

# **Maryland Working Families 2016 Baltimore City Council Candidate Questionnaire**

Thank you for participating in the MD Working Families Questionnaire and Interview Process. We will take your responses, in addition to verbal responses made during a candidate interview, into consideration as we make a decision for an endorsement.

Maryland Working Families is a growing progressive political movement pushing for an economy and justice system that works for all of us, and a democracy where every voice matters. Affiliated with the national Working Families Organizations, Maryland Working Families is powered by people who believe in a better future for all Marylanders.

Together with our affiliates 1199SEIU, CASA, Communities United, Maryland State Education Association, SEIU 32BJ, SEIU Local 500, and UFCW Local 400, we are making tangible change for low income Marylanders and transforming political dialogue throughout the state.

## **CANDIDATE STATEMENT**

**I affirmatively seek the endorsement and support of MD Working Families and the thousands of Baltimoreans for whom they advocate. In seeking this endorsement, I pledge to support the right of every resident to representation that is responsive, honest, transparent, and accountable. I understand the issues championed by MD Working Families and know that I will be called to champion them as well. Finally, as an elected official, I will maintain regular contact with MD Working Families and the leadership of their affiliates.**

Mary Pat Clarke  
Name

Candidate for Baltimore City Council, 14<sup>th</sup> District  
Office/District

Linda Eberhart, Volunteer Campaign Manager. 443-827-2126  
Key Contact Person & Phone Number

Email pdf of completed questionnaire by 11:59pm  
Thursday, January 21, 2016 to:

Adisa Muse  
Political and Legislative Director, MD Working Families  
amuse@workingfamilies.org

If you have additional questions or concerns please call Adisa Muse at (804) 721-5011.

## **CAMPAIGN PROFILE**

Office Sought: **Baltimore City Council**

District: **14<sup>th</sup> City Council District (North Central Baltimore)**

Party: **Democrat**

Committee Name: **Friends of Mary Pat Clarke**

Campaign Address: **Post Office Box 16175, Baltimore MD 21218**

Campaign Phone: **443-827-2126**

Campaign Website: **Marypatclarke.com**

Campaign Manager: **Linda Eberhart**

Campaign Manager Cell Phone: **443-827-2126**

Campaign Manager E-mail: [marypatclarke@yahoo.com](mailto:marypatclarke@yahoo.com)

Anticipated Campaign Budget: **\$60,000**

Campaign Funds Raised to Date: **\$50,000**

Previous Campaigns:

**for City Council in former 2<sup>nd</sup> District: 1975 & 1979**

**for City Council President, 1983 (lost); and in 1987 & 1991 (won)**

**for Mayor, 1995 (lost); and,**

**for City Council in new 14th Council District, 2003/04, 2007, 2011**

Other Endorsements: **CASA in Action**

Organizational Affiliations: **Please see campaign and Baltimore City websites**

Top Three Campaign Issues:

- 1. Fight for the rights of Baltimore's children to be safe, well-educated, healthy, adequately supported by their families --- and newly confident, along with their families, of a fair and positive future in which to thrive.**
- 2. Help uplift the entire City by requiring meaningful and decent-paying jobs so as to break the cycle of poverty too long ingrained within Baltimore City neighborhoods and families.**
- 3. Help stop the violence by promoting alternatives for our youth instead of leaving them on their own and often in harm's way.**

## **\$15 Minimum Wage**

According to the US Census, 23.8% of Baltimore City residents lived below the poverty level. This is over twice the statewide average rate of poverty for the state of Maryland. There is a consensus among economists that raising the minimum wage reduces poverty. It also benefits local economies as raising wages also puts money in the hands of consumers, boosting demand for goods and services. Studies have concluded that a wage that would lift thousands of Baltimore's families out of poverty would far exceed \$10.10 per hour. Would you support increasing the minimum wage for Baltimore's workers to \$15 per hour by 2020? Please explain.

