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2010 Questionnaire For Candidates Running for State Government Office

Progressive Maryland is a grassroots advocacy organization that defends the interest of Maryland's working families. We have offices in Silver Spring and Baltimore; 15,000 individual members and supporters statewide; and 40 of the state's strongest labor, civil rights, faith, and other organizations are affiliates. Learn more at www.ProgressiveMaryland.org

We support candidates who favor a pro-working family agenda of family-sustaining wages, investments in public education, expansion of high-quality health care, and fair tax policies.

To be considered for Progressive Maryland's endorsement, please return the completed questionnaire to our Political Director Rion Dennis at rion@progressivemaryland.org (or if you absolutely must fax to 301.495.9463) **no later than 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 12, 2010**. Your responses will be available to the public at www.ProgressiveMaryland.org

Candidate Information

Candidate Last Name: _____

Candidate First Name: _____

Office Seeking: _____

District: _____

Party: _____

Campaign Contact Information

Committee Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____, MD

Zip Code: _____

Business Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Campaign Website: _____

Candidate Contact Information

Cell Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Treasurer Contact Information

Treasurer Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____, MD

Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____

Candidate History

Previous Elected Offices:

Which Years Did You Serve:

Have you ever received an endorsement from Progressive Maryland?

YES OR NO

If Yes, when:

Have you ever assisted Progressive Maryland in achieving its goals?

YES OR NO

Describe:

Major Endorsements (Elected Officials/Organizations/Opinion Leaders):

Issue Questions

1. The minimum wage no longer guarantees a full-time worker enough to support a family without public assistance. Currently at least seven states and the District of Columbia have minimum wages above \$8.00/hr. Do you support raising the state minimum wage to \$8.50, which would fall just short of the rate in Washington State, which is the highest in the country?

YES OR NO

Comments:

2. If the minimum wage had been indexed to inflation when it was last set in Maryland, it would be over \$9.00 an hour now, allowing working families across the state to keep up with the rising cost of living. Do you support indexing the state minimum wage to the rate of inflation?

YES OR NO

Comments:	
3. There is a serious concern that the state's economic development subsidies (i.e. direct grants, special tax districts, tax abatements, state revenue bonds, etc.) go to companies which ultimately take more in state aid than they return in the tax base by creating poverty wage jobs which require their employees to use public assistance. Do you support requiring companies which receive economic development subsidies to create good jobs that pay a prevailing wage with benefits as embodied by SB785/HB1317 ?	YES OR NO
Comments:	
4. Do you support extending collective bargaining rights to any company which receives economic development subsidies from the state of Maryland, allowing the workers their right to decide if they would like to join a union or not?	YES OR NO
Comments:	
5. The skyrocketing cost of campaigns gives wealthy individuals and large corporations too much power in deciding who gets elected in Maryland. These same moneyed interests enjoy privileged access in Annapolis after the election on account of their campaign contributions. According to a recent Gonzales poll, 70% of Marylanders favor enacting a voluntary public campaign finance system. Do you support enacting a voluntary public campaign finance system for Maryland General Assembly races that is similar to systems enacted in Maine, Arizona and Connecticut and embodied in the SB681 legislation?	YES OR NO
Comments:	
6. Maryland current sales tax law was instituted decades ago when sales of goods were the overwhelming majority of the economy. Today, the majority of sales transactions are for services rather than goods, yet Maryland receives no sales tax from the purchase of services; disadvantaging retailers and manufacturers. Do you support modernizing Maryland's sales tax law to fit our current service economy?	YES OR NO

Comments:	
7. Thanks to ever more loopholes created by corporate accountants, one third of the biggest corporations in the state no longer pay a single penny in state income tax, even though under current law profitable firms are supposed to pay an 8.25% state income tax. Combined reporting closes most of these loopholes and is law in 23 states. Do you support a bill that would require “Combined Reporting” of all related companies like HB584 ?	YES OR NO
Comments:	
8. In contrast to tax loopholes invented by accountants, there are also intentional tax breaks for various special interests in the form of special exemptions to the income tax, sales tax, excise tax, franchise tax, etc. In 2004 the Progressive Maryland Education Fund identified dozens of such tax breaks that benefit polluters, monopolists, even country clubs and that drain \$162 million per year from General Revenue. Perhaps some of these intentional tax breaks served an economic development purpose at one time, but too many now are just General Revenue giveaways to special interests. Do you support abolishing as many of these tax giveaways as possible?	YES OR NO
Comments:	
9. This year the General Assembly allowed the surcharge on income above \$1 million dollars to sunset while cutting funding for many vital programs for working families. Do you support reinstating the surcharge on income above \$1 million dollars and making it permanent like in HB1177 ?	YES OR NO
Comments:	
10. Currently, eligibility for public pre-kindergarten in Maryland is set at 185% of federal poverty guidelines (\$33,874 for a family of three). Data demonstrate that pre-K is tremendously effective in closing the education achievement gap. Within your first two years in office, will you support raising the pre-K eligibility limit to 250% of federal poverty guidelines (\$45,775 for a family of three)?	YES OR NO

