

Metropolitan Baltimore Council AFL-CIO Unions CITY CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE – 2011

Candidate for: Baltimore City Council, 14th District

Name: Mary Pat Clarke

Address: 3911 Cloverhill Road

City/Zip: Baltimore, Maryland 21218

Phone: 410-294-3022 Cell 410-366-2023 Home 443-525-3743 Office

Fax N/A

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Present Occupation: Member, Baltimore City Council

Party Affiliation: X DEMOCRAT

Live in 3rd Congressional, 43rd Legislative, 14th City Council districts.

YES, I have received Labor's endorsement in the past.

If yes, when? Most recently, in 1995 (Primary for Mayor) and in 2003/04 & 2007 (14th District)

Previous elected/appointed office(s):

City Councilmember, former 2nd district (1975-1983);

President of City Council (1987-1995); and,

City Councilmember, 14th District (2004 – present).

Length of service: 23 years

1. Why should organized labor support your campaign? Please explain.

Throughout my 23 years in City Council, I have worked productively and consistently with organized labor. Most recently, have supported Fire & Police in our attempts to preserve/restore "20-and-out" retirement for active members and supported successful pension amendments for at least minimal benefits to surviving F&P spouses. Have introduced legislation to allow Hilton Hotel banquet workers to negotiate for a share of gratuities. Expanded sprinkler requirements to newly constructed single family homes. Introduced legislation which requires Living Wage for all employees of Baltimore City's major retailers.

2. Have you ever been a member of union? No.

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3. What experience or training do you have that qualifies you for the position you are seeking?

I am a teacher by profession and the parent and grandparent of 7 past/current students of the Baltimore City Public Schools. I have earned BA and MA degrees in my field of concentration as well as Ph.D credits. Long before seeking office, I served as president and director of an umbrella community organization serving many neighborhoods in my future City Council districts. I have served for 23 years in the Baltimore City Council, including as president.

4. In your opinion what are the three most crucial issues facing your constituents?

Need for: career jobs with benefits, reduction in crime, youth opportunities.

5. Under a Labor Peace Agreement, the company agrees to a fair and democratic process (neutrality/card check) for its employees to use to achieve union representation, should said employees choose to unionize. Would you sponsor or support legislation that would make private companies, such as hotels, that receive public assistance in the form of tax breaks, payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT), or other forms of public subsidy, be required to agree to a Labor Peace Agreement? YES.

6. Would you sponsor and/or support legislation that would require final and binding arbitration of all labor disputes by public employees? YES, depending on specific provisions of proposed legislation. (Please advise.)

7. Would you sponsor and/or support legislation for pay and benefit parity between fire and police? YES.

8. What can the city do to improve economic development to attract and/or retain businesses?

Focus our resources on developing and promoting a significant home-grown workforce through improved public education and affordable post-secondary training and education. Reduce crime and improve public transportation as two components of retaining graduates of our local colleges and universities and attracting other young and well-trained people to pursue careers here in Baltimore. Buy local. Hire local. Promote union and Living Wage jobs to minimize marginal employment among Baltimore City residents.

9. How would you address the increasing health care cost for active and retired city employees?

As the economy improves, systematically phase-in restoration of the City's "recession-reductions" to health care contributions, beginning with relief to the City's lowest compensated employees and retirees.

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10. Do you believe that government often looks to privatization as a way to save money or increase efficiency? When do you believe public services should be privatized?

Yes. Government is generally inclined to believe that privatization saves money and increases efficiency. My experience is that such presumed benefits are better achieved by reorganization of unsatisfactory public services while retaining direct public oversight and accountability.

11. Would you support the elimination of the current practice of rotational closure of fire suppression units as a budgeting mechanism?

YES. I do and I have vehemently supported an end of all rotational closures.

12. What would you do to encourage people to move to the city?

Reduce crime. Improve our public schools. Clean the streets. Improve public transportation. Offer "dollar house" initiatives for urban pioneering.

13. What are your views on the role of labor unions in society?

I am a strong supporter of labor unions. I have seen the injustices that occur when individual workers are left to their own devices.

14. Would you sponsor and/or support the continuation of fully funding education at the level designated by the Thornton Commission? Why?

YES absolutely. This reform was enacted in transparency and fairness; is relied upon by our families; and, has proved effective in improving student achievement.

15. Do you support the Race to the Top and its effect on the education systems in Maryland? YES.

16. Explain any ideas about raising revenues to fund services for the public?

Are you willing to partner with public sector unions in these efforts?

To avoid a \$121 deficit in FY2011, we filled about 40% of that gap through new fees and taxes, furloughs, and shifts of higher health care costs to Baltimore City employees and retirees. I will partner with our public unions to discuss what to do next, but I oppose increasing the burden on our taxpayers, employees or retirees any further.

17. Is there a pension crisis? How would you address structural issues in the Baltimore City Pension system?

Baltimore City's 3 pension systems (F&P, ERS, EOS) are not in crisis. Yes, all 3 have felt the effect of plunges in anticipated investment returns, leading to higher public investment requirements. The elimination of variable

benefits, agreed to by retiree representatives, eliminated the FY2011 F&P deficit. We could and should have preserved "20 & Out" for current F&P active members and adjusted to "25 & Out" for new employees.

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18. Explain position on Baltimore City's Maintenance of Effort Requirements and your position's effect on public employees and education employees.

Maintenance of Effort is the minimum local support required for each Maryland subdivision's public school system's operating budget. I support full funding of this requirement --- and more --- as a local budget priority.

19. Do you feel the Mayor and City Council should stop rotating closures in the Baltimore City Fire Department and keep all units open 24-7--365 days a year as budgeted?

ABSOLUTELY YES, for safety's sake. Requires adding \$5 million to budget.

20. In a democracy, the citizens are given the right to elect their representatives. The Baltimore City School Board of Commissioners currently is comprised of all appointed members. What are your thoughts on giving citizens the right to elect, if not all, a percentage of the representatives to that Board?

I could support some mix of appointed and elected School Board members, to ensure a healthy balance of stability and responsiveness.

21. Would you support reduced class sizes in Baltimore City Public Schools?

In 1979, then-Councilman Kweisi Mfume and I introduced the first Baltimore City legislation (a proposed Charter amendment) to require reduced class sizes in the Baltimore City Public Schools. As a teacher, parent and grandparent, I support reduced class size now more than ever.

School leaders and teachers report a growing need for individual attention to students, more and more of whom arrive at school in distraught conditions. To help these children settle-in and receive the help they need --- and to still offer productive instruction to the majority of students --- teachers need back-up resources, classroom assistance and a manageable class size accommodating as much individual attention as possible.

May we make this questionnaire public? Yes X

Signature

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Return questionnaire to:

Metropolitan Baltimore Council AFL-CIO COPE
2701 W. Patapsco Avenue #110
Baltimore, Maryland 21230

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