**I do support increasing the minimum wage for Baltimore workers to \$15 per hour by 2020. I will be introducing legislation to that effect in the Baltimore City Council. Thanks to Maryland Working Families for being a major partner in organizing and rallying for provisions of that local law for Baltimore. Your continuing help and involvement are crucial to success.**

## **Economic Development**

Development and revitalization projects are undertaken with public money and resources provided by Baltimore's residents. These projects have been justified by promises of local economic growth and jobs. However, they involve complicated partnerships between local government and private developers that are too often negotiated behind closed doors. Despite receiving direct and indirect financial and political support, these projects fail to provide Baltimore's working families with the economic benefits promised. Would you support overhauling the city's procurement rules to provide greater transparency during the negotiation of contracts and agreements concerning economic development and community revitalization projects? How would you keep developers and vendors involved in these projects accountable?

**The Board of Estimates controls the rules & regulations pertaining to contracts. The Mayor and two of her appointees (City Solicitor and Director of Public Works), the Comptroller and the City Council President constitute the membership, so the Mayor controls the majority three votes and the rules & regulations by which contracts are awarded.**

**City Councilmembers can be most effective by enacting laws to which the Board of Estimates itself can be held accountable; and, likewise developers and vendors. MBE participation in contracts and a Living Wage requirement for City contract workers are just two examples of such laws.**

**I will support with legislation, as lead sponsor or a co-sponsor, legislation which levels the playing field so that City workers and the City as a whole benefit from the funds we spend on development. I will work with Maryland Working Families to hone-in on which legal changes are key to making such breakthroughs. To accelerate local employment, I am interested in promoting more local MBE contractors into major contractor status with the City. Such bosses will hire from people they know, and that will include their neighbors, our Baltimore workers.**

## **Communities/Infrastructure**

Broadband penetration is a critical factor that drives our economy. Too many residents of Baltimore City are not connected, and too few residents and businesses have a choice for high speed Internet. Our lone Internet provider can charge whatever they want for whatever services they chose to provide. Verizon's FiOS is the most competitive alternative to our lone cable Internet offering, but Verizon ended its expansion in Maryland. It has connected surrounding counties, but has redlined the City of Baltimore. As a member of city council will you make the build-out of FiOS into Baltimore City a top priority?

**As a City Councilmember, I have been engaged in many heated meetings with Verizon to lift this redlining, to no avail. But Verizon aside, Baltimore City has options beyond FIOS to pursue --- and now. If the City acts effectively, Verizon will be just one more option for which Baltimoreans have faster and more affordable alternatives.**

**The City administration has recently completed an overview of Broadband options and must move ahead to meet Baltimore's urgent need to "get up to speed." Even jobs are affected by the current state of our service. Some businesses will not locate here, because Baltimore lacks the speed and capacity to accommodate their Internet needs.**

**What City government brings to the fibre optic option is 700 miles of conduit and a growing network of distributed antenna systems (DAS) under City contract. To these assets we need to add private sector partners who will meet our speed, reliability, affordability, "build out," and accountability requirements.**

**In coming months, City Council will hold public hearings on my resolution to move ahead on developing comprehensive, affordable, and up-to-speed broadband options for Baltimore City.**

**I invite Maryland Working Families to be there when we hold those City Council hearings, to help us make the case for schools, libraries, rec centers, and working families as priorities for the build out.**

**To access jobs and opportunities in the future, our school children require access now to 21<sup>st</sup> century tools of research, innovation, and communication.**

## **Community Policing**

Effective policing and reduced rates of crime should not come at the expense of civil rights and civil liberties. The fundamental belief of community policing is that our neighborhoods can be kept safe with law enforcement officers who are held accountable for their behavior. Developing constructive relationships within the communities they patrol along with opening lines of communication with residents can allay counterproductive police/community relationships that have been notable for their antagonism and some cases violence.

Do you agree with the following principles and what will you do to ensure they are implemented:

1. Police officers with a history of violence/misconduct are removed from the force.

What policy changes will you seek to ensure this is achieved?

YES.

2. Police officers are trained in community policing techniques, including de-escalation.

What policy changes will you seek to ensure this is achieved?

YES.

3. Police officers receive cultural competency and racial bias/anti-racism training. What policy changes will you seek to ensure this is achieved?

YES.

