

# Adams - Comptroller

## AFT-Maryland Candidate Questionnaire for the 2022 Election

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, 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, and Baltimore County Federation of Public Health Nurses, AFT-Maryland has thousands of members who work to make the state a better place for its residents.

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 Maryland and DC AFL-CIO State Federation; the state federation will announce its final endorsements in early 2022. However, because we are a large contingency within the Maryland 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 7th, 2022, 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).



### Candidate Information

Please note the AFT-Maryland plans to make these questionnaires public. However, personal information will be redacted.

Employer

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Party affiliation

Democrat.

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

I was proud to be endorsed by SEIU in my 2018 campaign for the 23rd District seat in the Maryland Senate.

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

Mayor of Bowie; 2019 - Present.

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General Questions

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 (BCFPE and BCFPHN) and city (CUB) employees. Why should we support your campaign?

The next Comptroller of Maryland will exercise enormous influence over the quality of the public schools in which our teachers and children will be asked to work. My unique blend of executive leadership experience, in both the public and private sectors, will be invaluable to protecting the rights, improving the workplace experience and ensuring the longterm financial security of our teachers in this historic moment of economic volatility.

I say this as someone who was able to rise from a childhood of poverty in the Deep South, to become one of our nation's most prominent Black CEOs, as a result of a good education. I have dedicated my life, as an elected leader and as a philanthropist, to providing all children in Maryland with the same life-changing opportunities I have, and this shall remain my guiding mission as our state's 34th Comptroller. Over the course of this questionnaire, I look forward to unpacking the specifics of my policy agenda and the credentials that underscore my ability to deliver upon these promises.

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

No.

Questions on Worker Rights

3. Expanding the right to collective bargaining. Currently, a number of state and public school employees in Maryland have collective bargaining. However, many still do not. For example, state judiciary branch workers; grad students, adjuncts, and full-time faculty in the University of Maryland System; faculty at our state's community colleges; coordinators in community schools; and many county and city librarians; do not have the right to bargain collectively. If elected, will you sponsor and/or support legislation to grant these public employees the right to engage in collective bargaining with their employer?

I am a strong advocate of collective bargaining and I believe that it leads to a more productive and efficient public sector workforce. It is upon that basis that I will vocally advocate for the expansion of collective bargaining rights to these and other public sector employees.

My experience has shown that collective bargaining agreements professionalize the workplace experience by removing the subjectivity from personnel decisions such as promotions, pay raises and progressive discipline. They provide employees with a sense of professional stability and predictability, and actually serve to enhance communication and improve the flow of vital information between labor and management.

4. Raising the minimum wage. Our members see every day the harmful impact of a minimum wage that does not keep up with rising costs of living throughout the region. While Maryland will raise its minimum wage to \$15 per hour in 2025, it still will not be indexed to inflation, and Marylanders working at this compensation level will continue to fall behind. If elected to office, will you author and/or support legislation to tie the minimum wage to the rate of inflation?

Yes. I believe the current economic environment, in which the rate of inflation continues to accelerate at an alarming pace, and at a rate far greater than wages and salaries, illustrates the need for this provision of law. It will simply be unacceptable to ask Maryland's teachers and support staff members to endure the extraordinary pressures of the profession while forcing them to live a life of financial insecurity and, in many cases, to live exceedingly long distances from their workplace for the sake of affordable housing and a lower cost of living.

5. Binding arbitration in contract negotiations.

Maryland recognizes the importance of collective bargaining as a way to assure employees at the state, municipal, and school district level have a fair and democratic voice in the conditions that govern their employment. For many of those employees and their unions, when disagreements arise during negotiations, there is no mechanism by which those disputes can be resolved. In most cases when the parties reach an impasse, management can implement their proposals without the consent of the employees. Because of this, management often realizes there is no need to bargain in good faith. To fix this flaw, many states and local governments have implemented binding arbitration. When an impasse arises at the bargaining table, management and the union agree to take their case to an objective, third party arbitrator. The arbitrator hears the case, and issues a ruling that both management and the employees must agree to. There is some form of binding arbitration for state employees in Connecticut, Delaware, and Maine, and Baltimore County offers binding arbitration for its municipal employees, for example.

