

Alec Ross



AFT-Maryland Candidate Questionnaire for Baltimore City Races

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 work to make the region and the state a better place for its residents and children.

The AFT-Maryland has prepared the following questionnaire for candidates running to represent us in Annapolis 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 in early 2018. 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 January 5th, 2018. If you have any questions, please contact Todd Reynolds, AFT-Maryland Political Coordinator, at 410-764-3030.

2018 Candidate Questionnaire—Representation in Annapolis
AFT-Maryland

Candidate for Governor

Candidate's name Alec Ross

Address

Phone

Email

Occupation Author

Who is your employer? Self

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? When?

No

General

1. The AFT-Maryland is a federation of numerous employee unions, including Baltimore City teachers and paraprofessional and school-related personnel (BTU); professional state workers (MPEC—Maryland Professional Employees Council), state healthcare professionals (AFT Healthcare-Maryland), state classified employees (MCEA—Maryland Classified Employees Association); as well county and city employees. Why should we support your campaign?

I'm running for governor of Maryland because I believe that talent is everywhere, but opportunity is not and that needs to change. I grew up in coal country and worked my way through college working partly as a midnight janitor and on a beer truck. I moved to Baltimore 23 years ago to be a Baltimore City

Public Schools teacher and joined the Baltimore Teachers Union while teaching at Booker T. Washington Middle School on the west side.

I fell in love with the teacher across the hall, and we have called Baltimore our home ever since. My wife is in her third decade as an educator in Baltimore City Public Schools, and our three children all attend Baltimore City Public Schools - the oldest at Poly and the two youngest at our zoned elementary school. The path I took after teaching has been full of many incredible risks and opportunities, but I still consider my time as a sixth-grade social studies teacher at Booker T. Washington Middle School to be one of my most significant achievements. It certainly taught me lasting lessons and provided camaraderie with educators all over the state that I still value today.

After teaching, I co-founded a non-profit to help underserved communities gain access to the internet and technology skills. We grew to be a world-leading digital divide organization that has impacted millions of lives. After that, I went to work for Barack Obama leading technology policy on his first presidential campaign in 2007 and 2008, and was then appointed as Senior Advisor for Innovation in the State Department, managing a multi-million dollar portfolio of work and hundreds of staff.

I am the only candidate in this race who has been a public school teacher. I am acutely aware of the everyday feats it takes to serve the youth in our state, and after my time in government, I am also equipped to lead our state as we improve how we fund and manage one of our most important assets - our education system. We have a once every 15 year opportunity with the Kirwan commission, and my background as a teacher guides my belief that we need to reset the funding formula for our schools and bring equity to school financing. This means more funding for our public schools, raises for Maryland teachers, and further professionalizing the role of a teacher.

Improving our education system is one of the primary reasons I am running, but the labor movement could be sure that they would have an ally and a friend in me as governor. I am no stranger to the daily struggles and triumphs of labor, and I would work closely with all our brothers and sisters across the state to represent and respond to their needs in Annapolis.

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

Yes. I was a member of the Baltimore Teachers Union from 1994 - 1996.

Worker Rights

3. Expanding the right to collective bargaining. Right now, even though a number of state employees and public school employees in Maryland have collective bargaining, many still do not. For example, state workers in the judiciary branch; higher education workers like grad students, adjuncts, and tenure-track faculty in the University of Maryland System; and teachers and staff at the Maryland School for the Deaf and at the SEED School; all do not currently enjoy the right to bargain collectively. If elected, will you sponsor legislation to grant these public employees the right to engage in collective bargaining with their employer?

Yes. I'm from a working family, and I know first-hand how difficult it is for working families to get ahead. I've understood from my earliest days on the job how workers need a strong voice and the ability to bargain collectively with employers. Workers' rights are fundamental rights, and we must do everything we can to defend and strengthen them. If we wish to elevate and support *all* of our workers, collective bargaining is an essential part of that process and allows the voices of all educators to be heard. I would work with all parts to sponsor legislation that prioritizes the collective bargaining rights of any public employees that do not currently have them.