**First and foremost, as a member of City Council, I will urge the Council, through its Public Safety Committee, to formalize and extend Council's oversight of the Baltimore Police Department (BPD) in regard to these three key issues; and, to alert the entire Council to relevant State legislation (for example, related to the State's Officer Bill of Rights). It's important to make the City's positions known in a timely manner, especially to the Baltimore City Delegation to the General Assembly. The Department of Justice is likewise concerned about these very issues, among so many others, and City Council must express explicit support for DOJ priorities which reflect those of Maryland Working Families.**

**The State controls most laws affecting the BPD, but City Council has demonstrated its influence on local BPD policies. I will work with the entire City Council in response to these priority oversight issues, asking for regular BPD updates at public hearings of the Public Safety Committee.**

**For question 1, our oversight on termination policies should be grounded in reforms to the BPD's Internal Investigations Division (IID) over which local control is exercised and greater transparency, expedience, and efficiency are required.**

**For question 2, I would add my own special interest in the Academy's 40-hour BEST training, conducted in partnership with Baltimore's Behavioral Health Systems and tailored to de-escalation training in working with mentally and emotionally ill citizens.**

**For question 3, I will work with community leaders and the Public Safety Committee to oversee this curriculum's development for relevancy.**

## **Education**

Maryland Working Families supports the community school model for all Baltimore City schools and students. Using schools as hubs, community schools bring together partners to offer a range of supports and opportunities to children, youth, families and communities. Schools become centers of the community and are open to everyone. Focusing on academics, health and social services, youth and community development and community engagement leads to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities. Forty-three Baltimore City public and charter schools are currently community schools. Would you make funding community schools a priority in the City budget? What else would you do to improve our schools?

**Yes. I was a lead sponsor with Councilman Bill Henry of the resolution, unanimously approved by City Council, which successfully called upon the Mayor to add an additional \$4 million to the current City budget for community schools and after school and out-of-school programs. I will continue to work on increasing this budget until the benefits reach all of our elementary and middle school children.**

## **Immigration**

Baltimore continues distinguish itself by protecting undocumented residents from unjust deportation. This has proven to be sound policy that encourages cooperation between immigrant communities and law enforcement. Backing away from this policy will needlessly include local authorities in matters of federal civil immigration enforcement. Would you continue to support this policy as a member of council?

**YES, absolutely and passionately.**

## **Affordable Housing**

According the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, many families pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing and this burden makes affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care more difficult. Nationwide an estimated 12 million renter and homeowner households now pay more than 50 percent of their annual incomes for housing. In Baltimore, two and a half full time jobs are required to pay rent for the average two bedroom home. Would you support affordable housing policies that assist our neediest families in securing a safe and affordable home? Please explain.

**Yes. And add "lead-free" to every description of the affordable housing required. I supported the Inclusionary Housing legislation before committee amendments required the City to compensate developers for affordable dwelling unit inclusions within a new development, thus putting the burden of compliance on the Housing Department's limited financial capacity. I am prepared to work with Council President Bernard "Jack" Young to rework this law to allow density bonuses and other non-financial allowances as incentives while assigning the burden of financial compliance to owners/developers on all new residential developments above a certain size to be determined.**

### **Security Officers**

Security officers at commercial office buildings, universities, the Port, the stadium and some state facilities in Baltimore are organizing with SEIU to raise their wages and benefits. While some of them have just entered into a collective bargaining agreement with their employers, many others remain without a contract. Will you commit to help them by:

1. Allowing 32BJ to publicize statements of support **YES**
2. Writing a letter to facility owners and managers? **YES**
3. Joining a rally with workers? **YES**
4. Taking part in a civil disobedience action with security officers?  
**Happy to respond on a case-by-case basis.**

### **Progressive Caucus**

Advancing a consistent and well-considered progressive agenda through city council that prioritizes the social and economic interests of Baltimore's residents requires the support of a core of council members and advocates. This will be greatly assisted by organizing a caucus. Can the working families of Baltimore count on you to be a part of a caucus that will prioritize their interests and aspirations?

**I would be happy to be part of a progressive caucus sponsored by Maryland Working Families and open to the membership of all Baltimore City Council members. I would, however, object to any caucus which "hand-picks" certain councilmembers for membership; and, I would object to any separate progressive caucus established exclusively within the City Council. After all, it's "progressive" to be open and welcoming to all comers.**

***My thanks to Maryland Working Families for this opportunity to discuss priorities and seek your support in my campaign for re-election to the Baltimore City Council. Mary Pat***