



AFT-MD Candidate Questionnaire for Baltimore City Races

The AFT-Maryland is a federation on local unions of the AFT within the state, including the Baltimore Teachers Union and the City Union of Baltimore—whose members work for the city—as well as state employee members of the Maryland Professional Employees Council, AFT Healthcare-Maryland, and the Maryland Classified Employee Association. Together, with the Baltimore County Federation of Public Employees, AFT-Maryland has thousands of members who are citizens of Baltimore City, as well as thousands of members who work to make Baltimore City a better place for its citizens and children.

The AFT-Maryland has prepared the following questionnaire for candidates running for office in Baltimore City as a means to familiarize the candidates with issues that our members care about most. It also allows us the chance to see where the candidates stand on these issues.

AFT-Maryland locals participate fully in the endorsement process of the Metropolitan Baltimore AFL-CIO Council; the council will announce its final endorsements sometime in February 2016. However, because we are a large contingency within the Baltimore AFL-CIO, the unions of the AFT-Maryland have a heavy influence on who Labor chooses as its candidates for endorsement.

Please take the time to complete this candidate questionnaire. It may be returned to

Todd Reynolds, Political Coordinator
AFT-Maryland, AFL-CIO
5800 Metro Drive, Suite 100
Baltimore, MD 21215

Fax: 410-764-3008
Email: treynolds@aftmd.org

Please return this completed questionnaire no later than February 5th, 2016, at 5pm. If you have any questions, please contact Todd Reynolds, AFT-Maryland Political Coordinator, at 410-764-3030.

2016 Candidate Questionnaire—BALTIMORE CITY RACES
AFT-Maryland

Candidate for Mayor

Candidate's name: Patrick Gutierrez

Address: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Occupation: Writer

Who is your employer? Baltimore's Child Magazine

May we make your answers to our questionnaire public? Yes

Party affiliation (circle one):

Democrat

Republican

Independent

Other (please specify) _____

Have you received an endorsement from a labor union? If so, which ones?

No.

Have you ever held elected office? No

When? N/A

General

1. The AFT-Maryland is a federation of numerous employee unions, including Baltimore City teachers and paraprofessional and school-related personnel (BTU); Baltimore City employees (CUB); as well county and state employees; public health professionals; and higher education workers. Why should we support your campaign?

Because you and all city employees deserve a much better work environment than the one you have now and it starts with better leadership and management of the city's people and its resources. You deserve to feel appreciated, respected, and rewarded for your work. You deserve to be given the adequate tools, training, resources and support to do your best work, and to feel genuinely inspired to come to work every day. You deserve to not be scapegoated for the city's problems when in fact it's poor leadership and mismanagement that is truly to blame. You deserve a leader who has made a career out of creating exactly the kind of work environment described above time and time again, and as a result has been universally loved and respected by employees at every level, everywhere I've been. There is no doubt if I am given the opportunity I will do the same thing for Baltimore and your members will be happy I did.

2. Have you ever been a member of a union? If yes, please give the union name, local number, and date.

Yes, I was a proud member of UFCW Local 1167 from 1988-1990 and a proud member of the WBNG – TNG-CWA Local 32035 from 2008-2010.

Worker Rights

3. Should Baltimore City librarians be granted the right to engage in collective bargaining? Should employees of the Baltimore Convention Center? If you are elected to office, will you work to expand collective bargaining rights to public employees who currently do not have that right?

Yes they should and yes I would. The opportunity to participate in collective bargaining should be extended to everyone.

4. Many cities nationwide have passed ordinances that raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour. Would you be in favor of Baltimore raising its minimum wage to \$15 per hour? Why or why not?

I would be in favor of this for a variety of reasons, but mostly because it works. Giving people a living wage is an important tool that they can use to pull themselves out of poverty and begin to build the kind of equity that can have a lasting effect on their families for generations to come. It will help stimulate the economy and create jobs, and it will allow people more freedom to explore and expand on what life has to offer them.

5. Retirement for city workers: defined benefit versus defined contribution. The city of Baltimore has been discussing moving from a defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan (401K) for its employees' retirement. Do you support such a plan? Why or why not?

I do support such a plan because it has proven to be more cost-effective while still achieving the overall goal of helping employees plan for retirement.

