

2026 Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Sheila Ruth

Position: Delegate

District: 44B

What are your unique strengths for this position? What committee(s) would you like to serve on and why?

I am running for re-election to the Maryland House of Delegates, where I've served since 2020. I am on the Environment and Transportation committee, which I'm fortunate to serve on, since it would have been my first choice. I also serve as one of Maryland's representatives on the Chesapeake Bay Commission.

Being a legislator is not as simple as introducing bills and presenting testimony. It requires patience, fortitude, strategic planning, and an ability to work well with others. It requires knowing when to compromise and when to draw the line. It takes time to develop the skills to be an effective legislator, and I believe that in the 6 years I have been in the General Assembly I have learned to be effective.

I have introduced and passed bills to enhance appliance energy and water efficiency, improve transit equity, require the State Highway Administration to develop plans for pollinator habitats along highways, require new building construction and renovations to install water bottle filling stations, protect drivers and wildlife by beginning the planning for wildlife crossings and habitat connectivity, and add a workgroup to study improving outcomes for substance use disorder. I have also through my committee work contributed to many important bills.

Issues that I plan to continue working on include universal healthcare, reducing plastic waste and toxic chemicals like PFAS, and holding the oil and gas companies accountable for the impacts of climate change that are a result of their deceptive and fraudulent behavior.

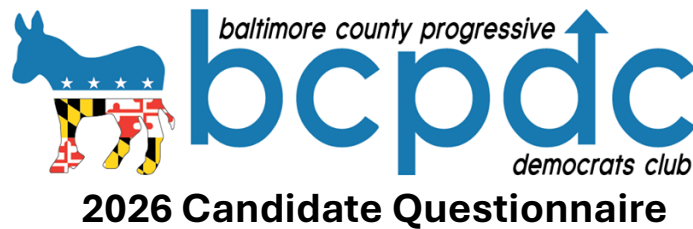
What legislation would you introduce/sponsor to address economic inequality in Maryland?

Healthcare is an economic issue. No one should die or go into debt for lack of healthcare. I've been fighting for universal, single-payer healthcare, because the care you receive shouldn't depend on how much you can pay.

I also support lowering the estate tax exemption, not only to generate additional revenue, but because inherited wealth is one of the drivers of economic inequality.

What would you do to address the impacts of climate change in Maryland and how would you encourage growth without degrading our environment and natural resources?

The oil and gas companies have known since the 1970's that their product would cause climate change, and their own scientists predicted where we are today with startling accuracy. Yet they chose to hide what they knew and engage in propaganda to cast doubt on the science in order to continue to make massive profits. One of my bills would hold them accountable by authorizing the Attorney General to file suits for the impacts of climate change that we are seeing today, because those whose fraudulent actions caused the damage should pay for it, not Maryland's taxpayers. I have worked closely with the AG on ensuring



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that the language of the bill gives him what he needs, and I'm hopeful that it will pass this year.

I also supported the Renew act, both in its original form and in the study that passed. I intend to vote to override the governor's veto.

I am also working to reduce our reliance on single-use plastic. Plastic fills up the landfills, sheds microplastics, and releases toxic chemicals. Further, plastic is made from oil, so the production of plastic contributes to climate change.

What legislation would you introduce and/or sponsor to ensure Marylanders' rights and wellbeing in the face of current federal policies? Please address protections for women, the LGBTQ+ community, and all populations under threat.

Protecting Marylanders from the federal assaults on civil rights and human rights has to be our highest priority. Last session I voted to ban 287g contacts, which unfortunately didn't pass, and I intend to support it again. I would also co-sponsor and support bills that would prohibit law enforcement from wearing masks and require them to identify themselves, and to further limit local law enforcement cooperation on immigration enforcement if needed. I have always supported protections for the LGBTQ+ community and will continue to do so. In all cases, I would be guided by the priorities of members of affected communities, who should be the ones to decide what they need. I am also deeply concerned about the use of artificial intelligence to create deepfake pornography, and I would co-sponsor and support any legislation to prohibit and penalize it.

How do you plan to address the funding shortfall that will soon reach Maryland due to Federal budget cuts to education, infrastructure, disaster response (FEMA) and others?

It's very difficult to pass any kind of revenue in an election year, but given the size of the projected deficit I don't see how we can manage it without at least some revenues. It's well past time to pass combined reporting, and I don't understand why it hasn't passed already. I also support lowering the estate tax exemption from \$5 million to \$2 million; I think that \$2 million is plenty to pass on to your heirs untaxed, and lowering the exemption would not only be additional revenue but would also help to reduce one of the drivers of wealth inequality.