I am particularly concerned that the University System has historically been opposed to allowing grad students, adjuncts, and tenure-track faculty the ability to organize and speak collectively. As governor, I will work to open our State's campuses to collective bargaining. We need to have an honest discussion about what kinds of rights these groups have.

4. The Fight for \$15. Many municipalities in Maryland and across the country have introduced ordinances that would raise the minimum wage in that jurisdiction to \$15 per hour. Yet legislation was introduced in Annapolis last year to block local counties and the city from raising the minimum wage above the state level. Should the state bar municipalities from raising their own minimum wage? If so, would you sponsor legislation to raise the state minimum wage to \$15 per hour, indexed to inflation?

I am 100% in support of raising the minimum wage to a living wage of \$15 per hour and indexing it to the rising cost of living. I worked on a beer truck and as a midnight janitor for minimum wage in order to fund much of my college expenses and know first-hand how it feels to receive a check at the end of the week and not know if it will be enough to fund basic living expenses. Paying a fair and living wage to all Marylanders is in the best interest of our state, its economy, and its quality of life. While it is good that we have scheduled increases in the minimum wage, I believe we must further adjust that wage in order to enable many of our workers to rise out of poverty and contribute to the vibrancy of our state's economy.

I believe that until we, as an entire state, prioritize raising the minimum wage, it should not be the prerogative of our state government to block local counties and cities from individually raising the minimum wage in their jurisdictions.

State service/public employee issues and rights

5. Interest binding arbitration. In 2010 Baltimore County Citizens overwhelmingly agreed that it is important to keep government employees focused on their jobs and not in labor contract disputes (especially Public Safety Employees), so they voted to pass a referendum question supporting interest binding arbitration for all County Employees. Baltimore County employees subsequently won the right to have interest binding arbitration to settle disputes or impasses in contract negotiations but those rights were unnecessarily limited through legislation to wages. According to this process, when during the negotiations process, labor or management declare an impasse and cannot agree to certain provisions of the contract, a neutral, 3rd party

professional arbitrator will be called into resolve the dispute. Both the union and management agree that the decision of this arbitrator is binding and final.

Do you support interest binding arbitration for contract negotiations for city, county, state, and federal employees? As an elected official, would you support strengthening those rights for the public employees that fall under your jurisdiction?

I support interest binding arbitration for employees in contract negotiations at all levels in our state and country. This kind of decision-making process creates the fair and level playing field that is so important when it comes to maintaining the rights of all workers. I would support strengthening these rights, because I believe that arbitration increases the validity of the decision, incorporates a greater number of interests and concerns of those involved, and ultimately, leads to a decision that is more nuanced and less costly, both in terms of financial and emotional cost to both parties.

Under Governor Hogan, the State has not arrived at the table prepared to negotiate; instead seeking to dictate terms and conditions of state employees. With no teeth in the current collective bargaining law, with no true independent third party arbitrator prepared to decide impasse, management has no check and balance to their negotiating posture. Collective bargaining rights are important, however arbitration ensures all parties negotiate in good faith.

6. Health Insurance Transparency. Disputes have arisen around employer's self-insured employee healthcare programs. Audits and budget analysis appear to suggest some governments are running for-profit healthcare programs and healthcare surplus funds are being diverted for use in unrelated areas. This clearly suggests that employees are therefore paying much higher than their negotiated healthcare splits for employer self-insured healthcare coverage.

As an elected official, will you sponsor legislation that would force government employers with self-funded insurance programs to be more transparent with actual claim cost, rebates and other refund programs?

As governor, I would unequivocally support legislation that requires more transparency from those who provide self-funded insurance programs. It is the right of anyone who receives a service that is negotiated for and decided upon by someone else to know the full breakdown of cost, services, and refunds or rebates.

7. Retirement for state workers: defined benefit versus defined contribution. Last session, legislation was introduced that would move state employees retirement from a defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan (401K). Do you support such a plan? Why or why not?

