# 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?

Recently Maryland, Virginia and DC have approved dedicated funding legislation. The challenge going forward will be to sustain and expand that effort. As a Montgomery County Council member, I together with other Council members can make sure that that the Montgomery County delegation to the Maryland legislature understand the importance to Montgomery County. We would work together with the Prince George’s County Council and delegations to present a united front.

Of some concern is that both Virginia and Maryland seem to fund METRO by shorting other transportation priorities. Only the District, seems to promise what could fairly be called a “dedicated” revenue stream. I would work for a truly “dedicated” funding stream from all the jurisdictions.

A key component of mobilizing support will be strong relationships with the many community groups that support public transit, which include environmental groups, smart growth groups, advocates for the poor and working class, and others. Building on this intersectionality will be critical

# 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?

A culture of safety emerges when workers feel empowered to be their own safety advocates. I would push for a strong joint labor-management safety program that starts with training. A joint labor management approach should ensure that that workers are given the knowledge and skills. As county council member I cannot directly impact the safety culture, but I am very good and persistent about asking questions and I would use every opportunity to use my office to echo those safety concerns when raised by the employees.

# 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?

There is one thing I would add to my previous answer. I have spoken with several members who have experienced various forms of assault as bus operators. One aspect of this does not get enough attention. These employees are often traumatized to the point that they don’t feel safe returning to work. Yet this form of PTSD is not recognized in all jurisdictions as a compensable work-related injury or illness. Thus, the employee feels doubly assaulted – first by the passenger and then by his or her employer. This response to trauma needs to be respected and the employee supported rather than belittled in their effort to return to work.

# 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?

To the larger issue of “labor costs”, I would respond that these workers are entrusted with the safety of the traveling public and should not need to be distracted by issues related to economic security. There is an emerging body of evidence that supports the argument that better paid bus, train and taxi operators have better safety records than their lower paid colleagues.

To the more specific issue of defined benefit vs defined contribution plans, there is overwhelming evidence that supports the argument that DB plans are a more efficient investment in retirement security than DC plans.

Just looking at it from a macro-economic perspective, if you are saving for one person’s retirement than that person would want to save for the maximum possible life span.

But if you are saving for the retirement of a group of people than you only need to put aside enough money to fund for the average life span on the group.

From a tax policy perspective, 100% of the money given preferential tax treatment in a DB plan goes to fund the retirement security of members of that group. In a DC plan, some member will outlive their retirement savings and be forced to depend on a higher level of tax supported social services. Others, their savings will outlive the retiree and the tax preferred savings will not go their retirement security but to support their living beneficiaries.

Even the state of Texas examined the issue and determined that the same level of retirement security can be provided in a DB for 40% less than in a DC plan. In addition to the reasons I already cited, they noted the longer investment horizon, the use of professional investment advisors, and access to investment vehicles not normally available to individual investors.

# 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?

Labor unions were illegal before they were legal. Eliminating binding arbitration would open up the strike as a legitimate tool. I am confident that the members of ATU Local 689 will find creative ways to make their case. As an elected official I would use the power of the political pulpit to echo the case for the members of the bargaining unit.

It seems unlikely in a climate open to a federal control board that there would any bargaining room for a labor voice at the table. But I would certainly support that initiative.

# 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?

Let me answer this question by saying that I have a grand son with mental health issues. And as is too often the case in this country, his issues are more often handled by the criminal justice system than by the mental health system. I have come to appreciate the many injustices in that criminal justice system. Our grandson is relatively fortunate in that he is white, and his parents have some means. But those have not been enough to keep him out of jail and most of those have been because he violated bail or probation.

Bail is unjust. Fines are too often excessive. Those arrested or convicted of a crime should not have to bear the cost of ankle bracelets, should not go to jail for failure to pay the cost of an ankle bracelet, should not have to pay exorbitant prices for telephone calls or commissary items while in prison. Prison should not be a revenue source for local governments.

# 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?

Let me answer this question by providing a statement I offered to the Montgomery Housing Opportunities Commission in support of the memorialization of the Moses African Cemetery, a burial place of former slaves that lived along River Road in Bethesda and now lies under a parking lot controlled by the HOC and is threatened with further desecration

I am here today to argue to protect, preserve and memorialize the Moses African Cemetery.

We are at an historic time both in our country and in our county.

In the span of a short decade we have gone from the illusion of a post racial society, to the reality of an intensely racially divided society.

And much of that intensity is focused on our symbols, especially our historic symbols

As a labor union member and a student of labor history in this country, I am very much aware of the forgotten stories in our disgraceful efforts to hold back the struggles of working people in this country.

Yes, we celebrate those bitter and hard-fought victories; but those equally bitter and equally hard-fought defeats are often buried -- deliberately buried by the victors or subconsciously buried in the collective consciousness of those who become used to defeat.

Yesterday, most of the world celebrated May Day as a day of international worker solidarity. So, I have a question. How many people in this room know that the rest of the world is celebrating OUR history, the struggle of the AMERICAN worker for the eight-hour day.

If you think that the forces that would have us forget our history are to be taken lightly, reflect on that question

So, I am saying to you, the Commissioners of the Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission, don’t let yourselves be part of those forces that would have us forget our history.

Be a part of the newly energized efforts to remember our history as evidenced by the new Museum of African American History on the Mall and the recently opened Mississippi Civil Rights Museum

Don’t let the reality of Moses African Cemetery remain buried under the asphalt along the Willet Branch Creek. Don’t let the memory of the Moses African Cemetery die with Harvey Mathews and his contemporaries.

You have a rare power. You cannot raise the dead, but you most certainly can raise the memories of the dead.

I am asking you that you do exactly that – that you protect, preserve and memorialize the Moses African Cemetery and that you raise the memory of those dead former slave lives and the communities that supported and enriched them

We cannot begin to deal with racial justice in the present until we come to terms with the racial injustices of the past.

I am asking you to do the right thing.

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

**Yes**