

Shulman 40 Hour



AFT-Maryland Candidate Questionnaire for 2022 Candidates

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, and Baltimore County Federation of Public Health Nurses, AFT-Maryland has thousands of members who work to make the region and 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 Metropolitan Baltimore AFL-CIO Council and the Maryland and DC AFL-CIO State Federation; the council and state federation will announce its final endorsements in early 2022. 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 7th, 2022. If you have any questions, please contact Todd Reynolds, AFT-Maryland Political Coordinator, at 410-764-3030.

2022 Candidate Questionnaire
AFT-Maryland

Candidate for State Delegate, District 40

Candidate's name Kathy Shulman

Address. _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Occupation. Consultant 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, not yet

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

For more than three decades, I have put my passion and skills to work as a mission-driven social justice advocate and volunteer leader in Baltimore City, the region and the State of Maryland. As a coalition builder and tenacious problem solver, I am running for District 40 State Delegate to elevate the voices of our citizens on the issues that they care about most. To date, a corps of volunteers and I have knocked more than 4500 doors and had one-on-one conversations with more than 500 residents. Residents are very concerned about the systemically high rates of violent crime, a transportation system that does not meet their needs, ensuring that our children have access to the best public

schools, access to health services including mental health services during this pandemic, and access to safe and affordable housing -- to name five priority issues. I will partner with the community to come up with creative approaches to address their priority issues, including the introduction of legislation.

For the past nine years, I have served as Director of Healthy Food Access and a consultant to St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore, where I helped grow the agency's social enterprise, Good Harvest. Through Good Harvest, tens of thousands of low-income children, homeless families, and senior citizens have benefited from millions of free and healthy meals during the pandemic. Currently, Good Harvest produces more than 5,000 healthy meals a day for partner agencies in the region. Our social enterprise also trains Baltimoreans seeking work in the food service trade so that they can secure jobs paying a living wage. Often our students come out of re-entry and substance abuse programs, for which the food service field is ideal as it is a forgiving industry.

Previously, I served as Executive Director of the Public Justice Center and the Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism. At the Public Justice Center, I doubled the organization's budget which enabled the PJC to launch a program preventing renters from unjust evictions, filed lawsuits to safeguard the rights of youth caught in the juvenile justice system and against police departments engaged in racial profiling, successfully advocated for a statewide Battered Spouse Syndrome law, and many other efforts to help those denied their legal rights.

I started my social change career working for national groups like the League of Women Voters, the National Organization of Women, and Americans for Democratic Action. While in these roles, I organized and trained hundreds of activists in more than 35 states to advocate on national issues such as women's rights to equal pay, voting rights, the Clean Air Act, welfare reform, and arms control.

In addition, I co-founded Harriet's List, named after Harriet Tubman, an organization that raised hundreds of thousands of dollars of early money for Democratic women running for local and statewide office in Maryland in the 1990s.

I am graduate of the Greater Baltimore Committee's yearlong "Leadership Baltimore" program for the city's corporate, governmental, and nonprofit leaders.

I received my Bachelor of Arts degree from Brown University and Master's in Public Administration from Princeton University's School of Public and International Policy.

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

No, I have not.

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?

Yes, I would fully support these efforts. The employees that you cite deserve to have the same rights to engage in collective bargaining as do public employees in other parts of government at the local and statewide levels. All State of Maryland workers should have fair salaries, good benefits and good working conditions. And members of the General Assembly should assure that this is the case.

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?

In the social enterprise that I helped to build for St. Vincent de Paul, Good Harvest, I see how our food production and transportation staff struggle to make ends meet with salaries that range from \$15-20 per hour. Many of our staff pay significantly more than 30% of their salary for housing as housing prices have risen significantly in our region while the living wage has stayed flat. As a State Delegate, I will support and author legislation to ensure that Marylanders earn enough money to support their families.

State service/public employee issues and rights

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?

I would fully support the right for state and local employees to objective binding arbitration so that varying opinions about working conditions are negotiated fairly between workers and employers. I would support strengthening the rights to binding arbitration as a State Delegate.

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?

I was a state employee (1997-2000) and so know first-hand that civil servants are underpaid and how benefits have eroded over the years. I believe that government is only as good as the people who work in government.

