



**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:

- 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** Chris Wilhelm

**Address** 11325 Amherst Avenue

**City / County** Silver Spring, Montgomery County, MD **Zip** 20902

**Phone** (301) 706-7843 **Mobile** (301) 706-7843 **Email** chris@wilhelmforcouncil.com

**Candidate For** Montgomery County Council, At-Large

**Campaign Committee Name and Address** Chris Wilhelm for County Council  
4740 Bradley Blvd #202, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

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**Campaign Committee Phone:** (301) 455-7717 **Email / Web** www.wilhelmforcouncil.com

**Campaign Manager:** Brian Wivell, (978) 697-4585

**Campaign Treasurer:** Elizabeth McMeekin, (301) 455-7717

**Does your campaign accept PAC contributions?** No, we are using public financing.

**Previously elected / appointed office:**

Office \_\_\_\_\_ Term \_\_\_\_\_ Office \_\_\_\_\_ Term \_\_\_\_\_

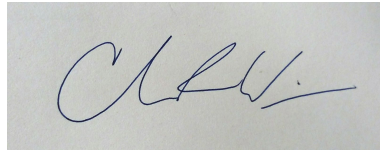
**Have you ever received labor's endorsement?** Yes.

**When?** I am endorsed by the Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA), UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO, NNOC / National Nurses United, and LiUNA Mid-Atlantic Region.

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

I am running in this election to show the power of organized people over big money. No organizations better represent this spirit than the labor movement. The relationship between labor and Democrats in the past has often been transactional. The Democratic Party of the modern era has viewed labor as a source of funds and volunteers, but always tries to distance itself from the real needs of the working people that labor fights for. The labor agenda isn't some abstract thing that I hope to take bits and pieces of in exchange for a seal that I can place on my website. The labor agenda is created from the demands of the working people that I hope to represent.

I am a proud union member myself. I am currently the elected Faculty Representative for Northwood HS with the MCEA. I was previously an elected Staff Representative for Eastern Middle School with SEIU Local 500 and assisted the union with internal member organizing at my school and neighboring schools. I will continue to actively and publicly support efforts to organize workers anywhere, anytime. Even my campaign staff are organized and formed one of the first bargaining units of campaign workers in the country with the Campaign Workers Guild (CWG). I immediately recognized them and signed a CBA with them, providing them paid time off and opportunities for remote work.



SIGNATURE:

DATE: 4/24/18

**Please return your signed questionnaire by Wednesday, April 25, 2018 to the below address:**

**Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO**

**Attn.: David Dzidzienyo**

**815 16<sup>th</sup> St NW, Washington, DC, 20006**

**Submissions can also be e-mail to [ddzidzienyo@dclabor.org](mailto:ddzidzienyo@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. 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.

**2. Do you support Full Funding for Thornton?**

Yes

No

Not sure

It's my understanding that the Kirwan Commission is about to be released with an updated suggested funding formula for education in Maryland. I support fully funding our county's educational needs regardless of what the Kirwan Commission recommends for state funding. We have an obligation to meet the growing needs of our county's residents, which included 55,000 students on free and reduced meals and a constantly expanding population of ESOL students. We should push back against the notion that Montgomery County is not a county with any economic needs, just because we also happen to have some of the wealthiest zip codes in the country. I will work with our state delegation to push for progressive taxation at the state level - including undoing the 2014 estate tax exemption and reinstating the multi millionaire income tax bracket that sunset in 2010 - in order to fully fund education in Maryland and Montgomery County.

**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

**E. 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 Montgomery County councilmember and member of the Democratic Party, please indicate which of the following you support.

- Make it easier for workers to exercise their right to organize and join unions
- Bring companies to the negotiating table
- Support binding arbitration to help workers who have voted to join a union reach a first contract
- Oppose so-called “right to work” laws
- Vigorously oppose any efforts to roll-back prevailing wage standards

- Defend the right of workers to collect their defined benefit pensions and ensure workers get priority and protection when pension plans fail
- Make investments to spur the creation of jobs for our young people
- Fight to ensure every American has access to quality, affordable health care
- Push for more educational benefits and job training for veterans

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

**F. 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?

**Yes**       No       Other (explain below)

Absolutely. It is infuriating that in the allegedly progressive Montgomery County, our own officials would try such a blatant attempt to drive down the wages of workers.

**G. 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)

We can go on offense to create higher union density by implementing Project Labor Agreements and Labor Peace Agreements for county contracts. I believe that \$20 million might be too high of a threshold.

