

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MARYLAND STATE-OFFICE CANDIDATES

Neeta Datt

### 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.*)?

Answer 1A. **This is a very important issue to me and I have spoken with a number of potential constituents and organizations about how to advance universal, single-payer healthcare (I identify this issue in my campaign literature). Also, I have only supported those elected officials who support it. And finally, one of the reasons I served as Hub-Director for now-President Obama is because of his advocacy for universal healthcare.**

### 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?

Answer 2A. **Yes I support increased funding for mass transit, as well as the Purple Line. I started We Green MD, a grassroots organization with the aim of energy coservation and waste reduction. Enhanced public transport is a part of that program. It is also part of my election issues. Please see <http://www.neetadatt.com/top%20issues.html>**

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

Answer 2B. **Absolutely. Government intervention becomes necessary where CAFO-like industrial poultry/pork farm operations lead to degradation of water bodies. Action begins with State insistence on enforcement of laws such as the Clean Water Act. State departments of environment should also offer outreach services to farms for optimum ways and means to process and dispose organic waste. As the founder of We Green MD, a grassroots environmental protection and energy waste reduction group, I will be watching the issues arising from the Perdue/Hudson Farms type incidents very closely.**

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

Answer 2C. **Yes.**

### 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?

Answer 3A. **Yes.**

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

Answer 3B. **Yes.**

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

Answer 3D. **Yes.**

#### **4. Courts & Imprisonment**

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

Answer 4A. **Yes and, as a corollary, I would oppose any efforts to expand the class of those eligible for the death penalty.**

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?

Answer 4B. **Yes. We have lost sight of the "rehabilitation" prong of punishment and we need to provide young gang members hope and the prospect of change through education and prevention programs that target the real problems, i.e., socio-economic disparities, low-paying jobs, connection to community, etc.**

#### **5. Immigrant Rights**

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

Answer 5A. **I am very aware of how free granting of licences for air pilot training led to facilitation of the 9/11 attacks. In a post 9/11 world, an unqualified allowance of any kind has to be carefully considered.**

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.)

Answer 5B. **Yes. ICE is fully capable of conducting its own investigations etc., especially in a State like MD (not a border State).**

#### **6. Women's Rights**

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

Answer 6A. **Absolutely. Unfortunately, to this day women still only make \$0.77 to every \$1.00 earned by men for comperable men. I was disappointed with the recent US Supreme Court case that skirted this case of first impression (Beverly Ledbetter).**

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

Answer 6B. **Yes.**

## 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?

Answer 7A. **Yes.**

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?

Answer 7B. **Yes. A number of years ago the American Psychiatric Association removed "homosexuality" from its diagnostic manual (DSMR-III), and, finally, there is movement to remove transgender.**

## 8. Labor Rights

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

Answer 8A. **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?

Answer 9A. **I counsel and mentor high-school dropouts (focusing on minorities, young women, and the economically disadvantaged where the pressure to assist their families fiscally is the greatest), and provide encouragement and support to continue their education. Interviews with some such persons will soon be posted to my website at [www.NeetaDatt.com](http://www.NeetaDatt.com)**

## 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)?

Answer 10A. **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?

Answer 10B. **Yes. Standardized testing tends to hurt the lower-income, and we shouldn't be "teaching to the test".**

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?

Answer 10C. **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?

Answer 11A. **Yes. It is one of my priorities, and I am proving it in this election. Even though I have access to corporate funding, I am not accepting funds from any organization that can influence my independent stance once I take office. Through small contributions and volunteer efforts I have already raised enough funds to demonstrate viability.**

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

Answer 11B. **Once again, in a post 9/11 world, open enfranchisement of one and all is no longer an option. However, intelligent safeguards can still keep almost everybody enfranchised.**

### **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?

Answer 12A. **I support National Guard deployment for humanitarian/relief work in other countries, but not for combat.**

### **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?

Answer 13A. **Yes.**