I do not support the shift to a defined contribution plan for state employees. A secure set of retirement assets is a promise that we must make to all of our state employees, and a defined contribution plan removes much of that security. It shifts the risk to employees, instead of placing the full responsibility for the plan on the provider who sets all of its parameters. By removing the security that state employees seek in a retirement plan, we de-incentivize staying in public service and risk losing some of our best state employees.

8. **Appropriate staffing levels.** This past fall, numerous news reports confirmed what many state employees have already known: that staffing levels in a number of state agencies have fallen to levels such that both the safety of the individual workers and the ability of these workers to carry out their duties has been compromised. Recent examples of nurses being assaulted at numerous state hospitals (<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/investigations/bs-md-spring-grove-assaults-20171003-story.html>), or of reports from the Department of Legislative Services to the state's Spending Affordability Committee (<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/politics/bs-md-state-understaffed-report-20171116-story.html>) speak to this. What more can the state do to assure that Maryland agencies and facilities are appropriately staffed?

Properly staffing all state agencies and facilities should be the priority of any legislature or governor. Deficits in our public staffing only sets us back as a state and denies our citizens many of the services that they count on government for. Furthermore, staffing shortages in many jobs decrease workplace safety, morale and efficiency. In order to address these deficits as governor, I would work with the leadership of each department and agency to ensure that we know what their funding needs are in order to properly staff their programs and facilities, and then advocate within the legislature for the measures that lead to appropriate funding. As well, I would also work to stabilize and increase the benefits that we provide to our state employees in order to keep them on the job. We cannot skimp on the healthcare, retirement, and continued learning benefits that we provide to state employees, or else we will lose them.

Public Education

9. **General:** What do you think are some of the biggest problems facing public education—both in Baltimore City and in the rest of the state—today? If elected, how would you help solve these problems?

To begin, I have already shown my commitment to prioritizing education first as a candidate and then as governor by being the first to release a substantive platform on educational issues. These policies were constructed with the support and direction of many state and local education policy experts, while also referencing my personal experience and that of my friends and colleagues in the educational ecosystem. Those policies on education, child care, and universal computer science education can be found on [my website](#).

I've seen the same genius and capability present in the students I taught at Booker T. Washington Middle School in West Baltimore that I encountered in my colleagues in the Obama Administration or nonprofit world was also. The only difference was their access to opportunity and resources. The starting point to address all inequity in Maryland and across America is education. That's why education policy is the focus of my campaign – from early childhood to higher education to job-training and lifelong learning.

As governor, I will push not only for incremental steps towards making things better, but also prioritize investment in Maryland's most important asset – our people. I am committed to working with all stakeholders in issues of education and labor to take smart and equitable steps that will better our schools and increase opportunity for our students. We must reset how public education is funded in our state through the Kirwan Commission and prioritize equity for all students. We need to further professionalize the teaching profession and better support our educators and school staff. And lastly, we must address the staffing shortages and recognize the importance of properly staffing all of our schools.

10. Community Schools: Baltimore City now has 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. How can state government work to expand the community school strategy in Baltimore and the rest of Maryland?

My perspective on the issue of community schools comes from my time spent as a teacher at Booker T. Washington Middle School in West Baltimore and is an essential component of my education platform. At Booker T. Washington, we essentially had 100 percent free and reduced lunch, and the student body was 100 percent African-American and low-income. I taught three classes of more than 30 students, and I had a single set of social studies textbooks that were more than 20 years old. The students of course could not take that textbook home and use it for homework; they had it for 45 minutes a day. This presented a substantial barrier to my being able to provide the bare minimum educational resources to my 100 low-income students.

With that context, I believe that a key to increasing equity in school financing and the resources it delivers to students is through aggressive investment in low-income schools, specifically in the community school model. Community schools provide an opportunity to bring together the stakeholders and resources necessary to ensure excellence both within and outside of the classroom. These schools are tailored toward serving the needs of individual communities and can provide services ranging to a food pantry in communities with high rates of childhood hunger to providing ESL classes in communities with large immigrant populations to providing extracurricular activities when traditional schools do not have the resources to do so.

