

## Question 1

Topic: Civil Rights

Montgomery County is one of the most diverse counties in the nation. Accordingly, many MoCo residents who are members of the Arab and Muslim community have engaged in public protests but have unfortunately experienced a curtailing of their first amendment rights to free speech. This includes doxxing, student and teacher suspensions, unequal response by local police.

1. What are your thoughts on the county's response thus far, in light of what was just shared? What has worked? What has not worked?

We are unfortunately governed by one-party rule in the county for over 4 decades and this has caused policies and government reactions to be unchecked. This reality has eroded basic civil rights where people who question the county government's policies, from any angle, are deemed the enemy of it and are targeted. You see this everyday with parents when they have concerns about their children's school materials, etc. Nothing will change in terms of all communities in the county being respected under the law if democrats continue to govern. We don't have checks and balances in our county, unfortunately.

2. What specific steps will you take to protect the free speech of residents and students, regardless of their positions on issues? What is your stance on the county's response to peaceful advocacy and protests? How will you protect the free speech rights of residents on local and global issues?

When elected in November, I'll make sure all residents have the voice to express their support or not of the policies enacted in the council and create community outreach sessions without 2-3-minute time restraints for residents to express their opinions. I'm here to serve you, the residents, and not the other way around.

## Question 2

Topic: Non-Profit Support

Many Muslim-led non-profits, like MCMF (Montgomery County Muslim Foundation), provide critical social services that the county cannot. Some may not even be aware of grant funding opportunities let alone have experience applying for competitive grants.

1. How will you ensure an equitable approach to communicating and granting funding for faith-based community organizations?

I'll push for a full audit of all county finances for the last 5 years, which will include review and analysis of all the fraud, waste, and abuse on the council funding over 13K NGOs in the county

to see if they're really doing what they say they're doing. I'll support full transparency of awarding county money to the NGOs based on merit and actual benefits to the county.

### Question 3

Topic: Housing and Displacement

Montgomery County is becoming increasingly unaffordable.

1. What do you propose to prevent current skyrocketing housing costs across Montgomery County, especially with residents facing record high interest rates?

Housing costs in Montgomery County are rising because demand continues to outpace supply, while high interest rates have made both renting and homeownership significantly more expensive. To address this, I will focus on increasing housing supply in a targeted way—expanding “missing middle” housing like townhomes and duplexes near transit and job centers, while streamlining permitting and reducing unnecessary regulatory costs that drive up prices. At the same time, new development must include meaningful affordability requirements, ensuring workforce housing is built alongside market-rate units and preserving existing affordable housing before it disappears.

I'll also work to provide direct relief to residents struggling with high borrowing costs by expanding down payment assistance, offering temporary interest rate buydowns, and supporting innovative financing options for first-time buyers. For renters, stability matters, but policies must be balanced so they don't discourage new construction. Ultimately, the solution is a practical, balanced approach: build more housing, lower the cost of development, and give residents real tools to afford living in the community.

As an economist, we don't need rent control, but rather we need the market dynamics to play out by addressing supply, it's that simple.

2. What is your plan to prevent the displacement of immigrant and low-income families, who have been disproportionately impacted?

Preventing displacement—especially for immigrant and low-income families—requires acting early, not after communities have already been priced out. In Montgomery County, I will work to focus on preserving existing affordable housing by expanding acquisition and preservation funds, strengthening tenant protections against unjust evictions, and providing legal support so vulnerable residents can stay in their homes. We should also invest in community land trusts and nonprofit housing models that keep housing permanently affordable, while requiring that new development includes units affordable to working families—not just market-rate housing.

At the same time, we need to address the root causes of displacement by lowering cost pressures and improving access to opportunity. That means expanding rental assistance and emergency stabilization funds, increasing language access so immigrant families can fully navigate housing programs, and supporting pathways to homeownership through down payment assistance and shared-equity models. Displacement isn't just a housing issue—it's an economic stability issue—so the goal is to ensure long-term affordability while keeping communities intact as the county grows. All legal residents need protection and assistance.

