



AFT-Maryland Candidate Questionnaire for Baltimore City Races

The AFT-Maryland is a federation of 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 Employees 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

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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 of Baltimore** _____

Candidate's name Catherine E. Pugh

Address HQ: 1030 N. Charles, Baltimore, MD 21201

Phone

Email

Occupation St. Senator Who is your employer? State of Maryland

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?

Have you ever held elected office? When?

I served on the Baltimore City Council, District 4, 1999-2003; I served in the MD House of Delegates 2005-2007; and I currently serve in the MD State Senate, 2007- Present

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?

Creating a first class public school system that promotes learning and prepares our students for careers and college will be among my education goals. This is essential for our students and necessary for the growth of our city in population, job opportunities and business development. Among corporate executives influences in selecting a business location or expansion is the quality of education that exist in a local system. I want those businesses to be in Baltimore. Also I have supported and

remain committed to fair and impartial processes that benefit labor unions and its members. Throughout my career I have worked for protecting and expanding collective bargaining rights, protections for working men and women, raising the minimum wage and job training for those that need it.

2. Have you ever been a member of a union? If yes, please give the union name, local number, and date. **No**

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, I would. My history is one of supporting workers to bargain collectively. For example, I have been the lead sponsor on several pieces of collective bargaining legislation. Back in 2012 I was the lead sponsor of a bill that expanded the collective bargaining for state employees of four agencies: the Comptroller, Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) -- those who were not already covered as police officers, the State Retirement Agency and the State Department of Education (MSDE). It became law in May 2012. This year I am the lead sponsor of SB363, which expands collective bargaining for all non-management employees at all Maryland community colleges.**
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? **Yes, I would. I am aware of the current initiative to raise the minimum wage in the City Council to \$15 per hour and when it reaches my desk I will sign it.**
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? **The pension system is a sacred contract between the City of Baltimore and its employees. As the City's Mayor, I will do whatever it takes to ensure that we keep up our end of bargain. If we move from a defined benefit to a defined contribution would only occur if we get agreement from all parties without that understanding I would remain with the defined benefit because that is what was agreed to.**

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?

In comparison to other jurisdictions Baltimore City contributes less to the funding of its public schools than almost any other jurisdiction. The 2015 contribution by the city to our schools represents approximately 20% of the city's budget in comparison to the surrounding 23 counties who contribute between 35-50% of their budgets to education. If education is a priority, and it will be, then the contribution from the city must increase. The goal of my administration is to increase the city's contribution over the next few years to 25% and to reach as high as 30-35% during my first term of office. Obviously this will require not only scrubbing the city's budget to identify how every dollar and penny is currently being spent but prioritizing the allocation of city dollars for future spending.

7. Community Schools: Beginning in August 2015, Baltimore City will have 51 of its public schools serving as designated community schools. 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?

The idea of community schools is to both be responsive to the specific needs of a community and to provide comprehensive wrap around services to the students and their families who attend. Having built the first brand new school in Baltimore in 30 years, the Baltimore Design School, I believe in community schools because our school is designed with its full service health suite to provide health services for the community. We also open it up to community groups and organizations to facilitate the needs of the community.

8. Public Charter Schools: There are just over 40 public 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?

Charter Schools must have the same levels of accountability and transparency as our Public Schools. All teachers of Baltimore are an essential cog in the wheel educating Baltimore's children. There should be no separation. Charter School employees should be entitled to their choice of representation in collective bargaining agreements just like any other employee of the school system.

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 support regaining local control of our schools that is why I have introduced SB640, which eliminates state control on our city. After fighting to get control of our schools it would be unwise to have school entities that do not have the same level of accountability and transparency as Baltimore City Public Schools use those scare dollars. I am committed to creating a first class public school system.

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.

I believe private schooling is a choice. To provide a government subsidy in the form of vouchers erodes a public school system that I am committed to strengthening. Furthermore, many charter schools are not subject to the same anti-discrimination policies for homeless youth, disabled children and LGBT youth as our public schools are.

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?

The cuts in education funding from the state to Baltimore is wrong. That is the reason I support a poverty based measure in the state's formula instead of a wealth based one. I do agree that the city should contribute more of its resources to the school system. Currently, the city of Baltimore contributes just 20% of the total school budget where other jurisdictions contribute between 35% and 55% of their budget to its schools. As a Mayor who plans to once again be responsible for Baltimore City Public Schools my commitment is to finding the resources within the city budget to bring Baltimore City's contribution closer to parity with other jurisdictions in Maryland.

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?

Baltimore City under a Pugh Administration would not need a charter amendment to ensure quality and comprehensive youth services are available across the city. The evidence is clear that these types of services are critical to interrupting the shameful youth to prison pipeline that exists today.

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?

It is unacceptable to ask non-trained school personnel to do the job of a healthcare professional. Not only is it unfair to the employee but it is unsafe for our children. For this reason, my commitment to you is finding the resources to within the city budget to ensure that this dilemma is not an option.

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?

Yes, I would. I want to ensure we have the flexibility to ensure that community leaders, fiscal experts, educators, parents, and students have the opportunity to be on the board and participate in the continued reformation of the school system.

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 believe we should create a culture of awareness around each school. One idea would be to bring back the public safety patrols. It can empower a community. We must make the effort to ensure Baltimore's children are able to learn in a safe environment. Our schools should be a safety zone from violence.

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?

Shutting off someone's water for \$250 is a sign of symptomatic problems at home. I think we should set up a fund with the help of the businesses and the city to assist these families and we can engage in an intervention program to prevent the reoccurrence. You can't live without water and we must find reasonable ways to help those in need. My pledge would be that the first priority in curing delinquencies in water bills would be targeting large businesses and other commercial institutions before targeting the residential accounts of our seniors and others in need.

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?

I can't think of a current situation where we should privatize essential services.

However, it is important for us to invest in our infrastructure in an adequate way so they are not so costly to maintain. We can't know what our priorities should be until we know what is working and what is not. One of the reasons we need an audit of all agencies is to determine what is needed. Public services represent a core component of the contract between our city and our citizens. There should be both transparency and direct accountability to the Mayor on behalf of those providing such services.

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?

Because I believe in a community based school system, a key ingredient is support for after school programs and support for recreation centers. I am concerned that the city owns a hotel. Traditionally cities are not in the hotel business. We should determine its future. When I am the Mayor, I will make a commitment to the after school programs and recreation centers to give our children a place to play and develop the skills that are beyond the bounds of traditional classroom learning.

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 think it is incumbent as leaders to evaluate and determine the environmental impact such as an incinerator has on the health of the children and adults. Before a Pugh Administration would consider allowing such a facility to operate they would have to be a comprehensive assessment of the risks involved. Job creation and economic development will be among my Administration's top priorities but not at the risk of the health and well-being of the community.

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?

As your next Mayor, I would issue a notice within 90 days of entering office to the owners of vacant properties that they have to improve their properties or be subject to their land being returned to the city's rolls. Once those properties have been returned to the city, we would open a Land Bank to facilitate the development of this land and return to this dormant property to the tax rolls. I was always in favor of William Donald Schaefer's one dollar homes to get residents to rebuild this city. Working with the business community there will be a prime opportunity to develop the shops, grocery stores, needed by returning residents so that our neighborhoods can grow and prosper.