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

Yes. Absolutely.

6. Public employee compensation. Under the current governor's administration, it is rare for state workers to get the compensation they deserve, even though the state has often had a budget surplus. As a result, too many public agencies have staffing problems, as many employees leave for better compensation in the private sector. What is your plan to assure state, county, and municipal employees (including workers employed at BCCC, the Maryland School for the Deaf, and all public, state-supported higher education institutions throughout the state) that their compensation levels will be financially competitive with the private sector?

Our state personnel system currently suffers from three existential crises. First, nearly 12 years of Republican governance within the past two decades has led to the steady erosion of Maryland's public sector workforce.

Second, our state's leaders have failed to keep state government compensation levels competitive with our counterparts within the federal and metropolitan county governments, which has made it exceedingly difficult to attract and retain exceptional employees. Finally, even as our workforce continues to age and more longtime employees approach retirement, there have been virtually no efforts to made to ensure proper succession planning or to cultivate the next generation of agency managers and directors.

As Comptroller, I intend to apply my experience in both the private and public sectors to address these challenges, and to do so by working in very close collaboration with the AFT's leadership and members. One of my very first initiatives as Comptroller will be to work with the Governor, legislative leaders and state budget secretary to undertake a comprehensive study of our state government's wage and salary structure. This study would conclude with a body of recommendations to ensure equitable compensation for Maryland's educators and all state employees, which would include both the costs and optimal timeframe for implementation.

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7. Health insurance transparency. Audits and budget analysis show some government healthcare surplus funds are being diverted for use in unrelated areas. In effect, employees are therefore paying much higher than their negotiated healthcare splits for employer self-insured healthcare coverage. What should a public body (the state, the municipality, or the local school system) do with money refunded to employees' health insurance programs? 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?

At a time when the costs of healthcare and prescription drugs continue to soar, and Maryland is experiencing an acute shortage of mental health care and preventative health care providers, it is deeply ill-advised to raid healthcare surplus funds to satisfy unrelated operating budget obligations. Should the State of Maryland end a particular fiscal year with healthcare surplus funds, I would insist - as a member of the Board of Public Works which approves state health care and prescription drug contracts - that we use those dollars to strengthen our commitment to the following areas: (1) mental health care, which remains a deeply unsatisfied need, (2) dental care cost relief, which remains prohibitively expensive for many state employees; (3) prescription drug offsets and (4) preventative care. I would also support legislation that would memorialize that commitment.

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8. Retirement for public employees: defined benefit versus defined contribution. Most Maryland public employees have defined benefit retirement plans like a pension. This allows employees to plan for their retirement because they know exactly how much income they will be receiving. With defined contribution retirement plans like a 401(k), employees contemplating retirement are never quite sure when the right time is to retire because of changes in their plan's investments. Do you support keeping public employee retirement plans as defined benefit/pension plans?

I obviously support the preservation of a defined benefit plan and will also use the platform of my office to raise awareness of the benefits of early, consistent investment in both the State of Maryland's 401(k) plans and the Maryland 529 initiative. Our employees will be wise to avail themselves of both options in order to enjoy an acceptable standard of living in retirement.

The next Comptroller will serve as Vice-Chair of the Maryland State Retirement and Pension Systems. In that capacity, I will have both the opportunity and the obligation to ensure the hard-earned financial security of more than 250,000 active and retired state employees. My strategy to preserve the long-term stability of the Pension System will feature the following provisions:

- Rejection of irresponsible past practices, such as our disastrous experience with "corridor funding," that has, at times, reduced the funded levels of the SRPS to as low as 60 percent;
- Fight any efforts by the Governor and General Assembly to redirect dedicated pension fund revenues into the General Fund;
- Guide my SRPS colleagues to adopt a more realistic rate of annual return in order to ensure adequate state appropriations for the pension system;
- Resist well-intentioned efforts to move exclusively to a passive, index-based investment model. Analysis suggests that while a passive investment approach yields acceptable returns in times of market growth and stability, their rates of return fall far short of those achieved by active fund managers in times of volatility.

