



a. 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, I support the development of affordable housing in Downtown Columbia and throughout Howard County as a progressive candidate. We must face the facts – over the last decade Howard County’s population has risen steadily. This assertion is made evident by the most recent U.S. Census. Why this influx? It’s chiefly due to our highly touted public school system which draws in young families. In addition, our quality-of-life metrics are off the charts, and they are perennially listed in media outlets.

As it stands, the addition of 150 units in Banneker Fire Station has the potential to lift the economic standing of those seeking affordable housing options. Instead of another apartment dwelling, I would like to see an earnest effort made by developers to build condominiums where occupants would have an ownership interest in the property. By taking this path, future residents could build substantial economic wealth over time.

Thankfully, we have already made strides in this direction with the Housing Opportunities Trust Fund. Moving forward, we must continue to leverage this vital resource so that newly minted first responders, public school teachers, and county government employees can afford to live in the place they work.

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b. 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?

The law is not a permanent thing. So, even as the referendum is slated to go before the people in Howard County, and in the small likelihood that the Liberty Act is struck down, all is not lost. I, for one, will not be dismayed as a Howard County lawyer. I would continue the fight by drafting new legislation to protect the rights of undocumented workers.

We must never forget that America owes its existence to the arrival of new immigrants. The genius of our nation rests on its ability to draw talent from all over the globe. The hustle, industry and creativity of immigrants fuels our economic clout. I say this, in large part, because my wife's journey is a testament to how immigrants make lasting contributions to our nation.

She was born in Mozambique right after it gained its independence from Portugal. Rich in land mass and natural resources, Mozambique is still a relatively poor country. Luckily, she was granted a golden ticket when her older sister landed a Fulbright scholarship to America. Today, she proudly works at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

c. 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?

Physical health remains the greatest blessing. Money, power, or fame don't rise to the same level of significance because one cannot enjoy the fullness of life without it. Thus, I am a staunch advocate of health equality initiatives in Howard County. For instance, the SNAP program ought to be expanded beyond Clarksville. This concept is a wonderful resource for our residents.

In terms of public transportation, we still confront the perception that being an active bus rider isn't cool. We must put this outdated view to rest. For example, my wife routinely commutes to DC using the bus. Surprisingly, with gas at \$5 a gallon, one would expect greater ridership. However, this valuable resource is underused.

Finally, we must provide greater access for mental health. I have familiarity with this issue because my mother is a noted counseling psychologist. On past occasions, she has aptly pointed out the upswing in anxiety and depression found today. Therefore, we must combat these inequities especially in the wake of COVID-19.

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d. 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?

If I prevail in the Democratic primary, I would be glad to meet with PATH and attend another forum. Should I become a Councilmember, I fully intend to meet quarterly with PATH to stay attuned to key issues impacting Howard County.

Thank for the opportunity to be heard and to have my thoughts put forth on the record. In closing, allow me to share this Biblical quote of inspiration:

Yes, my soul find rest in God; my hope comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress; I will not be shaken. (Psalms 62:5-6)