

2022 Baltimore Jewish Council Candidate Questionnaire

CANDIDATE NAME: Dana Stein

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 have been a delegate representing District 11 since 2007. I am vice chair of the House Environment and Transportation Committee, which makes me a part of House leadership. I have played a leading role on environmental, transportation and natural resources legislation, and this past session I was the House leader on comprehensive climate change legislation. I will continue to apply that leadership and experience should I be re-elected.

A key part of the job of legislator is being an advocate for constituents, and I believe that I have been an effective advocate. I have secured bond funding for such local organizations as Ner Israel Rabbinical College; Hatzalah; Torah Institute of Baltimore; Jewish Community Services; CHAI; and the Gordon Center for Performing Arts.

In 2020, Speaker Adrienne Jones awarded me the Casper R. Taylor, Jr. Founder's Award. The award is presented to a sitting member of the House of Delegates for steadfast commitment to public service and the integrity of the House of Delegates.

I am also executive director of the non-profit Civic Works, Inc., an “urban Peace Corps” that engages young adults in community service and job training activities and operates a Baltimore City high school. This gives me insight into the needs of young adults and challenged communities. I am also an attorney, though I have not practiced law since 1992.

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)

1. Ensuring that seniors are able to age-in-place and have access to quality health care. Northwest Baltimore County has a high proportion of older adults, many of whom will need assistance (home repairs, social services) to age-in-place. Regardless of whether an older adult can continue to live at home or in a congregate setting, they also will need to have access to quality health care. I will advocate for increased resources for the safety and health care needs of older adults.

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2. Ensuring that public and non-public schools have strong State support. Maryland is starting to implement the Blueprint for Maryland's future and we must ensure that Baltimore County gets its fair share. Also, non-public schools need additional State support in the form of BOOST assistance and greater transportation support. I will introduce legislation that would increase the State's responsibility for providing transportation support for non-public schools.

3. Providing State support for Pikesville's Revitalization Action Plan. The Baltimore County Council adopted the plan in December, 2021. The State should provide capital support for implementation of the plan, especially the redevelopment of the Pikesville Armory.

*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.)*

The 2018 federal tax law – by increasing the standard deduction – decreased or eliminated the tax incentive for charitable contributions for many taxpayers. In response, the State should allow for the deduction of charitable contributions, up to a certain amount, for taxpayers who do not itemize on their tax return.

The State's Community Investment Tax Credit program -- which awards allocations of State tax credits for use as incentives to attract contributions from individuals and businesses – could also be expanded and made more flexible.

*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.)*

A key step would be a requirement that public schools teach more about the history of hate and antisemitism in the U.S. than is currently done. There is a clear line between the history of hate and the current rise of intolerance and antisemitism. I will continue to be active in speaking out against local incidents of racism and antisemitism.

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.)

I strongly support continuing the state's initiatives to provide these security grants. In the wake of shootings at the Tree of Life synagogue and churches and the hostage-taking at Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas, it is essential that faith institutions, schools and other entities that are threatened by hate crimes be able to increase their protection against armed intruders and other threats.

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 strongly support maintaining and enforcing Governor Hogan's executive order. I was a co-sponsor of then-Delegate Kramer's HB 949 (2017) that would have prohibited persons who participate in a boycott of Israel from participating in a procurement with a public body in the State and makes those persons subject to divestment by the State Retirement and Pension System.

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 strongly support continuing the BOOST program. The program provides essential tuition assistance for low- and moderate-income families who attend non-public schools and has provided important support to Baltimore-area families who attend Jewish Day Schools.

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

Climate change is a grave threat to Maryland, given its extensive coastline. I was the leader in the House of Delegates on this year's Climate Solutions Now Act. Protecting the Chesapeake Bay from pollution also is essential, and I have sponsored several bills that enhance efforts to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus pollution into the Bay. Limiting or eliminating the use of dangerous chemicals is both an environmental and public health issue; I led the effort in the legislature to ban chlorpyrifos, a pesticide associated with neurodevelopmental problems and impaired brain function in children.

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