9. Prescription drugs for retired state employees. The State of Maryland is currently being sued by a group of retired state employees over the loss of their prescription drug coverage. Their position is the state has backed out of the promised retiree prescription drug benefit. Do you support full health benefits for retirees including prescription drug benefits? Under what circumstances, if any, would you agree to a reduction in benefits for retirees?

Yes. There are no circumstances, whatsoever, under which I would advocate that the State of Maryland renege on its legally and morally binding obligation to its public employees.



10. Appropriate staffing levels. This past fall, numerous news reports confirmed what many state employees have already known: that staffing in a number of state agencies have fallen to levels that the safety of workers and the ability to carry out their duties has been compromised. For example, the Maryland Department of Health has not been able to admit court-ordered patients to state mental health facilities in accordance with the law due to the lack of staff. Likewise, the State Investment Park Commission found that park ranger staffing levels are too low to meet the demand of Maryland Residents wanting to visit our state's parks. The most recent state analysis shows nearly every state agency has at least a 10% vacancy rate, with some of the larger agencies having a vacancy rate over 15%! Would you support efforts to increase recruitment and retention of qualified state, county and city employees? Would you make funding of additional staff a priority?

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## Public Education in Baltimore City

11. General [for candidates running for Governor, Comptroller, or for office in Baltimore City legislative districts only]: What do you think are the three biggest problems facing Baltimore City public schools? If elected, how will you solve these problems?

1. Deplorable working and learning conditions in our school facilities.
2. The digital divide that puts low-to-moderate income students in predominantly minority communities at a prohibitive disadvantage with their more affluent counterparts.
3. An acute shortage of highly skilled, certified and experienced teachers.

As Comptroller, I will be a forceful advocate for the accelerated implementation of the landmark Kirwan law, and will work with future governors and lawmakers on responsible strategies for funding the "out years" of the Kirwan plan. I will also take the lead on legislation that would restore oversight of Maryland's School Construction Program to the Board of Public Works. This will provide a climate of oversight and transparency for teachers, students and parents who are currently frustrated by poor working conditions and a lack of accountability.

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12. Education funding. The state has enacted the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, an ambitious plan developed by bipartisan education experts and stakeholders. The Blueprint will provide a world-class education our students need. Despite hand-wringing from the current governor, the state has the funding to pay for the Blueprint through Fiscal Year 2026. Beginning in FY 2027, the state will have to make decisions regarding revenues to continue to provide every student in the state the education they need. If elected, how would you propose the state fund the Blueprint? How will you advocate for these necessary revenues?

The Blueprint is absolutely vital to our state's ability to attract, properly compensate and retain the best teachers. We must execute the Blueprint in order to address and begin the remedy the structural inequities that have divided our children along lines of race, geography and socio-economics. The Blueprint will ensure that our children are given those early building blocks of learning that facilitate positive academic outcomes, and that they are provided with safe, healthy and modern learning environments.

As Comptroller, I will be a forceful and effective advocate for a fair tax structure for families and local, independent businesses. I have campaigned publicly in support of a combined reporting law that would make it more difficult for corporations to hide profits earned in the State of Maryland. I would also initiate a thorough review of our current inventory of state tax credits to determine whether they are achieving their intended benefits and recommend that the legislature discontinue those that are not.

At a time when tax fraud and identity theft are on the rise, with financial predators more brazen and sophisticated than ever before, my Office will rely upon highly trained personnel and state-of-the-art data analytics to prevent tax fraud and identity theft - both of which cost the State of Maryland hundreds of millions of dollars each year.

Finally, I have been an outspoken advocate of the legalization of recreational cannabis, and have been so with the firm expectation that a significant portion, if not all of the state revenues would be reinvested in Maryland's public schools.

