



MCMC: Voter Recommendation Guide Process

In a challenging election cycle for our community, the Montgomery County Muslim Council (MCMC) has given deep thought and considerable discussion both internally and with community members in developing its 2026 Maryland Primary Election voter guide. In order to finalize our list of recommended candidates, we engaged in and leveraged numerous inputs, such as:

- Candidate meetings
 - MoCo County Executive race - MCMC conducted a Candidates Forum inclusive of all County Executive candidates. In addition, we have met with several of the candidates.
 - MoCo County Council At-Large race - MCMC conducted a Candidates Forum inclusive of all County Council At-Large candidates. MCMC also followed up and presented all candidates with a questionnaire, with most of the candidates providing responses.
 - MoCo County Council District races - while MCMC was unable to conduct a Candidates Forum for the respective County Council District candidates, all District candidates were presented with a questionnaire, with most of the candidates providing responses.
 - MoCo Board of Education (At-Large and District races) - MCMC conducted a Candidates Forum inclusive of all Board of Education candidates, both At-Large and District candidates.
- Meet and Greet events with numerous candidates
- Soliciting and reviewing candidate questionnaire responses (available on our website) for various offices
- Review of public engagements, such as candidate debates, news articles, etc.
- Background reviews and interviews with separate candidates
- Community input

Based on this process and numerous engagements, MCMC has developed a set of candidate recommendations which we feel best represents and aligns our community needs at the local, state, and national levels.

Governor / Lt. Governor / Comptroller / Attorney General

Recommendation: ***"No Recommendation"***





To be clear and direct, MCMC has decided to not formally endorse any candidate running for a statewide seat. Primarily, this is due to the fact that MCMC did not have the time and resources to perform its evaluation in a proper manner. In these scenarios, MCMC may choose to lean on its partners who have been more engaged at the State level. However, these partners also chose to not formally endorse any candidate running for a statewide seat.

As a result, MCMC felt it best to not provide a formal endorsement.

Congressional District 4

Recommendation: ***No Recommendation***

The incumbent, Glenn Ivey (D), has supported many anti-Muslim initiatives during his time in Congress, all the while being one of the largest recipients nationally of AIPAC funding. His opponent, primarily Jakeya Johnson (D), is a candidate we did not have an opportunity to meet or learn about more.. As a result, MCMC is not providing a recommendation for Congressional District 6.

Congressional District 6

Recommendation: ***April McLain Delaney (D)***

As the incumbent, Congresswoman McLain Delaney has demonstrated a mixed set of results in her first term in Congress. She has supported some bills and positions that align with our community, yet has remained silent on many others. We have had a few opportunities to engage with her and her staff, thereby establishing a working relationship and framework. The main opponent, former Congressman David Trone (D) also presents a mixed record. While both have had some decent accomplishments while holding this office, both have not been strong in their support for Gaza and Palestinian rights amongst other topics. Another candidate, Ethan Wechtaluk, presents a strong platform but MCMC did not have the opportunity to engage him. After reading, researching and listening to many public engagements and statements, as well as evaluating its current level of engagement with both candidates and determining whom we can continue to work with better in the near future, MCMC concluded that while there is much work to be done, Ms. McLain Delaney represents the best opportunity for engagement by our community. As a result, MCMC suggests placing a vote for April Delaney in Congressional District 6.

Congressional District 8





Recommendation: **Jamie Raskin (D)**

The incumbent, Jamie Raskin (D), has rapidly been rising up the ranks in the House of Representatives. On the issue of Palestine/Gaza, Mr. Raskin has had mixed results but has shown his continued willingness to engage and hear from his Muslim constituents. Mr. Raskin has also publicly called for the need to significantly increase humanitarian aid in Gaza, and has cosponsored the Block the Bombs Act (H.R. 3565). As a result, MCMC recommends placing a vote for Jamie Raskin in Congressional District 8.

Montgomery County Executive

Recommendation: **Will Jawondo**

In a hotly contested race which includes 3 current sitting Montgomery County Councilmembers, MCMC has spent much of its effort on this race. MCMC has established relationships with most of the candidates, and also conducted a candidates forum to better understand each candidate's platform and position on specific issues important to our community, such as but not limited to protecting our houses of worship, identifying and placing members of our community within their administration, affordable housing, and not funding the MIDC now or in the future. We can work with many of these candidates. Yet it was clear that through our conversations, candidate forums, and reviewing platform positions and voting records, Will Jawondo was positioned to lead Montgomery County. As a result, MCMC recommends placing a vote for Will Jawondo for Montgomery County Executive.

