

Rose - Dist. 7

## 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, the Maryland Classified Employees Association, and Maryland School for the Deaf. Together, with the Baltimore County Federation of Public Employees and the Baltimore County Federation of Public Health Nurses, AFT-Maryland has thousands of members who are citizens of the city of Baltimore, as well as thousands of members who work to make Baltimore a better place for its residents.

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 Late February 2020. 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 by no later than January 17th, 2020, at 5:00 p.m.

If you have any questions, please contact Todd Reynolds, AFT-Maryland Political Coordinator, at 410-764-3030 or [treynolds@aftmd.org](mailto:treynolds@aftmd.org).

Email address \*

[REDACTED]



Candidate Information

Name

Tori Rose

Candidate for:

Baltimore City Council District 7

Home address

City, ZIP code

Phone

Email address

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Present occupation

Teacher

.....

Employer

Baltimore County

.....

Party affiliation

Democrat

.....

Have you ever been endorsed by a labor union? If so, which one(s) and when?

No

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Have you ever held elected office? If so, when?

No

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Candidate Questionnaire

Please note the AFT-Maryland plans to make these questionnaires public. Only candidates agreeing to this provision are eligible to be invited to any future AFT-Maryland Candidate forum for the 2020 Election.

## General Questions

1. The AFT-Maryland is a federation of numerous public employee unions, including Baltimore city educators (Baltimore Teachers Union, or BTU, Local 340) and municipal employees (City Union of Baltimore, or CUB, Local 800). Why should we support your campaign?

The AFT-Maryland should support my campaign because I am a progressive candidate working to advocate for the rights of the middle class as well as those people in my community who are under represented. I am running a grassroots campaign that focuses on enhancing the quality of life for all.

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

Yes, I was a member of the AFGE -Local 1923. From July 2007 to February 2014, I was a bargaining employee with the Social Security Administration and a member of AFGE FL-CIO the largest federal employee Union representing more than 30,000 federal employees.

## Questions on Worker Rights

3. Collective bargaining for city employees: Should Baltimore City librarians and those who work for the Enoch Pratt Public Library System be granted the right to engage in collective bargaining? Should employees of the Baltimore Convention Center be granted the right to collective bargaining? If you are elected to office, will you work to expand collective bargaining rights to municipal employees who currently do not have that right?

Yes. I believe all municipal employees deserve the right to bargain. When I am elected to office I will work to expand the collective bargaining rights to municipal employees.

4. Minimum wage: In the 2019 Legislative session, the state passed a minimum wage law that excluded tipped workers and did not link the minimum wage to inflation. In addition, the state's minimum wage won't reach \$15 per hour until 2025. Would you be in favor of Baltimore City linking the minimum wage to inflation, and removing the exclusion for tipped workers? Would you be in favor of removing the delay and closing these loopholes in raising the minimum wage?

Yes, I would support initiatives and work to pass legislation to remove the delay and to close minimum wage loopholes. I've already been committed to this fight. I've allowed organizers of the "Fight for 15" to hold meetings in my home to educate black professional women and my neighbors on the importance of every one having access to fair wages.

5. Retirement for city workers - Defined Benefit versus Defined Contribution: The City of Baltimore has in the past discussed moving from a defined benefit to a defined contribution plan (401k) for its employees' retirement. Do you support such a move? Why or why not?

As a recent employee of the federal government and having seen the inner workings of the 401K plan, I cannot support it. I believe in a defined benefit plan that gives employees retirement security and allows for an opportunity to comparatively have in your retirement what you would have been earning in your yearly income.

6. Retirement benefits for educators and city workers: Over the past few years, retired educators and employees of Baltimore City have had concerns that, just as the state did to its public workers, the city will discontinue the retiree prescription drug benefit and move all retirees to Medicare Part D for prescriptions. If elected to office, do you pledge to never vote to move retired educators and city employees to Medicare Part D for their prescription benefits?

When elected to office, I pledge to never vote to move retired educators and city employees to Medicare Part D for their prescription benefits. Educators and city workers who served for the best years of their lives, serving the cities while in the best of their mental health and physical health deserve to have their health needs met for the duration of their lives.

