

2022 Baltimore Jewish Council Candidate Questionnaire

CANDIDATE NAME: Robbyn Lewis

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)

Thank you so much for considering my application for endorsement. I was first elected in 2018 and I am seeking re-election in 2022 in order to build on my legislative accomplishments. Health policy is my area of particular expertise; I am the only member of the House that holds a Master of Public Health degree. As such, I have focused on expanding affordable access to health care for all Marylanders. I will continue this work. In addition, I have developed expertise in transportation, land use and environmental policy, and sponsored important bills in these domains. Finally, I have helped pass critically important bills on education, workforce, housing and more. There is more to do, and I want to help get it done for the people of our state.

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)

Every district in Maryland faces the same challenges: public safety, education, housing, transportation and the environment. I represent Baltimore's 46th district, and my constituents tell me that they care about these things. As a state Delegate, I will address these challenges by sponsoring, and supporting bills that address root causes. For example, to address public safety, specifically violent crime, I will support investment in preventive measures, such as job training to support folks onto a better path, as well as efforts to hold accountable those individuals who commit violent acts. I will continue advancing policies to improve public transit and walkability, which are also employment measures. Essentially, I will keep pressing to expand and improve the changes I'm advanced for many years.

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.)

I have a long track-record of service in small, community-based non-profits, including board service with the Friends of Patterson Park, Creative Alliance and Southeast Community Development Corp. Government should - and does - help

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these types of organizations by providing resources for investment in capital improvements, such as the BRNI grants. I'd welcome input from non-profit organizations themselves as to how government can assist them.

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.)

Elected officials are just people, human beings like everyone else, and for all human beings we have the same mandate: act like a human being. Protect and defend the vulnerable in your daily life. I have done this my whole life and will continue to do so, as I did, for example, when interrupting an anti-Asian hate crime in DC last month. As a legislator, I will continue to advance laws and policies that hold accountable those who commit hate crimes and other human rights violations.

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 am committed to continue helping and protecting all entities that are attacked by hate crimes.

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 appreciate this question, and must admit that I was not entirely aware of this executive order. Learning about it now, it makes sense to me that the order should stand, however, I prefer to seek advice and input from the Jewish community to learn more about the stance that the community prefers. I would like to learn more about it.

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.)

As my record demonstrates, I have opposed the BOOST program every time it has come before me.

What are your 2 or 3 biggest priorities to help protect the environment?

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

To protect the environment - and by extension, human health - we must significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions immediately. This will require major shifts in the way we live and conduct commerce, but we can do it! The transportation sector contributes nearly 30% of all greenhouse gas emissions. Reducing these emissions is the most significant way to protect the environment, as well as human health. I will continue to advance investment in mass transit and walkability, to improve the environment and human health. Housing/buildings are also significant contributors to GHG emissions. We have already laid the way by passing monumental climate and renewable energy legislation. Next, we must make it as easy and affordable as possible for homeowners and businesses to convert their properties from natural-gas dependence to renewable energy.

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