It is important that voters and leaders in the Maryland General Assembly understand the impact that state workers have on their day to day lives. If I was to hold hearings on the topic, I would find witnesses that make this case in a significant way. For example, almost all voters in the state have some interaction with the MVA. It would be good to find out from customer service comments or complaints how staffing shortages affect Marylanders directly and showcase that in legislative hearings and to figure out how each member of a committee relates to state workers. One legislator might have a spouse who teaches at a community college and another has a child who works in

another state public job sector. I would showcase these examples of public service so that the decisionmakers can relate to the need to strengthen the public sector in a personal way, not only as a policy matter.

Statistics would be helpful here too. I would find out from unions how the lag in salaries for state workers has affected service to residents of Maryland and the ability of agencies to carry out their mission.

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?

All aspects of government employment should be transparent. The funds from employees' health insurance programs. I agree to sponsor legislation to force government employers with self-funded insurance programs to be more transparent with all aspects of their programs including how surpluses are allocated.

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?

My overarching answer to this question is that I need to learn more about retirement plans and how public employees would best benefit from them. My current thinking is that it would be good to provide a choice for public employees. Some employees might prefer to stay with the defined benefit plans. I assume that these employees are more cautious with investments. And some employees, who are more comfortable with risk, might prefer defined contribution plans. If a choice was given, it would be important that the terms of the state's investments in each employee were equal and fair. Also, it would be good to offer incentives for public employees to put some of their money into either retirement plan.

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?

I support full health benefits for retirees including prescription drug benefits.
I would not agree to a reduction in benefits for retirees.

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?

I believe that this issue is of critical importance to Maryland residents. I am proud to be a Marylander in part because our state has the courage to have a tax base that supports its residents with quality services. I have noticed in the past 7 years under the current Governor that state services have suffered greatly. This is unacceptable. I would be pleased to support adequate recruitment and retention of government employees and I would make funding of government employees a priority.

Public Education

11. General: What do you think are the major challenges facing Maryland's public education today? If elected, how would you help solve these problems?

Below, I describe the major challenges facing Maryland's public education system. Following each challenge, I identify potential solutions to the challenge.

Challenge: The pandemic has wreaked havoc on an already stressed educational system. Teachers and students are exhausted from the additional stresses of COVID19.

Morale amongst teachers and other school personnel is low. Resignation rates are climbing. And the pressure from having to adjust classroom teaching to online courses and then back to in person learning with safety measure for the past two years has taken its toll and added incredible pressure on teachers, school personnel, students, and parents.

In addition, there are rising rates of anxiety, depression, social isolation, and other mental health effects of the pandemic on students. And students have lost precious classroom time and opportunities for learning that they will not recapture due to the effects of two years of the pandemic.

Solution: Public education systems must aggressively offer services to ensure that stresses caused by the pandemic are lowered or eliminated. I would work with teachers' unions, school, systems and administrators to determine the best solutions to COVID 19's effects on our school systems, create legislation if none exists, and support these measures in the General Assembly.

Challenge: An undue emphasis on educational testing can result in unintended consequences such as too much in class time spent on preparing students for test taking. This robs children of the less quantifiable and yet important components of learning – such as social studies, art, physical education -- which are also correlated to future success in life.

Solution: As a State Delegate, I would carefully monitor the effects of educational testing. If the proportion of testing takes an undue toll on Maryland students' ability to learn in other ways, I would speak up in hearings, support bills that work to achieve a balance in this area, and any other ways that are supportive of achieving a balanced testing system.

Challenge: Baltimore suffers from high poverty rates and systemic racism rooted in a history of redlining policies. Some parts of our population, mostly white residents, have access to high performing schools, jobs with a decent salary, safe and adequate housing, economic development investment in their neighborhoods, and access to such services as grocery stores. And other parts of our population, disproportionately families of color, do not have access to these resources and services. In under resourced and underserved parts of our city, there are high rates of poverty, substance abuse and mental illness -- much of which is connected to intergenerational trauma. When children live in households with parents with untreated mental health or substance abuse conditions, they are adversely affected and often are not to perform at a high level in school. Often, you living in these conditions, require social services to that they are ready to learn and perform at a high level academically.

Solution: I would monitor the effect of wrap around services offered in the Blueprint for Maryland's future to ensure that the needs of children who lack a stable homelife or have mental health challenges are met. If they are not met, I would support or sponsor legislation that mitigates these gaps in services.

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?

Ensuring a high-quality education for every Maryland student is one of the most important jobs for all Maryland leaders. And this would be a top priority for me when serving as a State Delegate.

