 4, 2018 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** [**ddzidzienyo@dclabor.org**](mailto:ddzidzienyo@dclabor.org)

**2018 Candidate Questionnaire**

# 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?

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

**Support** Oppose Not sure

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

**Support** Oppose Not sure

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

**Support** Oppose Not sure

1. 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.

1. 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.

1. 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.

1. 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.

1. 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

1. **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]](https://mail.google.com/mail/?tab=wm#m_-6318180153229803303__ftn1)  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

1. 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

1. 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.

1. 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)

1. **Education:** (Please answer by checking the box)

1. 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.

1. Do you support Full Funding for Thornton?

**Yes** No Not sure

1. **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):

# Yes 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.

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# Yes 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

# Yes 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

# Yes Recapture or rescind subsidies if a recipient fails to achieve its job creation, wage and healthcare requirements

# Yes Require annual reporting of companies receiving County property tax abatements and reductions

# Yes Require a publicly accessible unified economic development budget that provides a comprehensive accounting of economic development spending all in one place

# Standing with the Democratic Party: (Please check all that apply)

# Every four years, the Democratic Party establishes its party platform—the ideas and beliefs that govern the party as a whole. In 2016, the platform included the following tenets related to workers. As a Prince George’s County councilmember and member of the Democratic Party, please indicate which of the following you support.

# Yes Make it easier for workers to exercise their right to organize and join unions

# Yes Bring companies to the negotiating table

# Yes Support binding arbitration to help workers who have voted to join a union reach a first contract

# Yes Oppose so-called “right to work” laws

# Yes Vigorously oppose any efforts to roll-back prevailing wage standards

# Yes Defend the right of workers to collect their defined benefit pensions and ensure workers get

# priority and protection when pension plans fail

# Yes Make investments to spur the creation of jobs for our young people

# 

# Yes Fight to ensure every American has access to quality, affordable health care

# Yes Push for more educational benefits and job training for veterans

**THIS SECTION APPLIES ONLY TO MONTGOMERY COUNTY CANDIDATES**

1. **Extending Montgomery County’s Prevailing Wage Law to Include School Construction:**

(Please answer by checking the box)

Prevailing wage laws assure that workers on public works projects are paid a wage that is most common or “prevailing” for a specific job in a specific geographic location. They prevent contractors from undermining local employment by low bidding or bringing in workers at lower wages.

MCPS is budgeting its school construction projects to avoid paying prevailing wages—seeking to achieve cost savings by paying construction workers as little as possible in a county with a high cost of living.

Maryland enacted its prevailing wage legislation in 1945. Montgomery County enacted its prevailing wage law in 2008, but excluded school construction projects. Consequently, MCPS construction is governed solely by the State’s prevailing wage law. The threshold for applying the State’s prevailing wage law occurs when the state funds 75% or more of total project costs.

According to OLO Report 2017-4, “New School Construction Costs,” by Stephanie Bryant, to avoid paying prevailing wages on its school construction projects, MCPS does not request more than 24.9 percent of state funding for any school projects.

1. As a Montgomery County elected official, will you introduce and support legislation to close the loophole and extend the County’s prevailing wage law to cover County school construction projects?

**X Yes** ☐ No ☐ Other (explain below)

|  |
| --- |
| Comments: I sponsored several bills in Annapolis to expand the prevailing wage law, and successfully expanded it to WSSC. |

1. **Establishing a Montgomery County PLA Ordinance:** (Please answer by checking the box)

# Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) have been proven to bring in projects on time and on budget. They also have the added benefit of building community partnerships with contractors and unions to hire locally, provide family healthcare, pensions, and a career path for residents.

# Across the DMV area, LiUNA has been successful securing PLAs on a wide range of projects, including the DC United Soccer Stadium, the Wizards Practice Facility, the Northeast Boundary Tunnel, and the South Capitol Street Bridge in Washington, DC; the Purple Line in suburban Maryland; and the 395 HOT Lanes in Virginia, among others. This pipeline of projects enables laborer apprentices to move from project to project as one ends and another begins, accumulating the hours they need to graduate and become journey workers earning family-supporting wages.