MoCo County Council At-Large

Recommendation: **Fatmata Barrie | Radwan Chowdhury | Marc Elrich**

MCMC also conducted a candidates forum for the Montgomery County Council At-Large race. In addition, MCMC sent each candidate a questionnaire with numerous topics important to our community. While there are 4 At-Large Council positions available, through this evaluation process MCMC determined that there are 3 candidates that best represent our community and that of greater Montgomery County: Fatmata Barrie, Radwan Chowdhury, and Marc Elrich. As a result, MCMC suggests placing votes for Fatmata Barrie, Radwan Chowdhury, and Marc Elrich for Montgomery County Council At-Large.

MoCo County Council District





Recommendations:

- District 1 - **Debbie Spielberg**
- District 2 - **Marilyn Balcombe**
- District 3 - **Izola "Zola" Shaw**
- District 4 - **Kate Stewart**
- District 5 - **Kristin Mink**
- District 6 - **Natali Fani-Gonzalez**
- District 7 - **Dawn Luedtke**

While MCMC was unable to conduct a candidates forum for the numerous MoCo Council District races, all candidates were sent a detailed questionnaire based on topics important to our community. In addition, MCMC has been able to establish relationships with many of these candidates to better understand their platform and governing principles. As a result, MCMC suggests placing votes as described above for each of the MoCo Council District races..

Montgomery County Board of Education

While there are many topics and issues of concern for our community with respect to the MCPS school system, some of the most important revolved around protection of and freedom of speech, better reporting mechanisms for acts of hate, bullying, protecting and advocating for Islam's 2 Eid holidays to properly be represented as a non-instructional day, and more. Through execution of an in-depth candidates forum, as well as lengthy and in-depth engagements with each BOE candidate, MCMC concludes the following recommendations:

At Large: **Wylea Chase**

Of the 4 candidates vying for a single At-Large seat on the Board of Education, it was clear that one candidate - Wylea Chase - most affirmatively represented the positions and needs of our community. This included protection of Eid holidays as 'non-instructional' days, a fierce protection of freedom of speech by students, faculty, and staff, and working to update MCPS's policies and procedures for hate, bias, and bullying reporting. A few other candidates conveyed acceptable positions, but none were as clear as Wylea Chase.

District 3: **Sally A. McCarthy**

A recommendation in the District 3 race was not as clear, as there were a handful of candidates that presented strong positions that aligned with our community. Of these, 2 stood out - Sally McCarthy and Andrew Frykman. Upon further evaluation of MCMC's Board of Education





candidate forum, as well as candidate questionnaire responses, MCMC determined that both candidates were serve well on the Board of Education, but Sally McCarthy possesses a strong level of executive experience and leadership.

District 5: ***No Recommendation***

Although the District 5 race is uncontested, MCMC was unable to meet with the candidate and they were not able to attend MCMC's BOE candidate forum. As a result, MCMC did not feel it possessed the necessary information to make a recommendation.

Summary/Conclusion

Please note – virtually all candidates for the varied open races are not perfect candidates. The reality is we must find common ground on as many policy issues as possible, and focus on our ability as a community and the willingness of each candidate to work with us moving forward. In addition, in some cases certain candidates failed to respond to our queries in spite of follow up, or declined to participate in our forums. We were forced to eliminate such candidates from consideration, not having a way to assess their positions. This may have included at times candidates whose positions may find favor with some members of our community.

Montgomery County Muslim Council (MCMC) is a non-partisan organization, focusing its voter recommendations on the values and interests of our community. This process is influenced by the political landscape of Maryland and Maryland election law.

We recognize this process, in spite of its rigor, does involve some level of judgment. We have tried to do it as best as possible within the limitations of our resources and candidates' willingness to work with us, and pray to Allah, the Most Merciful, to keep guiding us to act in the way that pleases Him and serves our community best.

Board of Directors

Montgomery County Muslim Council