I would oppose any effort to decrease the Blueprint's funding unless there is a more pressing public emergency (for which I would set a very high bar). I would sponsor legislation, support other Delegates' legislation and vote in accord with my position on this issue. If it is required, I would support raising non-regressive taxes to ensure that public education is funded according to the Blueprint's formulas. In all these efforts, it will be important to make the case to Marylanders and key constituencies (labor and employers to name two) that funding high-quality education in the state of Maryland is in all of our interests.

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?

Any full-time employee of a local school system in Maryland should earn a living wage. Our school systems must hire talented employees so that they can best serve our children. I will support any effort to ensure fair compensation to all school employees across the state, including paraprofessionals.

14. Public School Construction and Renovation.

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?

Decaying school buildings send a signal to poor children that they and their education do not matter. This is unacceptable. All Maryland children, regardless of zip code deserve to learn in classrooms and buildings that are in good condition, inspire learning and are safe. Baltimore is a poor jurisdiction. Therefore, to ensure that all schools in Baltimore are in good shape, it would be ideal to pair public funding for school construction with private funds. Leaders should approach local and national funders (such as Michael Bloomberg) to speed up the number of schools that can be renovated in the near future.

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 schoolteachers and staff be considered employees of the charter school or of the local school board? Should oversight of these schools be weakened?

The public school system is weakened if charter schools get special treatment from local school boards. I believe that schoolteachers and staff should be considered employees of the local school board and thereby be covered under the collective bargaining agreements of these districts. Oversight of these schools by school districts should not be weakened.

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?

A thriving public education system is vital for Maryland. The more we opt out of funding for public schools with exceptions such as those in the BOOST school voucher program, the weaker our public school system becomes.

The only reason that our state should give public dollars to students to attend a private school is if the public school system cannot meet the needs of a student with special learning needs.

I would not support tax breaks to corporations that fund student scholarships for private k-12 schools.

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?

All current laws covering the hiring of employees in public schools should be followed and enforced. In addition, all public school employees should have the right to collective bargaining.

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?

I agree that the pandemic has and will continue to exacerbate the challenge to attract and keep teachers. I suspect that a lot of teachers will leave the field after this stressful two years.

As a Delegate, I will support recommendations for several immediate and long-term measures to attract and retain educators that are included in the Blueprint for Maryland's Future:

- 10% state increase in baseline teacher salaries across the board, phased in by July 1, 2024
- \$60,000 starting salary for teachers by July 1, 2029

- Expanded opportunity for loans and scholarships for students/teachers who teach in schools with high concentrations of poverty

The Blueprint seeks to make teacher compensation not only competitive with salaries in other states but also with other high-status professions. It also offers non-monetary improvements so that quality teachers stay in the profession – such as improving working conditions and better managing teachers’ workloads.

The Blueprint also proposes a career ladder that includes national board certification and taking on additional leadership roles, like instructional coaches, department chairs, and master teachers. The idea is to give teachers opportunities to raise their salaries without going into administration — a tough decision that faces many teachers who want to stay in the profession long-term.

I am familiar with the need to be proactive in recruiting and retaining public school teachers. In 2001 I was the staff lead to organize a Leadership Maryland conference to determine how Maryland can best recruit and retain quality teachers to our classrooms. More than 400 people – from all 24 jurisdictions and every walk of life – came to the Baltimore Convention Center to develop policy proposals to meet this critical challenge. Through a concept called Open Space Technology, we created a participatory process that allowed the 400 participants to propose policy solutions, lead sessions to flesh these out, vote on the proposals and thereby, create a public policy action plan of the top 10 policy proposals.

Elected versus an appointed school board.

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?

The main goal of a school board should be to hold local school superintendents accountable to the best interests of the students. I agree with this goal. The pandemic has made the role of school board members more public and, at times, antagonistic with the best interests of school children – such as opposition to mask mandates. So, I am interested to see how the new hybrid model of appointed and elected members of the Baltimore School board works to best serve the interests of our school children

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?

The purpose of a K-12 education is for students to get a well-rounded education. This should include reading, math, social studies, science, physical education, and the arts. When there is too much emphasis on standardized tests, it is tempting for school systems to narrow the curriculum which can result in an education that lacks depth and breadth for students.

Standardized testing is a double-edged sword. Prior to its implementation, our state and others in the US had dramatic inequality in educational performance. Testing can help school leaders determine which students are performing and which are not and seek corrections to these trends. For Baltimore City, this is very important as often those students left behind academically are those of color or from poor neighborhoods.

However, we hear regularly that tests create incentives for teachers to teach to the test. This results in teachers not being able to determine for themselves what the students in their classrooms need in order to succeed.

