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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

Todd Reynolds, Political Coordinator
AFT-Maryland, AFL-CIO
5800 Metro Drive, Suite 100
Baltimore, MD 21215

Fax: 410-764-3008
Email: treynolds@aftmd.org

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 House of Delegates

Candidate's name: Caylin Young

Address _____

Phone - _____

Email _____

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?

Liuna! (2018) _____

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?
 - a. As a former educator and sibling to a current BTU member, I understand many of the challenges that many of the folks represented by AFT face. This is especially important

given the changing dynamics your members have faced with the covid-19 pandemic as essential workers. I pledge to be a partner for your members, especially those within my district. I am a candidate who understands how to translate conversations about issues into legislation geared toward solutions, and I know that involving the folks directly impacted by policy is most important to crafting good policy.

- b. My campaign has been working hard to reach voters across the district, including knocking on over 5000 doors to date, raising over \$50k, and partnering with Senator Cory McCray to have a leadership team that can deliver results for our residents and your members.

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

- a. Yes, when I taught, I was a BTU member. I am currently a member of MAPS.

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, we must preserve the right to collectively bargain. We must expand this right to more areas of government workers in the same way we recently did for sheriff's officers in Baltimore city. I would support legislation to accomplish this.

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?

I would support and author legislation to increase the minimum wage to \$20 per hour by 2030 and index that number to inflation. The difficulty is that inflationary pressures are rising now. We need to consider adjusting the minimum wage now as a result. Even my aforementioned suggestion may be behind schedule.

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 support binding arbitration where good faith negotiations are not possible. This has especially occurred under the Hogan administration where many do not feel they negotiated in good faith. I would want to ensure the state is not placed in a circumstance that it could not fulfill, but otherwise this makes sense.

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?

The state must first seek to fill the many vacancies it has. over 10% of all state jobs are vacant, this has a negative impact on service delivery, quality, and employee work life balance -- thus contributing to attrition.

I would seek to pass legislation to mandate that the state to do a salary survey and analysis to ensure folks are compensated fairly and competitively with real equitable consideration for gender and race based under compensation.

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?

Yes, we should not place additional burden on our workers trying to take care of families on limited resources. I would support focusing this money back into reducing costs in a transparent way.

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?

Yes

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. I readily pledge to keep our retirees' prescription drug benefits where they are. Retirees who dedicate their lives to service in Baltimore City, whether for the City of Baltimore or Baltimore City Public Schools, deserve security in retirement.

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?

Yes

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?

We need to elect a governor who will fully fund the blueprint. Then we must work with local municipalities to ensure schools can deliver and teachers are supported with the resources they need. We must also reduce class sizes and determine how to combat learning loss from covid lockdowns.

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?

We should look at how we are leveraging our tax system to ensure we remain at the top in the nation for education. We must also seek opportunities to bring in new revenue that we can devote strictly to education. Furthermore, where casino and gambling revenue will continue to increase, we must ensure those funds remain in the lockbox for education.

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?

Paraprofessionals and SRPs are essential to the success of a school. We must value them in the same manner. What is also true, is when a person is compensated fairly, they will work better and harder. The state must recognize these truths and improve the financial supports provided to these workers.

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?

I would push to expand the program to restore more schools. We already are seeing the results of student who attend school in these newer buildings -- their achievement levels increase. This is no surprise. We must remain on schedule and look for more opportunities to do more.

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?

No and no. The employees need and deserve the same protections and we must ensure charter schools are high functioning with tax payer dollars. This is not an attack on the ones doing well, but it does mean we must work in partnership to ensure student success.

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 worked to abolish discriminatory practices related to BOOST as public Policy Director of the ACLU of Maryland. Where schools discriminate, their funding should be pulled. I am also a proponent of public dollars for public schools. I think we should be focused on providing education to all students, not just the well off.

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?

We must ensure workers are up to standard. We should not facilitate loopholes that avoid accountability and have a negative impact on student achievement. I am not aware of circumstances where I would support actions to the contrary.

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?

Teaching is the most difficult profession. We must ensure teachers are supported. This includes paraprofessional support and behavior management support in the classroom. I truly believe every classroom should have two adults, especially where a class size exceeds 20 students. Doing things like this will relieve the stress and challenges many teachers encounter regularly and may support their longevity and combat burnout.

19. 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?

I support a hybrid model with a majority of members elected. I do believe there is value in certain appointments for the Mayor and City Council. This allows the people to have the ultimate authority while allowing those elected to have some influence where appropriate.

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?

Standardized tests are a tool that can be helpful but we must understand that education is multifaceted and can not be quantified in a test alone. We need to be in the business of seeking out each student's gifts and developing those, while supporting their need for basic skills. We should also reassess what basic skills are needed in the digital age.

Vision for Baltimore Metropolitan Area and Maryland in General

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?

The bus system is not great and is not a system that causes people to prefer it over their cars. We need to expand multi-modal transportation that moves people from homes to jobs and other destination places around the state. We can do this with a combination of rail and alternative modes of travel like bikes and scooters. This will be costly but the state will recoup the funds in increased economic vibrancy and climate benefits.

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?

Yes, we should do all of the above to ensure everyone is paying their fair share and reducing the tax burden on working middle class families.

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?

NO

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?

NO and NO. I am aware of the effort by the governor to close these facilities and lease them out for \$1 a year. This is bad policy and negatively impacts the state, its residents, those served by these facilities and the employees.

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?

Yes

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?

It is important that we do not allow politics to govern public health crisis. Unions must be consulted in decisions to return to work. This must be balanced with the realities of the challenges we face with assurances that those who take the most risk are compensated accordingly.

