

2022 Baltimore Jewish Council Candidate Questionnaire

CANDIDATE NAME: Wes Moore

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)

My background and experience leading in every sector of the American economy stand in stark contrast to every candidate in this race. I volunteered to deploy to Afghanistan where I led soldiers in combat as a captain and a paratrooper. I built and ran a small business in Baltimore focused on helping first-generation college students succeed—helping to improve retention rates by 20%. In my most recent role as CEO of one of the nation’s largest poverty fighting organizations, we invested over \$600 million into transportation, housing, education, food insecurity, and criminal justice and created the first public policy wing in the 30-year-history of the organization working in the halls of government advocating for the child tax credit, better pay for childcare providers, and fighting hospital networks that sued COVID patients.

I’m running for governor because this is a moment when we are at an inflection point. We’ve been given a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to expand economic opportunity – to change the realities my mother lived through, my grandparents lived through, is a core part of why I’m running for governor. It’s the North Star of my campaign – to create work, wages, and wealth, with a focus on equity, for every family in Maryland. As governor, I'm going to build an economy where every family can thrive by accelerating the minimum wage increase to \$15 by 2023, creating strong pathways to the workforce with job training and apprenticeships, and I'm going to set students up for success by fully funding and implementing the Blueprint.

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)

Education - The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future was a tremendous legislative victory and we must ensure it is fully funded and implemented. As governor, I will build robust pathways to good-paying jobs, support our educators and students, ensure universal pre-K for every child in need, and drive more students into STEM fields. I was proud to be named the education candidate by the Maryland State Education Association, and I will not stop until every child is set up for success.

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Public Safety - Violent crime is on the rise and Marylanders deserve a governor who will address it with urgency. As governor, I will tackle illegal guns flooding our streets, invest in proven community-based violence intervention programs, fix the Department of Parole and Probation, and invest in local re-entry programs. I believe in policing with absolute accountability and appropriate intensity, bringing together federal, state, and local resources to prevent crime while building trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

Health Care - I will work to ensure universal access to affordable health coverage and lower prescription drug prices by empowering the Prescription Drug Affordability Board to review costs and set limits for prescription drugs, explore bulk buying pools, and leverage the state's purchasing power to drive down costs. Our administration will also destigmatize mental illness and support mental, emotional, and behavioral health for all Marylanders by increasing the number of community-based care centers, equitably growing the behavioral health workforce, and ensuring that we are better serving Marylanders experiencing serious mental illness.

*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 the CEO of one of the largest poverty-fighting organizations in America, I understand the important role of our foundations and non-profits and I'm uniquely qualified to support our non-profits and ensure we bring every resource to the table to tackle the issues facing our most vulnerable communities. But I also believe that a strong public sector is crucial to an effective government and our public agencies and systems should be able to stand on their own.

*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.)*

My commitment is for every Maryland student to have access to a world-class public education, free from fear, bullying, harassment, and discrimination. Our administration will work to ensure Maryland schools adopt strong provisions to combat bullying and harassment and create partnerships with Maryland's Jewish communities to provide additional resources and tools to schools to combat hate and antisemitism.

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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.)

Right here in Maryland, we've seen a 17% increase in antisemitic incidents in 2021. Our administration will never tolerate hate or discrimination in any form and we will always take immediate action to dismantle it. That starts with working together with our Jewish communities to listen to their concerns and work in partnership to address them. That includes creating partnerships with local law enforcement to ensure they are aware of and swiftly respond to any reported hate crimes or violence against Maryland's Jewish communities, and take appropriate steps to prevent and deter such crimes from happening in the first place.

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 am affirmatively against the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement. I will support the continuation of this executive order and I firmly believe that our laws should reflect our values.

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 believe that public dollars should go to public schools and my priority as governor will be focusing on investments that improve our public school system and to address any disparities that exist. As governor, my administration will phase out the BOOST program, however, I am very sensitive to the students that are already participating in the program and it's important that we don't disrupt their educational progress, but we would not grow the BOOST program like what has happened under the current administration.

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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.)*

Maryland used to be a national leader in fighting climate change, but a failure of executive leadership over the past eight years has set us back, costing us over \$10 billion in the past decade and putting our communities at risk. As governor, I will set aggressive targets to generate 100% clean energy by 2035, achieve net-zero emissions by 2045 and implement solutions to address sea-level rise and extreme heat, prioritizing environmental justice throughout. We will create a stronger, greener economy, creating thousands of new jobs, lowering costs, and protecting our most vulnerable communities.

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