#### Question 4

Topic: Housing and Displacement

For many families (1st generation, 2nd generation, immigrant, etc.), transit is a lifeline.

1. What are your specific plans to improve the reliability of public transportation (such as the Ride-On bus system and completion of Purple Line, and more), as well as pedestrian safety in all parts of the county, but especially in the Up-County region?

I propose creating a Upcounty Transportation Authority manned and run by residents who live in up county, who will determine the parameters to address the transportation shortcomings. This initiative will be funded via the full audit I will push for once in office, which will identify funds for this project. I envision having a public transportation system that is tailored for upcounty residents that will be complementary to the central system based down county.

#### Question 5

Topic: Healthcare Access

Health insurance - and healthcare costs generally - continue to rise, making access to healthcare nearly impossible for some in our county.

1. What legislative measures will you support to bridge the gap in healthcare access for uninsured or under-insured residents in our community?

The current financial situation in the county is fragile and unique as we're under an economic recession, which ultimately bodes negatively for additional expenditures for health care assistance.

However, bridging gaps in healthcare access starts with making coverage more affordable and care easier to reach. In Montgomery County, I would support expanding subsidies and eligibility for Medicaid and strengthening the state's individual marketplace to reduce premiums and out-of-pocket costs for under-insured residents. I would also back legislation to create or expand a state-based public option, giving families a lower-cost alternative when private plans are unaffordable.

Access isn't just about insurance—it's about actually getting care. I would support increased funding for community health centers, mental health services, and mobile clinics in underserved areas, along with stronger language access requirements so immigrant families can navigate the system. Expanding telehealth, supporting workforce incentives to bring more providers into shortage areas, and investing in preventive care will help reduce long-term costs while ensuring residents can get timely, quality care regardless of income or insurance status.

2. What legislation could you introduce or expand to bolster funding for free or reduced cost health clinics run by nonprofits in our county, such as medical clinics run by MCC (Muslim Community Center) and ICM (Islamic Center of Maryland)?

Given the current fragile fiscal situation in Montgomery County, any effort to support nonprofit clinics must be targeted, efficient, and sustainable. I would introduce legislation to create a dedicated but fiscally responsible Community Health Access Fund that prioritizes clinics like Muslim Community Center and Islamic Center of Maryland through matching grants that leverage private donations rather than relying solely on new public spending. I would also expand Medicaid reimbursement eligibility for preventive services delivered by qualified nonprofit clinics, reduce operational costs through liability protections and streamlined licensing for volunteer providers, and strengthen partnerships with hospital systems to direct existing community benefit dollars toward these clinics. The goal is to stabilize and expand care for uninsured residents without placing unsustainable strain on the county's budget.

#### Question 6

Topic: County Budget

Fiscal responsibility and balancing the budget in coordination with the rest of the County Council and County Executive is a paramount responsibility of the County At-Large seat.

1. Do you support tax cuts, tax increases, or maintaining the status quo?

I do not support broad tax increases. The priority should be restoring fiscal discipline, improving accountability, and ensuring taxpayer dollars are used efficiently before asking residents to pay more. Rather than maintaining the status quo, I support a more responsible approach that limits the tax burden on families and businesses while addressing wasteful spending and ineffective policies.

2. Regardless of your approach, how would you propose paying for many of the county's programs?

I would propose paying for county programs by prioritizing responsible budgeting and stronger oversight of existing funds rather than raising taxes. That means conducting thorough reviews of county spending, identifying inefficiencies, and eliminating wasteful or low-impact programs so

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resources can be redirected to core priorities. We should require clear cost-benefit analysis for major initiatives, ensure transparency in how funds are allocated, and leverage public-private partnerships where appropriate. The goal is to make government more efficient and accountable so we can sustain essential services without placing additional financial strain on residents and businesses.