# Other jurisdictions have also adopted PLA ordinances. For example, in Prince George’s County, the County Executive has had express authority since 2011 to execute PLAs on County-funded projects of $1 million or more. In the District of Columbia, a law was passed in 2016 requiring PLAs on city-funded construction projects valued at $75 million or more, unless the Mayor indicates in writing that such an agreement is not in the best interest of the District.

1. As a Montgomery County elected official, will you introduce and support legislation to require PLAs on County construction projects valued at $20 million or more unless the County Executive indicates in writing why a PLA on a particular project would not be in the best interest of residents?

# Yes No Other (explain below)

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| --- |
| Comments:  Absolutely. I have a long track record of fighting for Project Labor Agreements. Since being elected to the Council in 2014, I have advocated for the County’s Department of General Services to conduct a pilot project using a PLA. **Due to my advocacy, DGS has just announced its first project to be built under a PLA: the Clarksburg Fire Station.** The Council has appropriated the money for it, and I have convened and attended a meeting between Jeff Guido and the DGS Director to discuss the PLA language. This is a big victory for the labor movement in Montgomery County. I am continuing to work with the DGS Director, CHOICE, and others to make sure this is successful. |

# Will you sign PLA's per Current county law?

# Yes No

# Will you adopt apprenticeship readiness programs with RFP's on County projects?

# Yes No

# FYI, I’m sponsoring legislation suggested by CHOICE and WorkSource Montgomery, our workforce development agency, to create a pre-apprenticeship program to make WorkSource Montgomery more likely to receive EARN funds and federal funds for apprenticeship training.

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

# 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?

# WMATA is the backbone of our regional transit system and so important to our economic vitality. We must make sure that we use revenue to invest in high-quality, well-trained employees who will deliver the first-class transit services that is deserving of our nation’s capital and surrounding area. I have been advocating for dedicated funding for Metro at least since 2004, and this year successfully urged the Montgomery County Council to support the dedicated funding bill.

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

I already stay in close touch with ATU President Jeter and her staff about issues impacting their membership. I reach out to them proactively to understand the perspective of WMATA workers when the Council deliberates on these issues. I have also worked with them to set up meetings with county police and other agencies to help solve select issues.

# 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?

We can’t solve WMATA’s problems by by directing cuts at WMATA’s workforce and current levels of service. This is the opposite of what we should be doing and will cause the system to fall even further behind. Doing so will not only decrease customer satisfaction, but likely contribute to future safety incidents. I will not blame workers for systemic safety issues, and I will pressure the WMATA GM and Board to listen to workers and take steps to significantly improve operator assault and other issues.

# 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?

I have a long history of fighting back against unwise privatization. The government is only as good as its workforce. The government should continue to provide good pay and benefits in order to attract committed, well-trained workers and WMATA is no different. I will continue to work closely with ATU 689 and the other Metro unions to advance worker protections and to fight back against privatization.

# 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 am skeptical of plans to turn over WMATA to a federal control board. Contracts are a legal promise between an employer and an employee and I would oppose any attempts to skirt our existing labor contracts. I would be open to adding a labor seat on the WMATA Board to provide a consistent voice for our metro workers.

# 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.

# 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 these efforts.

# 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.

# What is your position on this matter?

# These symbols of people who took up arms against the United States should never be honored in our public parks, other public facilities, or land. I also don’t think public funds should be used to maintain them. When a committee recently suggested moving a statute honoring confederate soldiers to a park in Silver Spring in my district, I started a petition to the County Executive against the move, and urged them to sell the statue rather than spending tax dollars to relocate it. When the County Exec’s staff insisted that no one would buy the statue, I listed it on Craigslist, and I successfully identified prospective buyers.

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

# Candidate (Please Print Legibly): Tom Hucker

# Signature:

# Date: 5/4/2018

# Thank you.