

2022 Baltimore Jewish Council Candidate Questionnaire

CANDIDATE NAME: Tom Perez

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)

As the son of immigrants from the Dominican Republic, a longtime resident of Takoma Park, and a civil rights attorney, I have committed his life to protecting and expanding opportunity and ensuring justice for all Americans. I am running to be your next Governor of Maryland because this is a moment of generational change that requires bold, proven leadership to build a more just and equitable future for all Marylanders. Throughout my career from my work on civil rights, to elected office, to serving as Secretary of Labor in Maryland and in President Obama's cabinet, I have been guided by the values in which I was raised and I am running to transform the state government into a force for good. When I was 12 years old, my father passed away from a heart attack, which helped to mold my fierce sense of urgency, and the belief that those in government need to "Get Stuff Done", not just talk, but follow it up with sincere action. My record matches my words, with 35 years of experience in public service, fighting for working families, and protecting our communities against discrimination. I have these values because I have lived the struggles that so many ordinary Marylanders face, and I will never stop fighting on their behalf.

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)

We will help build Maryland's middle class by fully-funding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, investing in critical transportation projects — including the Purple Line, the Red Line in Baltimore, and Southern Maryland Rapid Transit — creating a statewide climate and resiliency coordinator to work across government and support clean energy job creation, and continue Maryland's public health response.

We will fulfill the vision of Dr. King, who said "of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane." Right now over 370,000 Marylanders remain without coverage. We need to get to 100 percent — and I have a plan to do it. With the Supreme Court poised to overturn Roe v. Wade, we will introduce a Constitutional amendment to further enshrine the fundamental

Baltimore Jewish Council is an agency of The Associated



right to abortion into the fabric of our laws and work with the Attorney General so Maryland defends any provider sued by other states for providing care.

As a former federal prosecutor, I understand how to build meaningful partnerships to reduce violence — because I've done it. As governor, I'll ensure the state is an ally, not an adversary, by serving a collaborative partner to bring local, state, and federal leaders — and resources — together to ramp-up staffing and support for parole or probation officers, combat the gun violence epidemic, and reduce violence.

*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.)*

In places where there are no services, the government needs to step up, but in places where we have the organizations and boots on the ground doing the work, it is the government's job to lift them up, and provide them with the necessary support. Throughout my career, I have worked with incredible nonprofit leaders who all wish for a world where their nonprofit is no longer needed. Until that moment, it is our job to support nonprofits with direct funding and support, including increased staff in state government to aid nonprofits better apply for and receive grants for their work.

*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 must vocally and without hesitation address hate speech and antisemitism no matter where it rears its ugly head or who spouts it. As a federal prosecutor in the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, I successfully prosecuted hate crime cases involving white supremacists who went on a deadly, racially-motivated crime spree. As Assistant Attorney General for division, I oversaw the successful implementation of the Shepard-Byrd Hate Crimes Prevention Act. As governor, I will continue to provide funding to protect organizations that are threatened with hate crimes, and use my bully pulpit to speak out and stand with the affected communities.

Baltimore Jewish Council is an agency of The Associated

BALTIMORE
JEWISH
COUNCIL 

 100
1920
2020
The Associated
Jewish Federation of Baltimore

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. These funds are used by our communities to help protect against hate crimes, and have been a useful deterrent when unfortunate situations arise. While the Perez administration will work with local law enforcement and the Attorney General to continue to crack down on hate-based crime, it will also ensure that communities have the security grants to protect their institutions.

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.)

When I was a candidate for DNC Chair in 2017, I had the strong support of many Democratic politicians who support Israel, and was roundly criticized for my criticism of the BDS movement. I honestly stated my belief that the movement itself has been destructive to the cause it purports to support, and the only way to find peace in the Middle East is a two-state solution between the two parties. I have long supported the State of Israel and firmly believe we need to support organizations such as the Maryland-Israel Development Center to continue to strengthen the economic and cultural ties between Maryland and Israel.

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 I have stated publicly, I think we need to maintain funding at current levels for non-public schools, including the BOOST program. As Governor, I will look out for the needs of all Marylanders, throughout the state.

*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 an existential threat facing our planet and placing our future at risk. While climate issues are multi-departmental and multidisciplinary, our state's response has been siloed. As governor, I'll create a statewide Climate and Resilience Coordinator who will oversee a multi-agency, multidisciplinary approach to climate change and fully implement the Climate Solutions Now Act passed this session to ensure we meet the carbon emissions reduction goals to net-zero by 2045. Furthermore, part of our transition to renewable energy must mean that state government is leading by example to invest in environmentally friendly schools, libraries, hospitals, and other state facilities.

Baltimore Jewish Council is an agency of The Associated

BALTIMORE
JEWISH
COUNCIL 

 100
1920
2020
The Associated
Jewish Federation of Baltimore