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13. Living Wage for Paraprofessionals. One element that was unfortunately unresolved by the Kirwan Commission recommendations was the pay for Paraprofessionals and School Related Personnel (PSRPs). For too many PSRPs throughout the state, their compensation levels are not enough to be considered a living wage. Will PSRP compensation be a high priority for you if you are elected to office? How can the state better show its appreciation to PSRPs working in our state's public schools?

Without our paraprofessionals, our teachers simply would not have the support they need to teach and our students wouldn't have the tools that are necessary in order to learn. As with so many classes of public employees, at both the state and local level in Maryland, they are not adequately compensated for the importance of the services they provide. I believe our state and local governments owe it to our paraprofessionals to provide higher starting salaries, ensure that the conditions in which they work are healthy, safe and comfortable, and take every conceivable step to ensure they can enjoy the financially secure retirement to which they are entitled.

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14. Public School Construction and Renovation [for candidates running for Governor, Comptroller, or for office in Baltimore City legislative districts only]. In 2013, the state passed the 21st Century Schools Program, which allowed the Baltimore Public School System and the Maryland Stadium Authority to leverage bonds to renovate roughly 25 public school buildings. While a good start, Baltimore city still has the largest portfolio of aging and obsolete school buildings in the state; therefore, the program needs to be expanded. If elected, what will your administration do to assure more aging school buildings in Baltimore city will be eligible for renovations?

As a member of the Capital Debt Affordability Committee, which establishes annual borrowing limits for the State of Maryland, I would recognize that our multi-billion budget surplus,, coupled with historically low interest rates, gives us a unique, if not a one-time opportunity to expand our bonding capacity for the sake of investing in public schools and other vital public infrastructure. In short, it has never been a better time - as a matter of both cost and affordability - for the State to go into the bond market and use its AAA bond rating to address critical needs such as this.

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15. Public charter schools and local oversight. There are over 50 public charter schools in the state of Maryland, and the vast majority of them reside in Baltimore city. Private, out-of-state charter school operators have previously wished to weaken the state law overseeing charter schools to make teachers and staff employees of the charter board rather than employees of the local school district. This would remove all protections that teachers and staff have under their collective bargaining agreements. It would limit oversight of these privately run public charter schools by taking them out from under the purview of the local school boards. It would also give the private operators 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 believe these institutions of K-12 learning should remain under the diligent oversight of the appropriate superintendent and school board, and I do not think steps should be taken to compromise the level of that necessary oversight.

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16. School vouchers and the BOOST program. Maryland is a state that diverts public funding to send students to private schools - the BOOST school voucher program. While the program is not codified in law, the governor's budget every year has re-directed millions of dollars of public funds to these private schools, many of which discriminate against students and families who don't adhere to that school's beliefs such as gay marriage. If elected to office, what will be your plan regarding Maryland's BOOST school voucher program? Should the state ever give public dollars to students to attend a private school? Would you support tax breaks to corporations that fund student scholarships for private k-12 schools?

I do not believe it is good public policy to invest taxpayer dollars in private schools at a time when so many public schools have an exhaustive backlog of unmet needs. Should the Governor and legislature decide to perpetuate the BOOST initiative, I believe it is imperative that funding recipients be held to the same guidelines for anti-discrimination, fair employment practices and curriculum integrity to which our public schools are suggested.

While I believe our entire framework of tax credits and subtraction modifications needs to be revisited to assess its effectiveness in generating jobs and economic investment, I would not suggest that we disqualify a Maryland-based business from receiving economic incentives solely upon this basis.

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17. School Staffing. In too many of our public schools, administrators are not following the law and are hiring people who are employees of non-profit organizations, some of whom are uncredentialed and untrained. Because they are not direct hires of the school district, they are not covered by the collective bargaining contract, nor are they held to the same accountability standards as certificated employees. If elected, will you work to ensure that school districts follow the law to prevent public schools from hiring employees from nonprofit organizations, circumventing the collective bargaining agreement? Under any circumstances is it acceptable to you for a school to hire an uncredentialed and non-unionized employee to be involved in the education of Maryland students?