The Role of Public Education in Baltimore City

6. What do you think are some of the biggest problems facing Baltimore City public schools today? If elected, how would you help solve these problems?

Poor leadership, ineffective management, and too much bureaucracy are some of the biggest problems facing Baltimore City Public Schools today. Our entire model is outdated and ill-suited for the unique challenges we face here in Baltimore and the results clearly indicate that.

If elected I would move to empower schools, communities and parents to work together to come up with an individual school model that fits the specific needs of that neighborhood, since

they know better than anyone what their children need. This could mean changes in school size, structure, curriculum, and whatever else makes sense for a particular community.

I would also work to ensure that more students arrive to Kindergarten ready to learn. That means working towards universal Pre-K, and whole-home education which will incorporate joint learning opportunities for parents and siblings as well.

And I would expand Career Training Education beginning in middle school to give students even more reasons to want to come to school every day, especially those who are not responding to the academic approach and end up dropping out because they have no other options.

7. Community Schools: Beginning in August 2015, Baltimore City will have 51 of its public schools serving as a designated community school. A community school is a public school that partners with some entity (UM-Baltimore or the Baltimore YMCA, just to name a few examples) to provide either after-school academic or social services to both students and members of the community. Would you be in favor of expanding the Community School Strategy in Baltimore by working to make more Baltimore City public schools community schools? If so, why? If not, why not?

Yes, definitely. Ideally I would like to see every school partnered with a local entity and the community school model has proven to be very successful.

8. Public Charter Schools: There are just over 40 charter schools in the state of Maryland, and the vast majority of them reside in Baltimore City. The large, out-of-state charter operators would like to weaken state law to make teachers and staff employees of the charter board, rather than employees of Baltimore City Public Schools. This would remove all protections that teachers and staff have under the collective bargaining agreement between the teachers union and the school board. This would also limit oversight of these privately run public schools by taking them out from under the purview of BCPS, as well as giving these charters a "blank check waiver" from any local school board policy. Should charter school teachers and staff be considered employees of the charter school or of the local school board? Should oversight of these schools be weakened?

I will empower each school to decide for themselves how they want to be considered. I don't think oversight of any school should be weakened, in fact I intend to strengthen oversight of every school while at the same time giving every one of them the freedom to operate as they see fit and holding them accountable to the results.

9. Charter School funding. There has been a long-running dispute between certain charter school operators and Baltimore Public Schools over appropriate funding. As a feature of being a public charter school in Baltimore, the charters are largely given cash—calculated on a per pupil basis—from the district in lieu of the services that the central administration provides

neighborhood schools. Most recently, the system presented a per pupil funding formula that mandated funds intended for students living in poverty or who are English language learners actually receive those funds. Some charter operators have countered with a lawsuit, arguing that those special funds for high-poverty students or ESOL be distributed to every student equally, regardless of need. How do you think BCPS should calculate its charter school per pupil funding model?

I believe the funding model needs a complete overhaul and as part of that should take into consideration the various special needs of students, whether as part of the model itself, or as a separate item in education, or another part of the budget altogether. Regaining control of the school system would also be something I would advocate for so that we could better serve the needs of each community.

10. School vouchers: should government give out vouchers (either a tax credit, or even a tax rebate) to parents who want to send their children to a private school? Please explain your answer.

No, a voucher alone would not be enough to cover the cost of a private school education so that particular incentive would be lost on those families who would most benefit.

11. Education funding: This past year, lawmakers in Annapolis severely cut education to Baltimore City schools. Some in Annapolis have argued that the city should be contributing more to public schools, as property values (especially in and around the Inner Harbor area) have rapidly increased. Do you agree with this assessment?

Sadly, because of all the TIF's being given out, the rise in property values has not coincided with an additional infusion of cash from property taxes so I disagree with this assessment.

12. Some current members of the Baltimore City Council have proposed a city charter amendment that would guarantee 3% of the city's budget for youth programs in the city, like recreation programs, youth mentorship, and afterschool programs. Would you be in favor of such a charter amendment? Why or why not?

I am all for increasing spending on youth programs (in fact it's a central part of my campaign), but as mayor I would prefer to maintain the flexibility needed to craft the budget as the immediate needs dictate and not be tied to any type of guarantee in any one specific area therefore I am not in favor of this specific charter amendment at this time.