If Montgomery County had such legislation, the contractors related to \$50 million that the county is spending in the White Oak redevelopment plan could be required to hire local workers, have apprenticeship programs, and provide certain career pathways so that blue collar work can actually support a decent standard of living in the county. Putting in place Labor Peace Agreements in county contracting would protect current union workers from losing their jobs if contractors change.

I would also support labor peace and neutrality agreements for all county contractors. I submitted testimony in solidarity with workers from Potomac and Unity Disposal regarding Bill 6-18 after a request from LiUNA.

**2. Will you sign PLA's per Current county law?**

Yes

No

**3. Will you adopt apprenticeship readiness programs with RFP's on County projects?**

Yes

No

**H. 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 was thrilled to see that WMATA has finally received dedicated funding from Maryland. Functioning public transportation is essential to building sustainable and equitable communities. I have been very impressed with the advocacy work of ATU Local 689 and the Save Our System campaign. In fact, I met with ATU President Larry Hanley in 2017 to find out how I could be supportive of the union's efforts to reach a fair deal to fund WMATA. Both organizations have been able to tie the issue of transit to larger issues of social, racial, and economic justice.

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

No one should go to work afraid of harassment, violence, or unsafe working conditions. It is the responsibility of WMATA to ensure that all of their employees are protected from harm. If WMATA board members or management fail to take this seriously then they are incapable of the responsibilities of their position and should be removed, though this will require state level pressure campaigns. As a public official and member of the labor movement myself, I would be more than willing to take part in any actions or demonstrations that might help ATU workers.

**3. 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?**

Defined pension plans were a hallmark victory of the American labor movement. I currently participate in the teachers' defined benefit pension plan. There is no reason why other workers should not have the same benefits and security in retirement. Efforts to move employees over to 401K plans and investment based retirements seek to make retirement a luxury that only the wealthy can afford. As for the notion of "labor costs," we must push back against the constant efforts to privatize everything in order to save money. The only cost savings from privatization, whether of pension benefits or public services, come directly from taking away money that used to go to workers. We should push back against the usual suspects that advocate for privatization, by exposing the real harm that is caused by these "cost reductions." The county's formerly decent paying sanitation jobs now make as low as \$22,000 a year. We have a responsibility as a county to ensure that we're not profiting off of the exploitation of others.

**4. 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 opposed to the creation of a federal control board for WMATA if it means the elimination of ATU's hard fought collective bargaining agreements. I am absolutely in favor of adding a seat to the WMATA board for labor. Workers should get a say in the management of their own workplaces and many countries have long standing traditions of reserving board seats for unions.

**I. 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?**

Cash bail is blatantly unconstitutional and should be banned. It effectively allows wealthy, typically white, defendants to purchase their freedom while turning jails into debtors prisons. I would work with our delegation to Annapolis to follow the recent criminal justice reform successes of Larry Krasner, the District Attorney in Philadelphia, and prohibit the use of cash bail for almost all non-violent offenses.

**J. 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?**

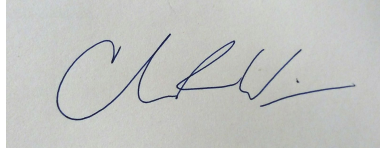
The public display of confederate symbols are nothing but thinly veiled attempts at reinforcing a racial caste system within our country. No amount of love for “heritage” can atone for the crimes committed under these symbols. The Confederacy and its aftermaths (the Klan, segregation, mass incarceration) were always about racial hatred and white supremacy. We must ask ourselves why most public confederate statues were actually built during two distinct time periods: the end of reconstruction and during the beginnings of the Civil Rights Movement. It is clear that these statues and monuments were attempts to scare black americans into silence. We are fortunate enough today that those symbols were not fully successful and movements fighting for racial justice made incredible progress. But we still have a lot of work to do to and removing public symbols of the confederacy is a very easy first step. Many complain that by erasing these symbols we erase the history of the confederacy, but this is absurd. Statues are hardly our main source of history education, but serve as a testament to the values of the community. In addition, I would be happy to find public or private funds to build statues dedicated to those who fought against the confederacy or its shameful legacy but I don’t believe that this is what the confederate apologists want or mean by avoiding erasing history. Simply put, not only should government money never be used for the maintenance of confederate symbols, we have a moral obligation to tear them down immediately.

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

All confederate symbols on public property should be removed.

**Candidate (Please Print Legibly):** Chris Wilhelm

**Signature:**

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'C. Wilhelm'.

**Date:** April 24th, 2018

Thank you.