As Governor, I would make it easier for our local jurisdictions to create community schools, and I would create an inter-agency task-force with representatives of my cabinet agencies to streamline the process and support the local school districts.

11. Public charter schools and local oversight. 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?

I support the current charter school law which insures that charter schools are under control of local school boards, requires enrolment to be open to all students, requires the hiring of certified teachers, and holds charters to the same high standards as traditional schools, while protecting collective bargaining rights of employees. There is no reason why we should allow oversight of these schools to be weakened. But there's a broader issue here that I feel compelled to speak to, which is the tendency of the education reform community to see charter schools as silver bullets, as the one thing necessary to improving public education.

While I am not in favor of closing the existing charter public schools in Maryland as they continue to be high performing, I object to the view and the policies which portend that the road forward is for us to create more charters. This comes at the expense of existing schools in the traditional system. Rather than looking at our existing elementary, middle, and high schools as being inherently suboptimal to charter schools, we must bring the same level of investment and vigor to supporting these schools as we do to charter schools. Charter schools have an outsized advantage that comes with being able to attract outside philanthropic and private capital. With the appropriate government leadership, we could also bring that private and philanthropic capital into our public non-charter schools. Charter schools have had an outside benefit of being fashionable within private and corporate philanthropy, and as governor, what I would seek to do is to try to drive not just government capital, but also private capital into our non-charter public schools. This would give our educators the additional resources that they often lack, but that are enjoyed by those in the charter system.

12. 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?

The charter school funding debate is one with many pitfalls and turns that have pitted groups and interests against each other. But, we cannot forget who the real winners and losers are in this debate - our students in the state of Maryland. We owe it to them to get it right. In this case, I believe that we must fund charter schools in a way that makes sense for the kinds of students they serve. If they have high needs students, then we should provide the extra per pupil spend. But if they do not, then they must receive the normal per pupil allotment.

13. 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.

Public funds for education should go only to public schools, full stop. I do not support funds that subsidize the cost of private education for those who would already be sending their kids to private schools anyway. It unduly takes money away from public schools. Parents should have the option to send their children to non-public schools, but it should come at their own cost, not that of public dollars.

14. Education Funding, state contribution. The state is currently studying revisions to the formula that determines the amount of aid given to a local school system from Annapolis. Over the past few decades, the number of Maryland public school students living in poverty has more than doubled, going from 22% in 1990 to 45% statewide today. In Baltimore City alone, well over 90% of our public school students live in poverty. What can the state—and the funding formula—do in order to be sure these students living in poverty get the best education we can give them? If the answer is more funding for public schools, from where is that money to come?

It is imperative that we get it right when we set the funding formula for our schools coming out of the Kirwan Commission in 2018 and beyond. This is our once-every-15-years chance to set proper funding models for our public education system in Maryland, and the future of our state depends upon it.

I believe we have a budget that we can make work and our first priority should always be to use existing resources. We have a \$43.4 billion budget and the distribution of that budget and how it relates to the funding of schools must be reviewed and possibly redistributed. Funding unmet needs in our schools is my primary concern, and all other funding needs in the state would come second. The quality of education in Maryland cannot continue to be determined by zip code. We are perpetuating the very inequalities that education is intended to remedy if we do not finance our schools equitably. Throughout the state, teachers, students, and parents are coping with critical problems in our schools -- and the root cause is usually funding. Class sizes are too large. Schools are consolidating and declining in quality. And our teachers, teacher aides, counselors, and other certified staff -- who are among the finest in the country -- are perennially underpaid. We seem to find lots of money to support economic growth with tax breaks and subsidies for corporations, but we shortchange the people that build and maintain the educational foundation of our economy.