7. Safe working conditions for city employees: This past year, a number of city employees have been severely injured—and in at least one case, killed—on the job. Whether it be Transportation Safety Officers merely directing traffic, DPW workers inspecting our water reclamation systems, or Department of Transportation officers needing to repair damaged roads—all employees deserve the right to work in safe conditions. Far too often, city workers feel the leadership of various city departments are either unaware of or completely ignore workplace safety protocols. If you are elected to office in Baltimore City, will you support a law requiring the various city departments to partner with Maryland Occupational Safety and Health to do a no-cost, wall-to-wall inspection of all city workplace facilities to help identify potential employee safety hazards?

YES, when I am elected to office in Baltimore City, I will support a law requiring the various city departments to partner with Maryland Occupational Safety and Health to do a no-cost, wall-to-wall inspection of all city workplace facilities to help identify potential employee safety hazards.

#### Public Education in Baltimore City

8. General: What do you think are the three biggest problems facing Baltimore City public schools? If elected, how will you solve these problems?

1. Poor Funding/ Lack of Funding 2. Underpaid/ Under-supported teachers 3. Inability to create a stronger relationship with students/parents/teacher... Community partnership.

When elected, I will continue to advocate for Maryland State and the Kirwan Commission better fund our schools. I will demand pay and benefit increases for the teachers, staff, and school counselors. I also will work diligently to support and foster healthier relationships between the schools and the community. The parents, teachers, students, and overall community have to see themselves as stakeholders in the success of our children.

9. Appointments to the City School Board: Just recently, a law was passed that gave the mayor (but not the city council) more authority in choosing the members of the city's school board. What role do you think the city council should play in this process? What should be the qualities Baltimore should prioritize in choosing a member of the city's school board? Would you commit to only support a candidate for local school board with at least 3 years of classroom experience (as a teacher, or a teacher's aide, for example) working in a public school system?

I think the City Council should have more of a voice in these decision making processes. In my opinion, it is the role of the city council to ensure the voices, needs, and opinions of the people are being heard. This is important to keep the community's needs and the student's needs represented and at the center of discussions and legislation. We want to ensure and restore community participation in Baltimore City Schools. Members of the school board should be elected, they should represent the needs of the children, parents, and community. They should have experience as traditional or non-traditional teachers and they should have a background in understanding budgets, financial management and/or strategic planning.

10. Baltimore City School Board: In 2022, Baltimore City will finally be allowed to vote two additional members to the school board. Baltimore City is currently the only jurisdiction in the state whose entire School Board of Commissioners is appointed. In 2022 the board will expand from 10 to 12 seats, with the two additional seats being elected rather than appointed. Of the 23 other Maryland County School Boards, 19 are fully elected, and four are an appointed/elected hybrid, with only Wicomico County having more appointed than elected positions. If elected, would you support legislation transitioning Baltimore City to a fully elected or hybrid board with the majority of seats being elected? What is the optimal structure for Baltimore City's School Board and why?

When elected, I would support legislation transitioning Baltimore City to a fully elected or hybrid board with the majority of the seats being held by elected officials chosen by the community. This is important to keep the community's needs and the student's needs represented and at the center of discussions and legislation. We want to ensure and restore community participation in Baltimore City Schools. Members of the school board should be elected, they should represent the needs of the children, parents, and community.

11. Student and staff safety: A number of recent, high-profile incidents of violence in our schools have drawn attention to questions of student discipline. Additionally, in surveys to families about reservations on enrolling their children in a BCPSS school, student safety is cited as their #1 concern. Generally, employees of the school system have questioned the current code of conduct as ineffective, whereby students are suspended from school only to return when the suspension is over with the same underlying issues. Are there any revisions to the code of conduct for student behavior that you feel should be considered?

Yes there are revisions that I feel should be considered, especially those concerning suspension times for students who have several offenses of the same nature. I would suggest creating a stronger line of communication between the school and the police when students are involved in violent aggressive assaults, and ensuring that our top priority is fair and equitable approaches to keeping our children and teachers safe.

12. Baltimore's population loss has contributed to enrollment declines in City Schools. Lower enrollment has also been caused by under-investment fueled by systemic racism that's lowered the quality of City Schools' programming. As part of the 21st Century Schools initiative, Baltimore was required to close a number of schools in order to qualify for renovation funds. School closures have also been triggered by low achievement, as part of the district's portfolio approach to schools. These policies have resulted in a disproportionate number of vacant schools in black neighborhoods that are already under-resourced. If elected, what is your plan to utilize these potential community resources?

