

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MARYLAND STATE-OFFICE CANDIDATES

Hrant Jamgochian - Candidate for Maryland State Delegate, District 16

1. Healthcare

1A. As an individual or an elected official, did you take any actions last year to advance the national issue of universal, single-payer healthcare solution, and if so, what were those actions (to include taking a public stance and making contributions, *etc.*)?

I currently serve as the Director of Health Policy for United Way Worldwide. And when the health reform debate became extremely partisan I helped to ensure that we stayed at the table and worked to advance our priorities in the new law. Here is a good summary of all the issues I worked on in the new health law: <http://www.liveunited.org/PublicPolicy/upload/New-Federal-Health-Law.PDF>

My campaign website also has a terrific shot of me at the first White House Regional Health Forum on Health reform: http://www.friendsofhrant.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=93&Itemid=145

2 Environment

2A. Do you support increased funding for mass transit, as well as the Purple Line, and do you oppose the Inter County Connector (ICC) in particular?

Yes, I strongly support increased funding for mass transit, including implementation of the purple line, CCT and improvement to Metro. More roads like the ICC are not the answer to addressing our traffic concerns.

2B. Do you support limiting the Maryland pollutant runoffs reaching the Bay?

Yes.

2C. Do you support legislation that places stricter State-limits on gasoline consumption to force auto makers to create more efficient vehicles?

Yes. In fact, I also support an increased gas tax to help fund more public transportation and reduce driving.

3. Taxation

3A. Do you support a full, graduated income taxation solution for Maryland residents, including the "Millionaires' Tax; and eliminating tax breaks for wealthy individuals?

I definitely support a progressive tax structure, but am reluctant to increase taxes at this point, especially in the current economic climate.

3B. Do you support combined reporting for corporations, and imposing higher corporate tax rates in line with neighboring states?

I support increasing the corporate tax rate to that of our neighbors, but am reluctant to support combined reporting, because it will allow extremely profitable companies in our state to reduce their overall tax burden to us as they will be able to write-off the losses of subsidiaries on their returns.

3D. Do you support an increase in the alcohol tax?

Yes.

4. Courts & Imprisonment

4A. Do you support the repeal of the death penalty in Maryland?

Yes.

4B. Do you support policies/legislation to strengthen gang prevention in Maryland without punishing young victims of gang violence and intimidation, and further eroding communities where gangs dominate?

Yes. I believe in jail diversion in general, and worked during my tenure to enact the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act, which created our current mental health courts.

5. Immigrant Rights

5A. Do you support granting of Maryland drivers' licenses without any restrictions dependent on immigration status?

Yes. To me this issue is not about preventing illegal immigration, but rather about ensuring the safety of everyone on the roads. We should ensure that everyone in our state who is driving has a license as well as auto insurance. Or at least that will be my argument to my more conservative colleagues.

5B. Do you have a history of support for legislation to make Maryland a "sanctuary state" and/or are you willing to support it in the future? (In a sanctuary state, no agent, officer or employee of the state, may assist the U.S. Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement in the investigation or arrest of any persons for violation of the U.S. immigration and nationality laws.)

It sounds like the right thing to do, but I will have to do a little more research before I fully commit.

6. Women's Rights

6A. Do you support enacting state laws that require equal pay for equal work irrespective of gender?

Yes.

6B. Do you support women's access to government-funded abortion under MHIP, or have you opposed restrictions on those rights?

Yes, I support access to government funded abortion and received a 100% rating from NARAL.

7. LGBT Rights

7A. Do you have a history of advocating for legalizing same-sex marriages in Maryland, and for opposing restrictions on recognizing same-sex marriages performed in other jurisdictions?

I strongly support civil unions, and believe it is a matter of civil rights.

7B. Do you support Montgomery County's Gender Identity Law, and have you taken any actions to defend it when it was under attack, and if so, what actions; in addition, do you support a similar State-wide law?

I support the law, and was always raised to love your neighbor, so I cannot stand for discrimination of any kind.

8. Labor Rights

8A. Do you support the rights of Maryland's private and public-sector workers to have collective bargaining and union representation?

Yes.

9. Human Rights

9A. Outside of the context of health insurance reform and the other "rights" cited above, as an individual or an elected official, did you take any actions over the last six years to advance the needs of what is sometimes called "the underprivileged" (e.g., economically disadvantaged, mentally ill, developmentally disabled, etc.); and if so what were those actions?

At the American Psychological Association I worked to increase access to mental health services in general and helped to pass several state parity laws while building support for passage of the federal law. At the American Pharmacists Association I worked to secure a delay of the Medicaid Tamper-resistant

Prescription Pad Law, so that Medicaid patients would not be turned away at the pharmacy counter if their prescriptions were not written on the correct paper. At United Way Worldwide, I worked to improve the health of all Americans.

10. Education

10A. Do you support full funding of the Thornton Commission on Education Finance, Equity, and Excellence, and for opposing public funds being used for private schools (including the use of vouchers or the BOAST Bill)?

Yes.

10B. Do you oppose the current level of reliance on standardized test scores as the measure of student success and evaluating schools, or would you make changes, and if so, what changes would you make?

Yes. When reading this question I cannot stop thinking of all of the students that my mother has taught during her tenure. In particular, I remember how hard she worked with them on their history fair projects, the geography fair, math competitions, Shakespeare plays, chess club, and so many other activities well beyond regular school hours. So, I am struggling with concept of measuring the success of a student with one high-stakes test. Also, after speaking with so many of my mothers colleagues, I understand and appreciate what happens when you shift your efforts to teaching to a test and more importantly when adequate funding is not provided.

10C. Do you support the right for undocumented residents and their children to have equal access to the public school systems at all levels as apply to other State residents; for applying the same in-state college tuition, and for using the same formula for scholarships as applied to other State residents?

Yes.

11. Elections

11A. Do you support enacting State campaign finance reform and laws that curtail corporate influence on elections, and laws that enable voluntary public financing of campaigns for state offices in a way that would allow candidates to receive funding after demonstrating significant community support?

Yes. I worked on campaign finance reform during my tenure at the Fund For Public Interest Research.

11B. Do you support the right enfranchisement for all residents of Maryland, regardless of legal status.

If you pay taxes you should have the right to vote.

12. Peace and Anti-War

12A. Do you have a history of opposing the use of the Maryland National Guard in non-humanitarian military assignments in other countries?

No. However, I have worked for years to oppose conflict. As the descendant of an Armenian Genocide survivor I have worked extensively to support policies that advance peace.

13. Good Government

13A. Do you support enacting open government and transparency legislation that would include the public web-posting of the entire record and votes of all meetings/hearings of General Assembly official bodies at every level, including subcommittees; and the posting and sign-up sheets for all General Assembly hearings?

Yes.