Comments:	
11. Currently many local school boards, municipalities, community colleges, local governments and other public entities do not provide for collective bargaining rights for their employees. Do you support a public employee collective bargaining law covering all public employees in the state of Maryland, such as in Oregon, allowing all public sector workers their right to decide if they want a union or not?	YES OR NO
Comments:	
12. Do you support recognition of a union for employees of any public entity provided the union submits independently-verified authorization cards signed by a majority of eligible members?	YES OR NO
Comments:	
13. When a recognized union negotiates a contract for better wages and benefits for its members, non-union members within that collective bargaining unit get to vote and enjoy all the benefits of the union's negotiation without contributing to the union. Lawmakers fixed this problem for state employees in 2009 when they enacted the Fair Share Act. Do you support extending this same requirement to all public entities covered in a collective bargaining unit?	YES OR NO
Comments:	
14. Currently the state of Maryland covers 100% of the pension costs for teachers and educational support staff for all localities across Maryland. The state Senate supported shifting some of the cost to county and city governments which are already facing daunting budget deficits and cannot afford this new expenditure. Do you oppose shifting some or all of the pension costs of teacher and educational support staff to the localities?	YES OR NO
Comments:	

<p>15. The existing Maintenance of Effort law dealing with a minimum level of local funding for public education is intended to reinforce the shared responsibility between the state and counties for adequate funding of our public schools, which has helped Maryland's public schools achieve the top ranking in the country. Do you oppose efforts to reduce or weaken the minimum funding requirement?</p>	<p>YES OR NO</p>
<p>Comments:</p>	
<p>16. Any proposal that would drain public funds from public schools, for example, school vouchers or tuition tax credits would be deleterious to Maryland's top ranked public schools. The program known as Building Opportunities for All Students and Teachers (BOAST) is a tuition tax credit program that the General Assembly has considered in recent years. Do you oppose enacting a tax credit program like BOAST?</p>	<p>YES OR NO</p>
<p>Comments:</p>	
<p>17. WMATA has provided rail transportation in Maryland since the late 1970s. While the system has been stressed lately, it has generally provided well run service since its inception and its workers are paid decent wages with benefits. Some have suggested operating the proposed light rail "Purple Line" as a state or privately run line without integrating it into the WMATA system or ensuring its workers continue to enjoy decent wages and benefits. Do you support integrating the proposed light rail "Purple Line" into the WMATA system?</p>	<p>YES OR NO</p>
<p>Comments:</p>	
<p>18. In the 2010 General Assembly session, a bill would have extended basic collective bargaining rights to library employees in all counties who do not currently have these rights. Do you support a bill like SB225/HB881 to extend collective bargaining rights to library employees in all counties, allowing the library employees their right to decide if they want a union or not?</p>	<p>YES OR NO</p>
<p>Comments:</p>	
<p>19. Project Labor Agreements have been proven time and time again to bring in projects on time and on budget but they also have the added benefit of building community partnerships with the contractors and unions to hire locally and provide family healthcare and a career path for residents. Would you support executive or legislative action putting PLA's on all contracts over \$500,000?</p>	<p>YES OR NO</p>

Comments:	
20. Currently the low bid system of contracting is a race towards the bottom for the federal, state and local government. Would you support moving contracting towards best value contracting which will allow extra points for contractors who provide apprentice programs, hire locally, provide family healthcare and pensions making it more likely that the contractor that does more for his employee's and the community will get the contract?	YES OR NO
Comments:	
21. Do you support requiring all contractors and subcontractors who bid for jobs on publicly-subsidized construction projects to participate in apprenticeship programs that provide employees with free training for life?	YES OR NO
Comments:	
22. Do you support the requirement that a prevailing wage be paid to construction workers on all projects initiated by a public entity, whether or not that public entity has given hiring authority to private developers?	YES OR NO
Comments:	
23. Electricity deregulation for residential ratepayers created de facto monopoly electricity providers gouging ratepayers in most parts of Maryland. Do you support re-regulating Maryland's residential electricity system with a carve-out for new merchant plants already slated for construction at Calvert Cliffs?	YES OR NO
Comments:	