When elected, I will work to establish coalitions with the school board, nonprofit organizations and the community to ensure we take into account the needs of children and parents living in low income and poor neighborhoods. I plan to pass legislation that creates sustainability for after school programs, recreational and centers, vocational programs, and other social services necessary for the success of our city's children, and children throughout of state.



13. In Baltimore, as across the nation, school zones and neighborhood boundaries have historically served to limit access to high quality public schools. While Baltimore City Public Schools students in middle and high school are assigned to schools through a complicated "school choice" process, students in elementary schools are still largely assigned to schools based on enrollment zones. These zones were created over a generation ago, and in the years since, population shifts (notably large growth southeast Baltimore of the English Language Learner population, which required additional services and support) have resulted in several schools being overcrowded, while others are under-enrolled. Additionally, the school district's Equity Policy requires it to examine its plans and practices to determine and address the ways they exacerbate racial and economic inequity. In order to meet the needs of Baltimore families, and move towards a more just and equitable school system, a comprehensive redistricting plan should be completed, involving the coordination of the Baltimore City Planning Department and Baltimore City Public Schools. However, changing neighborhood boundaries causes significant public backlash. If elected, would you support school redistricting and would you direct the Baltimore City Planning Department to partner with City Schools to create a comprehensive plan?

Yes, I would support school structuring that brings balances and equity to the educational system in Baltimore city. We need to evaluate practices to determine and address the ways they exacerbate racial and economic inequity. I would sponsor and support legislation that moves towards a more just and equitable school system and a comprehensive redistricting plan which includes input from the community and parents. I would work for the support of each individual child, and work for the schools to have nurses and mental health staff in each school.

14. Public Charter Schools: There are 50 public charter schools in the state of Maryland, the vast majority of which are in Baltimore City. Some charter school operators would like to weaken state law to make the teachers and staff at the charter employees of the charter non-profit board, not the school system. This would remove all protections that the teachers and staff have under the BTU collective bargaining agreement. Should charter school teachers and staff be considered employees of the charter school board or the city's public school board?

The teachers and staff should continue to be protected under the BTU's collective bargaining agreement. We do not want to disenfranchise them.

15. Should there be a cap on the number of charter schools in Baltimore City? Why or why not?

Yes, there should be a cap on the number of charter schools in Baltimore especially if the funding source for the charter schools are the same tax payer dollars that would normally fund standard public schools. We need to focus on funding and stabilizing the schools.

16. BOOST/School Vouchers: Should government give vouchers (either as a tax credit or even a tax rebate) to parents who want to send their children to a private school?

No, the government should not give vouchers to parents who want to send their children to a private school. Public funding should be used to ensure that all students have access to a quality public education. Voucher programs divert funding away from public schools and the children who need it most. Allowing these voucher create issues of discrimination, racial disparities, and potential discrimination of specific groups of students altogether.

17. Education funding: Some in Annapolis have argued that Baltimore City should be contributing more to its public school system than is currently budgeted. The city ranks among the worst in Maryland when it comes to the local contribution to its public school system; while on average a county in Maryland contributes roughly 36% of its annual operating budget to its local school system, in Baltimore, the city contributes only 14% of its budget to its schools. The Kirwan Commission is recommending the city increase its contribution by \$300 million, more than doubling its current contribution.

17(a) How large of an increase, percentage wise, should Baltimore City commit in its budget to funding public schools?

Yes, when I am elected I would commit to raising the city's contribution to funding public schools. The percentage of the budget I believe should be allocated is at least 25%. Raising the % to at least 25% allows the needs of students living in or below poverty and students who have additional challenges and are in need of additional mental health and community support to receive the resources they need. We also need to raise more money for public schools, and we can collectively be more creative than the current way of relying on lottery or slots revenues. Additionally, funding for schools should come from the police budget which is extremely high.

17(b) In order to meet Kirwan obligations, how would you propose raising that additional \$300 million?

In addition to my answer in 17(a), I would recommend that we reallocate funding that has gone to the Baltimore Police Department. The police shouldn't be more funded than the schools.

