

2022 Baltimore Jewish Council Candidate Questionnaire

CANDIDATE NAME: John King

Briefly tell your personal story and why you are seeking this elected public service position. (Please limit your answer to no more than 250 words)

I know the transformative difference public institutions can make in people's lives because public schools saved my life. Both of my parents passed away when I was a kid: my mom when I was 8 and my dad when I was 12. As a teenager, I struggled and actually got kicked out of high school. It was public schools and public school educators whose care and support - and willingness to give me a second chance - saved me.

As an educator, I have always been very conscious of how all the systems operating in kids and families' lives affect their outcomes from housing to healthcare, and from criminal justice to economic opportunity. I believe the next governor of Maryland will be uniquely positioned to work across policy silos to make government a force for good in people's lives in much the same way public schools were such a powerful force for good in my life.

What are the 2 or 3 biggest challenges facing Maryland (or your district), and briefly describe how would you address those challenges over the next four years? (Please limit your answer to no more than 250 words)

Our biggest challenges in Maryland are delivering a world class education for all of our students, combating climate change, and ensuring economic dignity for everyone. I will fully fund the Blueprint, and expand on it, by making multi-millionaires and out-of-state corporations pay their fair share in taxes. This will allow us to pay teachers at best in the nation levels (introducing the \$60,000 minimum starting salary for teachers ahead of the Blueprint's mandate), raise pay for education support professionals, and invest in a diverse teacher pipeline and bilingual teachers (including expanding teaching programs at HBCUs and recruiting heavily from them). I am proudly endorsed by Sierra Club Maryland and will be a champion in fighting climate change by getting Maryland to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2035 and getting our electricity sector to carbon-free by 2030. We will transition every Marylander to clean renewable energy by providing financial support and in-home consultations. I will ensure economic dignity for every Marylander by quickly and fairly implementing the new Paid Family Leave law, expediting our timeline to reach a \$15 minimum wage and tying

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it to inflation so that it is a living wage, and instituting universal affordable child care for birth through 5.

*Baltimore and Maryland are blessed to have so many committed foundations and non-profits. How can government better support the work of these non-profits in providing the care and services needed by vulnerable Marylanders?
(Please limit your answer to no more than 100 words.)*

As we saw with vaccine distribution, nonprofit organizations can be tremendous partners in delivering services by leveraging deep knowledge of their communities and profound trust. A King-Siri administration will partner with nonprofit organizations to deliver universal, affordable childcare birth-to-5, mobilize recent college graduates and retired teachers to address the academic and socioemotional needs of students as we recover from the disruptions in children's lives due to COVID, provide desperately needed elder care, offer adult literacy and ESL programs, and much more. Nonprofits will be a vital partner for outreach efforts and initiatives from affordable housing to reentry programs for returning citizens through their pre-existing relationships with different communities.

*Over the past several years, we have seen a rise of hate and antisemitism in schools, college campuses, and the general community. What could you as an elected official do to help combat this alarming trend?
(Please limit your answer to no more than 100 words.)*

We need law enforcement to target resources towards preventing these hate crimes and taking threats of violence seriously. With antisemitic and racist attacks increasing, it's clear we are not devoting enough time or effort to combat them. We also must crack down on disinformation and roll out public education campaigns and strategies to dispel the conspiracy theories hate groups latch onto, including "The Great Replacement Theory." The recent backlash against "Critical Race Theory" in schools is really a movement to deny the truth and avoid teaching the ugly parts of our history, and we must push back because this will lead to an ignorance of Jewish history and antisemitism as well. Most importantly, we need stricter gun control, like stronger federal background checks, better implementation of the Maryland red flag law, and stronger state laws to prevent child access, so it becomes harder for deadly firearms to get into the hands of these extremists.

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Do you support continuing the initiatives begun by the state over the past several years to provide security grants to faith institutions, schools, and other entities that are threatened by hate crimes?

(Please limit your answer to no more than 100 words.)

Yes. We must continue targeting resources to prevent hate crimes and threats of violence against our faith institutions, schools and other culturally significant centers. We are seeing an uptick in right-wing violence, and we need to make sure our security grants match the need.

For more than three decades, Maryland and the Jewish community have jointly invested in developing a flourishing business relationship between our state and Israel – creating jobs and economic activity both here and there. As part of that relationship, Governor Hogan signed an executive order in 2017 prohibiting all executive branch agencies from entering into contracts or conducting official state business with any entity unless they certify that they will not engage in a boycott of Israel during the duration of the contract.

<https://governor.maryland.gov/2017/10/23/governor-larry-hogan-signs-executive-order-strengthening-marylands-opposition-to-bds-movement-against-israel/>

Do you support maintaining and enforcing this executive order?

(Please limit your answer to no more than 100 words.)

I do not support BDS, I support Israel's right to exist and I believe in a two-state solution. However, while I do think the BDS movement is counterproductive, I do not believe the government should dictate how people protest. Gov. Hogan's executive order on not allowing state contractors to participate in BDS actions drew a legal challenge, and while it was ultimately upheld, I believe similar actions could continue to draw challenges. I support Israel's right to exist, but we must respect every Marylander's Constitutional rights, and the state cannot violate the right to protest. I also do not want to unnecessarily draw litigation against the state.

Over the past several years, Maryland has created the BOOST program – a scholarship opportunity to assist low-income families in attending non-public schools. Do you support continuing the BOOST program?

(Please limit your answer to no more than 100 words.)

I oppose continuing the BOOST program. I have not seen evidence that it has improved outcomes, and I believe that public funds belong in public schools with public accountability. While I deeply respect the right of parents to choose a private school for their child, the state should not be sending tax dollars to private schools. I will end the BOOST program as governor and invest that money in making sure Maryland offers every student a world-class public education.

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*What are your 2 or 3 biggest priorities to help protect the environment?
(Please limit your answer to no more than 100 words.)*

My top priority will be making Maryland a leader in reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2035. To get there, my administration will develop our state's electricity sector to be carbon-free by 2030, ensure our Renewable Portfolio Standard only includes clean, renewable energy sources and replace the state fleet of vehicles with all electric ones by 2030. Second, I am also committing to transition 60% of all cars and trucks in Maryland to zero-emission vehicles by the same year and will build 10,000 charging stations to facilitate the transition. All public buildings - including schools and college campuses - will be 100% clean energy by 2030, and my administration will support residential homes and commercial buildings transition to clean power sources through in-house consultations and financial support. Third, to address the immediate future, we must adapt to the effects of climate change that are already happening. My administration will invest in infrastructure resilience and planning, including stormwater management infrastructure to reduce community flooding and run-off.

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