13. Due to the limited number of certified nurses in Baltimore City Public Schools, administrators and/or staff are forced to administer medication to students, share nurses between multiple school locations, and utilize part-time nurses. How would you help solve this issue?

One way is to partner with more professionals in the medical industry to help provide the coverage we need where it's needed most on a volunteer and/or low cost basis. Another is to manage the city's resources more efficiently overall, which will free up money that can be used to hire and retain more nurses. We would also look at providing incentives to working professionals like nurses to live in the city and work for BCPS so we could help fill the shortage.

14. Currently, all seats on the Baltimore City School Board are appointed. Legislation is introduced almost every year to allow for at least a partially elected school board. Would you be in favor of such legislation?

No. We will be more effective if we have people on the board who share our vision for how are going to bring about improvement in the city and BCPS.

15. Violence in the city schools. What do you think is the best strategy to assure that our school buildings are safe and welcoming environments for children, teachers, and other education professionals in Baltimore City?

I think the best strategy is to focus on prevention and that means universal Pre-K and whole-home education to improve kindergarten readiness, re-designing the school model to allow each neighborhood school the flexibility to serve the students in their particular neighborhood in the manner they deem most appropriate, adding or increasing services like group and individual therapy, life skills, and character coaching as part of the curriculum, expanding career training education, and integrating the police officers into this model so they can build a better relationship with the students, faculty and staff and be able to head off incidents before they occur.

Vision for Baltimore City

16. The city has begun shutting the water off for accounts that are delinquent by more than \$250. It has started to turn off the water for both individual accounts and business accounts. Do you agree with this plan? Why or why not?

No I do not agree. There needs to be more factors taken into consideration than simply a \$250 threshold. Everything is a situation and each account needs to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis before making such a drastic decision. Furthermore, businesses that owe large amounts should be the priority and those accounts should be settled before the city goes after residents.

17. Privatization. Many rumors have been circulating that the city has been looking into privatizing water services. When, if ever, do you feel it is appropriate to privatize public services or to sell off or privatize city-owned resources?

When the city is doing a poor job managing a public service, and shows no signs of being able to reverse course, and there is ample evidence that shows a private company can manage it better

and cheaper, than I would say it's appropriate to consider privatization. The management piece, not sell off altogether. For an example of this, look at the Royal Farms Arena. While changing nothing structurally, the arena is now booking world-class acts on a regular basis after privatizing the management of it.

18. There are at least two competing strategies to help the city raise funds for recreation centers: one calls on the city to sell off a number of public parking garages downtown; another calls for the Downtown Hilton to be sold. Do you prefer one plan over the other? Or a different plan to raise revenues for more rec centers? Do you think raising more funds for recreation centers should be a priority for city leaders? Why or why not?

I prefer both. The city does not need to be in the business of managing hotels or parking garages. It should focus on providing good government and services to its residents. My plan calls for managing our resources more efficiently which will result in additional funding being made available for recreation centers as well as engaging with corporate partners to help offset the costs. I absolutely believe it should be a priority for city leaders to raise more funds for recreation centers and it is definitely one of my priorities.

19. The City is entertaining proposals to build a trash incinerator near Curtis Bay, located less than one mile away from Benjamin Franklin High School and Curtis Bay Elementary school. Supporters claim this incinerator will create much-needed jobs for the community. Opponents argue that incinerators pollute even more than coal-burning power plants, and should not be constructed so close to public schools. What is your position on the construction of a trash incinerator in Curtis Bay?

I am against it for the reasons stated.

20. According to some statistics, there are approximately 16,000 vacant buildings and 14,000 vacant lots in Baltimore. Combined they total 30,000 vacant properties within the city limits, and play a large role in contributing to crime and other problems facing the city. More than 75% of all vacant property in Baltimore city is privately owned. How can we fix this problem and make sure land is being used effectively and efficiently in Baltimore?

By completely overhauling the process by which the city deals with landlords of those vacant buildings. The current process fails to get results. The new process will be more streamlined across the board and the penalties will be more severe and more swiftly administered.

I will also look to hire locally when it comes time to tearing down and/or renovating vacant houses. I will empower local groups to make something useful of those properties via land trusts, as well as give residents an opportunity to purchase and rehab those houses cheaply.