This particular questions rests far beyond the policy purview of the Comptroller of Maryland. That said, I believe it is imperative that we take many of the steps I've outlined above to ensure that our school systems - whether in Baltimore or elsewhere - are not put in the position of having to make this choice.

18. Teacher recruitment and retention. The global pandemic has exacerbated the increasingly challenging problem of teacher retention and recruitment. Far too often, experienced, successful educators are made to leave our school systems. Newly hired teachers in some alternative teacher education programs stay in the classroom for an average of 3 years. How can the state enact legislation to support the retention of the highest quality educators, and recruit more to their ranks?

As Comptroller, I would advocate strongly for the following five policies that should help attract and retain quality teachers:

1. Through strategies outlined throughout this questionnaire - particularly, restoring oversight of Maryland's School Construction Program to the Board of Public Works - I would ensure that teachers are provided with safer, healthier and climate-controlled workplace environments.
  2. As outlined repeatedly in this questionnaire, I would be an advocate for a new culture of pay equity for our teachers and paraprofessionals;
  3. I believe we should establish a program that guarantees to eliminate, in its entirety, the student loan debt of teachers who agree to work within one of Maryland's 24 public school systems for a minimum of five years;
  4. I believe we must use a comprehensive strategy that includes, but is not limited to the strategic use of School Resource Officers (SROs) to keep both teachers and students safe;
  5. I would work aggressively, as Vice-Chairman of the State Retirement and Pension System, to ensure that the new money that was pledged to the State's Pension Fund in 2011, largely through increased employer contributions, actually be invested in the pension system and not used to patch other budget shortfalls.
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19. Elected versus an appointed school board [for candidates running for Governor, Comptroller, or for office in Baltimore City legislative districts only]. In 2022, the citizens of Baltimore city will finally be allowed to elect 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?

This policy issue, while exceedingly important, exists outside of the parameters of the Comptroller's span of control.

20. Standardized testing in the schools. In our state's public school system, instruction time in our classrooms is often pushed aside so that students may prepare for and take a plethora of standardized tests. What is your view on standardized testing in our state's public schools? If elected, what policy positions would you take regarding the number of standardized tests required of our students?

I believe the State of Maryland's ongoing fixation with standardized tests presents a steep obstacle to the true practice of teaching and learning in our public schools. They also have a history of being inherently discriminatory against racial and ethnic minorities. As a member of the Board of Public Works, which approves Maryland State Department of Education contracts with national testing firms such as Pearson, I would use my position to discourage the State from utilizing national evaluation instruments and, instead, develop our own outcome-based metrics to ensure that students are truly getting the learning experience they need to compete in the 21st century economy.

## Vision for Maryland



21. 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 its residents?

I believe it was a failure from the very start. Due to lack of vision, planning and prioritization, the City of Baltimore still lacks systemically integrated bus and rail networks. Moreover, the bus network remains woefully out of sync with both commercial and residential population shifts that have occurred with both Baltimore City and the suburbs. I believe the State, under the leadership of our next Governor, must restore the Red Line to the State of Maryland's long-term transit plan; work with planners, policymakers, community leaders and riders to redesign the MTA's outdated bus network, and seriously address the need for community-based circulator routes, suburb-to-suburb lines and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).

22. Revenues and closing unfair tax loopholes. In order for the state, county, city, and local school system to continue to provide the services to Maryland residents that they deserve, do you believe the state must work to close loopholes in our tax structure? From things like instituting combined reporting (where out-of-state corporations no longer avoid paying taxes on the revenues they generate in Maryland) or a carried interest tax (where wealthy hedge fund managers pay the same income rate that the rest of Maryland residents pay), would you introduce and/or support legislation that would make our state tax code more fair?

While final tax policy decisions are the responsibility of the Governor and General Assembly, I believe the Comptroller has an important role to play in those processes. First, as mentioned earlier, I would be a forceful advocate for the policy known as combined reporting. This would prevent multistate and multinational corporations from exporting, for the purposes of tax avoidance, profits that are earned in Maryland. Therefore, this accounting method would offer a far more accurate measure of a corporation's economic substance in our state than the single reporting method that is currently used in Maryland.