Therefore, it seems that we need to find a balance of ensuring that standardized tests meet the need to ensure equality in learning while also ensuring that they are not over-emphasized and crowd out parts of academic learning.

In addition, we should avoid the result of teachers lacking creativity and individuality in how they approach teaching in the classrooms. This is why many teachers leave the teaching profession.

Vision for Baltimore Metropolitan Area and Maryland in General

19. 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?

When I talk with voters, the bad transportation system in Baltimore is a frequent complaint. Public transportation is critical for Baltimoreans' ability to get to work. Our current system is not reliable and creates long wait times for those needing to transfer between bus lines. The social enterprise, Good Harvest, for which I have worked for almost 10 years hires a large share of its staff who live on the west side of town. To get to Good Harvest by 6 a.m. on the far east part of Baltimore, staff without cars have to wake

up at 4 a.m. to catch a bus that often takes an hour to get to work and that often runs late. An inefficient public transportation system adversely affects our staff members' performance if they cannot get to work in a timely manner.

The Red Line should never have been cancelled by Governor Hogan as it would have provided much more efficient public transportation for workers traveling from the east to west sides of the city. Also, a lot of public money had been spent in planning the red line which was wasted when Hogan ended the program. Finally, the red line would cut carbon gases in the Baltimore area, which given its poor air quality, would have been a big help to the health of our residents.

I have also heard from senior citizens that the Mobility system of the MTA is inefficient and without the proper customer service.

20. 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?

I would support, and if I am serving on the right committee, introduce legislation that would make Maryland's tax code fairer. Everyone in our state – from families of relative wealth to corporations to other entities – must pay their fair share. This is particularly important for Baltimore which is a poor jurisdiction and therefore already has a disadvantage compared to the counties surrounding it.

21. 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 would support avoiding privatization as much as possible within state government. I agree with your premise that privatizing government functions reduces accountability, eliminates employees access to collective bargaining

and fair wages, and can lead to corruption as to how contracts are awarded. We see that in states that have privatized their prison systems. There may be instances – and these should be rare – when contracting with a private vendor makes more sense than creating a new workforce to get that service for the State. However, Maryland government would have to make the case to lawmakers as to why this is necessary.

22. 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?

I would oppose the privatization of these two facilities for three reasons. First, keeping these facilities run by the state allows for greater oversight so that the health and safety of the clients using the long-term care facilities is protected. This is especially important during a worldwide pandemic. Also, long term care facilities are facing significant challenges including recruiting staff and ensuring the safety of those who use the facilities during COVID, to name two. I would support keeping these facilities in government's hands so that Maryland can create state-of-the-art public facilities – to which private facilities can be measured. Government can be a role model for private facilities. Second, it is important that the state workers in these facilities not lose their hard-fought rights and working conditions through a privatization effort.

23. 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?

Marylanders in search of mental health and addiction services were dramatically underserved before the pandemic. And now, during this pandemic, the need for these services is at a crisis point.

Increasing private and public resources for treatment to be sure all Maryland residents have access to the care they need will be a priority for me as a state lawmaker.

There is a greater recognition today that millions of Baltimoreans have experienced trauma, which has many roots. This recognition also has shed

light on the deficit of mental health services available to these Baltimoreans seeking to heal from trauma. I applaud those public servants who are shedding light on this situation and proposing remedies to this situation.

If the issue were a lack of hospital beds for conditions other than mental health or drug treatment, state lawmakers would have found the funding to build new health facilities with lightning speed. It is stigma towards these specific conditions that keeps those Marylanders with mental health diagnoses and addictions without care. Therefore, we must also wage a continued public relations campaign to combat this irrational stigma that keeps people from care that they are due.

24. 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?

Vaccines and testing are integral to helping us put the worst of the pandemic behind us. As a State Delegate, I would work feverishly towards the following actions:

1. Ensuring that all State workers are vaccinated. This has happened at the federal level and the effort has been very successful. I would ensure that the state government efforts for full vaccination would use lessons learned from the federal efforts.
2. Testing must be expanded dramatically, particularly during this current time with the Omicron variant. It is unacceptable that people who fear that they have COVID19 must wait in long lines for either the take home tests or the tests that are administered at a pharmacy or clinic. State leaders must ramp up the supply of test through any means possible and as soon as possible.
3. It would help Maryland to be a model of COVID19 mitigation if the unions and management worked together to vaccinate their workforce. And this would increase trust between the parties as well.