

Our Revolution Maryland: Montgomery County Chapter Questionnaire for General Assembly Candidates

Name: Marc Korman

Office sought: Delegate

District 16

About Our Revolution Maryland

Our Revolution Maryland, the State Chapter of Our Revolution, seeks to reclaim our democracy for the working people of our country by harnessing the transformative energy of the “political revolution,” by supporting a new generation of progressive leadership, empowering millions to fight for progressive change and elevating political consciousness. By transforming Maryland politics, Our Revolution Maryland aims to make our political and economic systems once again responsive to Maryland’s working families. Our Revolution Montgomery County seeks to promote economic, social and environmental justice and counter the corrupting influences of wealth and power through community organizing, political engagement, education and outreach.

Personal

1. What have you done professionally or as an activist that qualifies you for public office and that might stamp you as a candidate whom Our Revolution’s Montgomery members would want to support?

I am currently serving my first term in the House of Delegates and have a progressive voting record. Prior to being elected to the House, I was a Democratic Central Committee Member.

Campaign Finance

1. Do you support publicly financed General Assembly elections?

Yes, I introduced the State Legislature Local Public Campaign Financing Act (HB 227) which would allow local governments to establish public financing for state legislative races. I am a co-sponsor of the Maryland Small Donor Incentive Act (HB 785), which is Delegate Mosby's statewide legislation on the same topic.

2. Will you support legislation calling for a Constitutional Amendment or convention to overturn Citizens United and limit corporate donations (SB7/HB11)?

HJ 11 is being voted out of the Rules Committee and I will vote for it on the floor. However, I am extremely uneasy about calling for a constitutional convention. A constitutional convention opens the door to significant mischief by those with different values than mine. Although proponents assure us that a constitutional convention can be called for a narrow purpose—adopting a campaign finance-related amendment—there is really nothing to back that claim up. That said, the call for a convention can create some pressure on Congress for action.

3. Are you financing your campaign with any donations from PACs, corporations, large unions, or major developers?

The only contributions legally permitted that I do not accept are from Pepco and its lobbyists.

If Yes:

a. What percentage of your funds raised come from these sources?

I would estimate that such sources account for perhaps 5% of contributions on a combined basis.

b. What steps will you take to remain unbiased when legislation affecting these donors is being considered?

My top four donors are my parents and my in-laws. You can ask them if it has made me any more likely to do what they want.

Income & Wealth Inequality

4. Do you support enacting the \$15 minimum wage statewide and also phasing out the tip credit?

I am a co-sponsor of HB 664, the Fight for Fifteen legislation.

5. Our Revolution is committed to addressing growing income and wealth inequality. Please describe any changes to the tax code that you would support in order to achieve this goal.

I think the best way to make changes to the tax code is to tie revenue increases to specific goals. For example, an income tax surcharge on the very wealthy to fund pre-school or other education initiatives both serves the goal you are describing and funds a worthwhile program.

6. Will you support a bill (currently HB308/SB646) to decouple the Maryland Estate Tax exemption from the federal level? Do you wish to leave it at the current exemption level?

I am a co-sponsor of HB 308.

7. Will you support eliminating the property tax break for golf courses?

I did not vote in favor of this local legislation when it was before the Montgomery County Delegation.

Net Neutrality

Net neutrality is the principle that Internet Service Providers (ISPs) like Comcast & Verizon should not have control over what is viewed online, and should treat all data on the Internet equally, and not discriminate or charge differently by user, content, website, platform, application, type of attached equipment or method of communication. It recognizes the Internet as a common carrier.

8. Would you support a bill that would require ISPs operating in Montgomery County to abide by net neutrality protocols?

Yes ____ No ____

9. Would you support the development of County-owned ISPs?
Yes ____ No ____

The legislature is part-time and many of us have other jobs. Because of my day job as an attorney for clients affected by net neutrality legislation, I am recused from net neutrality legislation and cannot vote on the bills or participate in debate on the topic.

Transportation

10. What changes to revenue streams would you support to create funding for local transportation concerns including bike lanes and a sustainable, functioning Metro system?

In the short term, I support my own bill (HB 372) to divert funds from the state Transportation Trust Fund for increased and dedicated Metro fund. In the long term, we need to increase the amount of revenue in the Transportation Trust Fund as the gas tax generates less funds. Currently, the corporate income tax provides some funding to the trust fund and expanding similar sources will help increase our overall transportation funding.

11. Do you support expanding I-270 and I-495 (or other highway routes) or mass transit projects such as expanding MARC train service to be all day bi-directional and to include weekend service? In addition, please identify any transportation projects currently under consideration in Montgomery County that you particularly support or oppose and how you would prioritize them in allocating state funding.

The number one priority to me right now is dedicated funding for Metro. I support other investments in transportation such as the Purple Line, improved MARC service, Bus Rapid Transit, and so on. In terms of road projects, we are much better off targeting such investments than looking to significant mileage of additional lanes that will simply induce further demand and fill up quickly. That does not mean additional or reversible lanes, turn lanes, better signals, and other roadway improvements are not ever needed, but transit investments should be prioritized.

12. Gov. Hogan is proposing a package of \$5 billion dollars including tax breaks and infrastructure spending to entice Amazon to locate HQ2 in Montgomery County. What infrastructure projects do you think will be necessary to accommodate Amazon HQ2 locating in Montgomery County?