To realize excellence at all of our public schools, we must develop plans to improve our schools that are customized to meet the needs in all 24 jurisdictions. It's not just about investing more in public schools. It's about investing smarter. We need to account for the special circumstances in school districts with high levels of poverty. We need to make sure our schools are equipped with high-speed Internet access and useful technology for the classroom. And we need to pay closer attention to the distinct needs of rural and urban school districts.

We must think creatively about how to provide more funds for our public schools. I believe there are a few things we can do right off the bat. First, we need to stop dumping millions into aging IT systems owned by the state and either update the technologies or dispose of them and properly re-allocate the funds. Second, we need to ensure that the per pupil spending for each district in the state is allowing students to receive the services that they are promised. For example, in Baltimore City, around \$3,000

of the per pupil spend goes to the Maryland Transit Authority, no matter if that child or school uses public transportation. We must make sure that money does not slip through the cracks for our students. And lastly, we can do better to ensure that current and new funding sources reach our students. The casino money earmarked for our schools must actually go to them, not simply displace statutorily mandated funding. If we legalize recreational marijuana (which I believe we should do), then we must earmark much of that revenue exclusively for reinvestment in our education system; however, that additional revenue must not be allowed to replace current general funds. We can and will do better with our state's funding for public education when I'm governor.

15. Education funding, local contribution. For the past three years in a row, the Baltimore City Public Schools System had dealt with a reduction in state aid to its 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?

I do not agree. Baltimore deserves its share of funding just like every other jurisdiction. Through a series of events and decisions that have most often not involved the educators on the ground in Baltimore City Schools, state aid to those schools has stalled, all at the detriment of the students they serve and the educators they employ. This must not be the case if we want our students in Baltimore City to receive the best possible education.

Systemic poverty in BCPS is everyone's concern. Success at the Inner Harbor does not fundamentally change the realities in other parts of the city and if Baltimore is going to see city-wide resurgence, Annapolis cannot renege on its responsibilities every time the city has an economic success story.

The use of TIFs to encourage development should not impact school funding; schools should not be harmed from these incentives, either through the funding formula or the TIF community benefits agreement related to the TIF. It would be one of my first priorities to ensure that our state aid is set at the correct levels in all parts of the state as governor.

16. School Staffing. Due to a lack of funding, a number of specialized services our students need are being staffed by employees who are not trained properly to administer those services. For example, 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. And in other cases, students who have experienced extremely traumatic events do not have access to social workers trained to help them through these times. How would you help solve this staffing crisis?

In a resource scarce environment, teachers and staff in our schools are asked to do too much for too little money. We do not reward excellence in the classroom, nor do we sufficiently reward the decades long commitments made by our career educators and service providers. We severely disadvantage our students when we do not provide them with necessary services in their schools.

The State has a constitutional obligation to provide all students in all regions of the state an adequate education. Inherent in this obligation is to provide the resources for children in need to receive support from trained professionals inside and outside the classroom. I will work with AFT to ensure medical professionals are available to students.

I think we can address this staffing crisis from a few different angles. First, both within the new provisions of the Kirwan Commission, as well as annual funding cycles determined by the governor's office, I would commit to prioritizing the fair and generous compensation of our educators and the proper staffing of our public schools, full stop. Second, I do believe that increasing the number of community schools that respond directly to the needs of their communities and correctly funding them can help alleviate this staffing crisis. Until we prioritize proper staffing and personnel support for our public education system, we will not see significant gains in student outcomes.

17. Violence and trauma in the city schools. Far too often, children in the Baltimore City public school system witness very traumatizing events, and indeed may also be victims to those events—either in the classrooms or outside the walls of the schools after the dismissal bell has rung. 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? How can we work to minimize the impact of traumatizing events on our school children?