<p>24. As you may know, electricity deregulation has been a disaster for Maryland ratepayers and financial deregulation facilitated the worse financial crisis in this country since the Great Depression. Earlier this year, the Maryland Public Service Commission approved a settlement offer from Verizon, deregulating basic telephone service in Maryland, even though Verizon readily admits deregulation will lead to higher prices for basic telephone service. Would you support legislation to strengthen the ability of the Public Service Commission to re-regulate the telecommunications industry?</p>	<p>YES OR NO</p>
<p>Comments:</p>	
<p>25. All across the country, Verizon has attempted to sell its rural basic telephone networks to undercapitalized companies, where perversely the more debt the buying company incurs, the larger the federal tax credit Verizon receives from the sale. In the four states where Verizon has been allowed to sell their rural lines, the buying company has gone bankrupt; leaving states and basic telephone customers scrambling to maintain service. Would you support legislation requiring the Public Service Commission to evaluate specific factors about the purchase when considering a telecommunications acquisition or merger like SB667/HB937?</p>	<p>YES OR NO</p>
<p>Comments:</p>	
<p>26. In an effort to keep and grow jobs in Maryland, would you support legislation requiring telecommunications companies to disclose the location of call centers, allow state agencies to give preference to companies that use local call centers when awarding state contracts and allow consumers to request their customer service calls be handled by a local call center?</p>	<p>YES OR NO</p>
<p>Comments:</p>	
<p>27. Would you support legislation providing consumer protections for cell phone users ensuring appropriate disclosure of fees and the ability to cancel a service contract or return a device within a certain time-frame like SB1008/HB1018?</p>	<p>YES OR NO</p>
<p>Comments:</p>	

<p>28. Retail is one of the fastest growing sectors of Maryland’s economy, yet retail jobs are some of the lowest paying jobs which usually do not offer benefits, forcing many of their workers to rely on some form of public assistance. Would you support a bill that would require large employers who build new stores in Maryland over 75,000 square feet to pay a “living wage” with benefits as well as be required to adhere to local hiring provisions?</p>	<p>YES OR NO</p>
<p>Comments:</p>	
<p>29. As you may know, Maryland’s alcohol taxes have not been raised in over 40 years and are some of the lowest in the nation, though alcohol-related health concerns cost Marylanders millions of dollars every year. Would you support increasing the state alcohol taxes if the revenue is tied to expanding health coverage and access for Marylanders?</p>	<p>YES OR NO</p>
<p>Comments:</p>	
<p>30. Do you support increasing the gas tax to fund expansion of transportation projects, including mass transportation?</p>	<p>YES OR NO</p>
<p>Comments:</p>	
<p>31. Do you support extending collective bargaining rights to Adjunct Faculty and Graduate Student employees at all public institutions of higher education in Maryland, allowing these workers their right to decide to join a union or not?</p>	<p>YES OR NO</p>
<p>Comments:</p>	
<p>32. As you may know, the Maryland Attorney General recently released an opinion stating that Maryland permits the recognition of valid out-of-state marriages of same sex couples. Do you support legislation to ensure all gay and lesbian couples have access to full civil marriage equality in Maryland?</p>	<p>YES OR NO</p>
<p>Comments:</p>	

Assisting Progressive Maryland & Allies

33. For the measures above that you have agreed to support would you be willing to:

- | | | |
|---|--------|----|
| • Co-sponsor legislation? | YES OR | NO |
| • Work with our lobbyists to pass the bill? | YES OR | NO |
| • Testify at a hearing in support of legislation? | YES OR | NO |
| • Speak at public events in support of legislation? | YES OR | NO |
| • Write a letter in support of legislation? | YES OR | NO |
| • Write an op-ed in support of legislation? | YES OR | NO |

34. In order to build progressive grassroots organizations, would you be willing to help by:

- | | | |
|--|--------|----|
| • Speaking at Progressive Maryland events? | YES OR | NO |
| • Urging employers to respect their employees' right to form a union by remaining neutral during a union campaign? | YES OR | NO |
| • Urge employers to recognize a union voluntarily when the majority of their employees choose to form a union? | YES OR | NO |
| • Write a letter to unorganized workers endorsing an organizing drive by a labor union? | YES OR | NO |
| • Walk a picket line with a labor union? | YES OR | NO |
| • Other (Please specify): | | |