I would also preside over a thorough review of tax credits that have been previously adopted to achieve specific outcomes, such as job creation or investment in specific sectors. Those that are not achieving their objectives should be phased out or eliminated entirely.

23. Privatization, General. As public employees, each of our members works for an entity that is directly accountable to the residents we serve. Far too often, when jurisdictions and school districts choose to contract out or privatize those services, the level of accountability changes with those services. A private company or nonprofit is accountable to its board of directors or shareholders, and not necessarily to the residents that rely on its services. In addition, their employees are seldom unionized. If elected, would you support any plans to privatize and/or farm out work to a private company or nonprofit in our state and local governments or local school systems? If so, why?

I will work to stem the tide of privatization of essential services that has steadily occurred under 20 years of predominantly Republican governments, and that has eroded the quality and dependability of public services in our correctional facilities, mental health treatment centers, college and universities and elsewhere throughout state government.

This trend has proven to be corrosive on many fronts, as private corporations are motivated by profit considerations to "cut corners" wherever possible, even at the expense of keeping workers safe and delivering the best services to the taxpayers of Maryland.

Furthermore, recent history is replete with instances where inexperienced service providers have won contract awards on the basis of artificially low bids, only to create operational crises and saddle taxpayers with far higher costs as a result of their ineptitude.

24. Privatization, specific. On September 2, 2021, the Maryland Department of Health announced the Facilities Master Plan, which includes plans to close Western Maryland Hospital Center in Hagerstown and Deer's Head Hospital in Salisbury within the next 5 years by transferring patients to private facilities. In many cases, these facilities offer the only long-term care options for Maryland residents on dialysis or who are dealing with chronic respiratory problems. If elected, would you support the plan to close these state facilities? Would you support outsourcing state, county or city operations?

Absolutely not. I would strongly oppose the closure of these facilities and the reallocation of their responsibilities to private providers. They are absolutely essential to the preservation of Maryland's rehabilitative care network and a source of good-paying, family supporting jobs in economically depressed areas of our state.

25. State's mental health and addiction crisis. The need for mental health and addiction services has increased during the pandemic. Mental health beds in the state hospital system are filled with court ordered patients. If elected, would you support increasing private and public resources for treatment to be sure all Maryland residents have access to the care they need?

Use my influence and platform to make mental health care a paramount priority for the State of Maryland. We are currently falling short in every step of the process – from the absence of preventative wellness care to the severe and worsening unavailability of psychiatrists, therapists, prescribers, hospital beds and outpatient support personnel.

Furthermore, we have, in recent years, watched as the State of Maryland has closed mental health treatment facilities without justification, while addressing budget needs by reducing the number of available in-house psychiatrists at state-run facilities. This is absolutely unacceptable – particularly given the growing number of children who have been diagnosed with mental illnesses and given the percentage of patients who are suffering from both mental illness and the effects of substance abuse.

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26. Vaccines and working with unions to return to work. The COVID-19 pandemic has of course been a challenge for the safety of Maryland residents and our members who have been returning to work. While we hope that the worst of the pandemic is behind us, we know from past experiences with mutations of this novel virus, recovery and a return to normalcy may not be linear. Vaccines must be a part of a comprehensive strategy to get past the pandemic, as well as an important tool for fighting public health threats in the future. What role do you believe unions and management have in constructing a plan to vaccinate their workforce? What in your mind is the way unions and management can work together to make sure represented employees are offered a COVID-19 vaccine?

I will demand employees in high-risk positions – such as education facilities, state prisons and state hospital facilities – are equipped with the best possible health and safety precautions they need to do their jobs and remain safe - from KN95 masks and gloves to tests, vaccinations and boosters. That has not been occurring over this current Governor's term – particularly during the COVID outbreak and ongoing pandemic – and it is unconscionable.

I believe that in order to ensure that our front-line employees have the best resources at their disposal to protect themselves from COVID-19 and its many variants, Maryland's public sector unions must have a Governor and an Administration that is willing to work with them in good faith and maintain a substantive daily dialogue.

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**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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