It depends on the location. Metro is a major part of why businesses locate in our area so funding that system and other transit connections will be a significant priority. If Amazon chooses Montgomery County and the location is announced, infrastructure in that area's sector or master plan should be built out including parks and schools.

13. Will you oppose any changes into the collective bargaining rules of WMATA that would weaken union rights?

Yes, I oppose such changes.

Housing

14. There is a rising rent affordability problem in Montgomery County. What would you do to protect existing tenants from unaffordable rent increases and displacement by development? Would you support a just cause eviction law? Are there other measures you would propose to stabilize rents?

I support a just cause eviction law. I voted to allow Delegate Wilkins to late file her just cause eviction legislation and look forward to working on the bill if re-elected.

Energy / Climate Change

15. Our Revolution Maryland is in support of achieving 100% renewable energy production no later than 2035, with the goal of zero carbon emissions - How will you help our state and county achieve this goal as soon as possible?

I am a co-sponsor of HB 878, the 100% renewable energy bill. I have also passed legislation related to energy storage devices, which is a critical component to the wide scale use of intermittent renewable sources. There is further work to be done on energy storage, however, including following

the lead of California, Oregon, and Massachusetts in setting requirements that utilities purchase a certain amount of energy storage capacity.

Environment

16. There is a bill under consideration which would prohibit state funding of any new installations or replacement of playing fields and playgrounds with synthetic polymer surfaces. Do you favor or oppose this legislation?

I am a co-sponsor of HB 505, the referenced legislation.

Health Care

17. Do you support a Maryland single-payer universal health care system insurance, in the absence of a national plan, to establish a single standard of quality, therapeutic care to all residents in the state?

Yes, I am co-sponsor of HB 660 and HB 1516 to start the state down this path.

Education

18. The Kirwan Commission report addresses the persistent achievement gap that continues to show up across the state including in Montgomery County. Do you agree with the recommendations of the Commission or is there another approach you favor to address the problem?

The Commission is continuing its work but I agree with the initial recommendations in the interim report.

19. Do you support debt-free post-secondary (vocational schools, community and college or university) education?

Yes.

Criminal Justice

20. What is your position on the bail reform imposed by the Maryland Court of Appeals? Do you support eliminating cash bail and/or other

reforms to prevent having anyone spend time in jail because of inability to pay bail?

I was one of the legislators who first wrote Attorney General Frosh asking about the constitutionality of our cash bail system. I was also one of the legislators who worked to beat back legislation from the bail industry seeking to overturn the Court of Appeals' rule.

21. Will you pledge to support laws that would allow authorized seizure of firearms from any person that represents a threat to the public? Will you support measures requiring anyone banned from purchasing guns to relinquish guns in their possession?

Yes. I support "Red Flag" legislation to remove guns from those representing a threat. I also support legislation to enforce the existing laws that an ineligible gun owner relinquish their firearms.

22. Would you champion legislation that ensures civilians are active participants in police trial boards, including the creation of a civilian review authority?

Yes, I am comfortable giving civilians a voice in this progress.

23. Do you support the SAFE Act, HB 1461, which would prevent Maryland law enforcement agents from inquiring about immigration status or turning over individuals to federal immigration authorities without a warrant?

I am a co-sponsor of HB 1461.

24. Do you support legalizing marijuana for recreational use in Maryland, would you co-sponsor in order to accomplish this goal? If yes, do you support pardoning and expungement of records for all persons in jail for cannabis possession or use?

Yes. I have co-sponsored such legislation in the past and am currently a co-sponsor of HB 1264 to put marijuana legalization (and taxation and regulation) on the ballot.

Equality for Women and for Minorities:

25. We live in a majority-minority community and yet there are noticeable gaps in economic wealth and disparities in academic success. What evidence do you see of overt discrimination against racial or ethnic minorities in Montgomery County and/or across Maryland? What will you do to push back against and address these problems? Please be as specific as you can.

Overt discrimination against minorities is awful and should be prohibited and prosecuted to the extent it is not currently being done. But quite honestly, I am much more concerned about de facto discrimination than de jure discrimination. Thankfully, we live in a state where de jure discrimination is viewed as unacceptable. De facto discrimination, where the effect of policies or decisions inadvertently discriminates, is much less understood and difficult to deal with. For example, last year we passed Delegate Wilkins' HB 1335, colloquially known as the "fuzzy dice" bill. This legislation prevents law enforcement from treating items hanging from rearview mirrors as a primary offense. On its fact, the existing law was not overtly discriminatory because it applied to everyone. But in reality, it was being used as a pretext to pull over minorities. Making it a secondary offense has improved the situation, but that is the type of de facto discrimination that needs to be rooted out.

26. Despite great social progress, women continue to be massively underrepresented in circles of authority including elected office. As we all know, women earn less than men. What will you do to advance real equality for women here in Maryland and in Montgomery County?

I am proud to be running on a ticket for re-election with two women: Senator Susan Lee and Delegate Ariana Kelly. In my personal life, I have been a supporter of Emerge Maryland because I think its mission of training women to run for office in a targeted and deliberate way is very important. I support policies such as gender balance on our Democratic Central Committee to ensure women are always at the table and represented.

Concluding Argument:

27. Is there one policy initiative you support that you would like to point to, in particular, as evidence that your priorities align with ours and give a final summation of why Our Revolution Maryland should endorse you?

I am pleased that your first question is about a bill I introduced on public financing of state legislative races. I look forward to working with you to make that a reality if I am re-elected. Thank you for engaging in this process.