

Limit to 150 Words

- Do you support the development of affordable housing in Downtown Columbia and throughout Howard County? If so, how would you ensure the current, already approved plan for the renovation of Downtown Columbia (including the addition of 150 units of affordable housing in the Banneker Fire Station and the Central Library renovation projects) remains on track to be completed within the current timeline?

Yes, the reality is that more housing is needed in Howard County to improve access to housing that aligns with the emerging variety of family types. This is why housing and equitable based smart growth is one of my primary priorities. My experiences on the hyper-local level in my community, where I have seen a particular type of resident advocate against expanded housing opportunities and smart growth (along with sending Toby's/NCC into contingency is one of the catalysts for my entry into politics). We need voices that will speak for our current community needs (rather than clinging to an outdated version of Columbia that has not existed for over three decades). We need brave, younger voices that won't seek to defund workforce housing in Downtown Columbia; wanting to gut the Housing Opportunities Trust Fund by 5 million dollars, or send the Central Library renovation in contingency (where it currently is).

- In previous forums, you have publicly stated your support for protecting the Liberty Act. Can you describe what specific steps you will take to guarantee the rights and protections of immigrant families in the County if the voters do not uphold the Act?

I am confident that the ballot initiative will fail. Liberty Act (CB 63) is, and after November, will remain the law. In the event that the Act is not upheld, I would be vigilant about ensuring that internal policies and procedures within the County, including the HCPD's General Orders, continue to comply with the spirit of CB-63. I would also utilize the bully pulpit of the office to educate the immigrant community about their legal protections and rights within Howard County. I have several family members or close friends who were, at some point, were undocumented. They lived in fear - when all they were trying to do was take care of their children; afraid to take domestic flights, and nervous of any encounter with government. I would focus on educating them about local government, what it can or cannot do, linking them with community partners like Luminous, and letting them know that I, as an immigrant, understand their struggle and fears. This is why representation that embraces the community matters.

- What specific steps do you plan to advance health equity throughout the county and decrease inequities in access to things like healthy food, public transportation, and affordable health care? Are you in support of expanding the SNAP program among other farmer's markets in addition to the one that exists?

I am absolutely in favor of expanding the SNAP program to other farmer's markets. 2020 opened up and revealed to all the world the various intersectionalities that systems, birthed in racism and oppression, for what they were. Health and education are the great equalizers.

We must continue to advocate for universal healthcare at the federal and state levels. At the county level, we must prioritize making healthcare reliably accessible and affordable to all who need it. As a County Councilmember, I will work to: improve the services we provide to low-income, undocumented, and uninsured or under-insured residents; work with community members and advocates to determine how we can better reach residents who may not know about or be taking advantage of the systems we've put in place. Much of the work I have done is the community is centered around ECJ, including helping to ideate the CSA at the CEI.

For healthcare, I think that there is the need to create a statewide single payer healthcare plan that provides coverage to everyone, paid for and administered by a state entity, which I believe will drive costs down. On the Council, I get to continue my work of liberation for the voiceless; for the ones left behind; for the ones that are not embraced by current leadership.

- Will you commit to meeting with PATH and attending another action like this if you make it past the primary, and commit to meeting with us quarterly if you become a Councilmember?

Yes, of course.

Seek Justice. Love Mercy. Walk Humbly with Your God.

I am running to be a representative of the people. In order to effectively serve from a place of wisdom, one must stay connected to the people - all people - in order to be an effective advocate. To create policy, legislation, and budgets that reflect the will of the community and that are created in justice and liberation. I am committed to representing the people of District 4 and to do that well, I need to be available and listen to the issues that are important in order to give power to the people - not necessarily the loudest naysayers.