No greater priority exists for me to ensure our schools are safe havens for children and teachers. I will work closely with AFT to hear from the frontlines the steps we must take to ensure our schools are safe. As a teacher at Booker T. Washington, I saw everyday the effects of trauma that students suffered at home, on the streets, or even within the walls of our schools. The effect on the learning environment is profound, and we must prioritize programs and positions that address this trauma and minimize its effects on the learning process. We can do this first by providing proper funding for those professionals, like nurses and social workers, who are able to respond to the myriad needs of those students experiencing trauma. By increasing staffing, our nurses, social workers, and counselors will be able to be more proactive in helping students rather than being constrained to only dealing with the most serious of issues. Next, we need to provide the proper training to all of our educators so they are able to respond appropriately to the needs of these students. As well, by increasing the number of community schools in Baltimore City, we can ensure that schools have more latitude to employ the professionals that will help them to serve students best in their particular environments. Lastly, I believe that we must work with the law enforcement professionals both within and outside of our schools to make sure they have the proper information and training to work with communities where young people often experience trauma.

Vision for Baltimore Metropolitan Area and Maryland in General

18. Transportation. When Governor Hogan cancelled the Red Line rail project, he replaced it with a revision of the MTA regional bus lines and renamed the system the Baltimore Link. How effective do you believe this new bus plan has been? How can the state improve the transportation needs of Baltimore's citizens?

Safe and modern public transportation is key to increasing equity and improving the economic well-being of those in Baltimore City, as well as those in the rest of our state. In Baltimore City, the duration of your commute time is the single best indicator of your economic status. The longer your commute time, the lower your economic standing. It should not be the case that if you have to take public transportation to arrive to work or other commitments that you are disadvantaged and forced to spend needless time navigating the transport system.

Cancelling the Red Line rail project was something that I completely disagree with. We need a transportation solution to connect all parts of Baltimore City and Hogan's decision to cancel this project is just one example of how he does not prioritize equity for all Marylanders, particularly those in Baltimore City. The Baltimore Link bus system is a bandaid on a much larger issue.

We must prioritize a modern transportation plan for the entire state, and support more specific local solutions from the state level. A modern plan for transportation does not only involve new highway construction like Larry Hogan's ill-advised multi-billion dollar proposal, but incorporates modern solutions like trains, bike lanes, and bus systems that will carry us forward in a rapidly advancing technological world.

19. Privatization. Many rumors have been circulating that the city has been looking into privatizing water services. This comes at a time when the Maryland has been quietly attempting to privatize a number of state services—like closing many state hospitals or turning them over to private companies. When, if ever, do you feel it is appropriate to privatize public services or to sell off or privatize city-owned resources?

Private contracting is often presented as a way to save money, but more commonly it is a way to force people to work at unfair wages with few or no benefits. As well, it is often a way to abdicate from the responsibility of providing essential services to those in our state while also employing important public employees. I do not see any cases where it is currently appropriate to privatize public services or sell them off.

20. State's opioid crisis. This summer, Governor Hogan declared a state of emergency in Maryland in response to the opioid crisis, calling it a "rapidly escalating" threat. Yet, even as opioid overdoses and death rates continue to climb, the state is actively de-funding, privatizing, or, as in the case of several Maryland health departments {can we name any of them here?} actively shutting down numerous institutions designed to treat this crisis. What can you do as a legislator to assure Maryland gives its citizens safe and affordable access to addition resources?

As governor, I would support services and solutions that treat the opioid crisis as what it truly is: a public health crisis. We must prioritize inter-agency cooperation so we can address this crisis from all sides, be it in our education systems, state-run healthcare providers, and even in how we treat and train those recovering from opioid addiction as they look to re-enter employment and normal living. If we treat the crisis this way, then there is no reason to be de-funding or privatizing state-run service providers

working to address this issue. I would work with our legislators and state departments to address this crisis from all sides.

21. Earned Sick Leave. In the 2017 session, the state legislature passed a bill greatly expanding the requirement that employers provide earned sick leave to their employees, but Governor Hogan vetoed this bill. Do you support the legislative effort to override the governor's veto on paid sick leave?

I was very happy to see the override of Governor Hogan's veto of paid sick leave in January 2018 and look forward to seeing that important piece of legislation move forward.