18. In every school district in Maryland the head of the school system is the Superintendent of public schools. However, in the two majority minority school systems—Baltimore City and Prince George's County—the head of the school system is instead titled the CEO of public schools. This title change, while subtle, has been significant: since the switch to a more corporate-based model with this title change, these two districts have seen a substantial portion of their schools become charters, and an overall explosion in the amount of standardized testing has followed. If elected to office, will you be in favor of returning the title of the head of our public school system to "Superintendent" so as to be identical with other school districts in Maryland? Why or why not?

Yes, we want to be consistent with the rest of the state.

### Vision for Baltimore City

19. Privatization: Recently, CUB and AFT-Maryland worked with the City Council and Food and Water Watch to pass a city charter amendment that would prohibit our water from ever being privatized. Are there other resources that are owned by the city that you believe should never be privatized? When, if ever, do you feel it is appropriate to privatize public services or property?

I do not feel that privatizing public services is right at all. I especially do not think education, police departments, hospitals or jails should be privatized.

20. Development: In 2016, the city passed a multi-billion dollar re-development plan, supported by a \$535 million TIF request to develop Port Covington. Opponents worried development projects such as these, funded through public tax revenues, will be used not to the betterment of all in the city, but instead to the betterment of wealthy elites, widening the gap between the haves and have-nots in Baltimore. Do you have a vision for development in Baltimore City that...

20(a) ...assures neighborhoods will contain equitable amounts of low-income and affordable housing?

I think we can innovative and try new approaches to containing equitable amounts of low housing and affordable housing. We can develop housing trust funds, inclusionary zoning, and explore more into the idea of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits. When working with developers, CBAs have to be negotiated with developers that will include incentives for the community and affordable housing for all. I also would like to see mixed income housing with programs that support low income residents with employment and educational help.

20(b) ...will help the city improve its financial contribution to its public school system?

The city shouldn't use TIFs as often as they do. We hurt the school system by giving away money. TIFs give tax breaks to developers coming into the city, while tax breaks don't have a return to the city or to the school system. A percentage of the developer's profit should be recirculated back into the school system.

20(c) ...will be completed by workers who live in and around the Baltimore region, and follow prevailing wage standards and project-labor agreements?

I would support legislation to urge contractors to use prevailing wages, protect labor agreements, and buy Maryland/ buy America first provisions in all state procurement and tax incentive policies. I would suggest Community Advisory Boards to also have a voice at the table.

20(d) ...will contain businesses that must follow labor peace agreements?

I would support legislation urging private companies receiving public assistance to adopt Labor Peace Agreements.

21. Affordable housing: Recently, CUB worked with legislators in Annapolis to pass legislation that would allow the city to grant low-income city employees a property tax credit on their homes. Affordable housing is a priority for city educators as well, as there are more homeless students in Baltimore city than there are total students in some county districts. What is your plan to increase accessibility to quality, stable housing in Baltimore city?

As an educator I know the value of home ownership, and as someone who was homeless while a student in the Baltimore City school system, I know the importance of housing security. We have an opportunity to benchmark from the programs and initiatives other cities have. For example, In D.C., Mayor Bowser recently announced an innovative plan to promote teacher home ownership. We also have a lot of vacant homes in Baltimore with significant blight. I believe we should forge partnerships with organizations like City works, Centers for Urban Families that will help ex-offenders and low income residents learn building trades to repair homes. We need additional wrap around services to provide housing security for homeless children and their families.

22. Crime: Do improved education and expanded city services play significant roles in your plan to reduce crime in Baltimore city? If so, how?

Yes. I am focused on a comprehensive plan to reduce crime and enhance the overall quality of life by creating safer, cleaner, and more sustained communities. The plan operates under the acronym: RISE which stands for RESTORE, INNOVATE, SUPPORT, and EDUCATE. My plan allows for youth and young adults to have access to better quality education and employment support and resources. For example: I will work for the Youth to have 12 month employment opportunities and for small business owners who have hauling trucks to assist with cleaning and hauling the illegal dumping.

Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this candidate questionnaire. If you have any questions, please contact Todd Reynolds, AFT-Maryland Political Coordinator, at (410) 764-3030, or [treyolds@aftmd.org](mailto:treyolds@aftmd.org).



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