

Metro DC DSA CANDIDATE ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

(approved by the General Body, August 2021)

Basic information

1. Name:
2. Current Occupation (if applicable):
3. Party Affiliation:
4. Have you been a public servant before? What positions and when?
5. How long have you lived in your jurisdiction?
6. Which office are you seeking?
7. Why are you seeking this office?
8. Why are you soliciting Metro DC DSA's endorsement for this office?
9. Please list other significant endorsements you've received for this position or for prior races:

DSA and democratic socialism

1. Are you a member of DSA? If not, would you join? Why or why not?
2. How does the campaign you are planning and the office that you are considering relate to your theory of social change?
3. Do you identify as a democratic socialist? Why?
4. Are you willing to run publicly as a democratic socialist? *[Yes/No]*
5. Will you be willing to run with other DSA-endorsed candidates as a slate? *[Yes/No]*
6. Will you publicize DSA's endorsement? *[Yes/No]*
7. Will you pledge not to take any campaign contributions from for-profit corporations or for-profit corporate PACs? *[Yes/No]*
8. Will you pledge not to take any campaign contributions from real estate developers, corporate lobbyists, and landlords? *[Yes/No]*
9. Will you pledge not to take any campaign contributions or endorsements from organizations in the carceral system (such as law enforcement unions)? *[Yes/No]*
10. Are you open to working with DSA when developing your platform? *[Yes/No]*
11. Will you allow Metro DC DSA to create campaign materials to distribute during its work on your campaign? *[Yes/No]*
12. DSA has a large and active volunteer base. Will you support DSA training our own volunteers, running our own canvases, and campaigning openly as DSA members? *[Yes/No]*
13. Will you allow DSA to collaborate with you on your field plan and program? *[Yes/No]*
14. Will you allow DSA to keep copies of all data we collect through voter contact, if legal in your jurisdiction? *[Yes/No]*

Goals of your campaign

15. What is your estimated number of votes needed to win?
16. What are your plans, beyond what Metro DC DSA can bring to the table, for obtaining the number of votes needed to win?
17. What are the issues that will distinguish you from other candidates? How are those issues popular with the electorate?
 - 17.1. If you are challenging an incumbent, what distinguishes you from the incumbent? Why would you be an improvement over the incumbent?
18. How much money will you need to successfully compete in this race and what is your plan to raise it?
19. What relationships do you have in your district that could form a base of support, through activism, organizing, work or personal networks?
20. What endorsements do you have from elected officials, political organizations, unions and community leaders? What other endorsements are you seeking and why?
21. How will you use your campaign to build Metro DC DSA? Democratic socialism in DC/Maryland/Virginia?
22. How do you strike the balance between your positions as a socialist and your ability to appeal to the broader electorate?

Goals in office

23. Would you be open to having DSA members as staff in policy positions and/or to collaborating with our working groups on policy?
24. Will you agree to appear periodically at DSA meetings in your district?
25. Will you endorse and campaign for other DSA endorsed candidates in the future?
26. How will you use your office, if elected, to build socialism and working class power?
27. If elected, what are your top 3 priorities?
28. How will you implement those priorities, given that you will likely face opposition from other elected officials?

Questions for incumbents

1. Tell us about a success/political win you championed/led that created material wins/improved conditions for the working class in your district?
2. What obstacles did you face in office and how do you plan to address these obstacles if re-elected?

Metro DC DSA Priorities

In February 2021, Metro DC DSA voted to approve four priority campaigns: Defund MPD, Stomp Out Slumlords (housing justice), Green New Deal and Labor. These priorities are subject to annual changes.

Defunding MPD and abolition

MDC DSA's Defund MPD Working Group is organizing in coalition with Black-led and racial justice organizations to defund the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department, remove police from schools, and free our neighbors from occupation and incarceration as a path towards abolition — a world without cops and prisons. As part of our vision for racial and economic justice, we demand that the funding removed from police and prisons be reinvested in real public safety: housing, schools, jobs, healthcare and mental health services, community-based support programs, violence interruption, and other public goods and services. This aspiration is a core part of our vision of socialism.

MDC DSA has endorsed the [demands](#) of the Defund MPD coalition, including reducing funding for MPD by 50% over the next three years. In Montgomery County, MD, Metro DC DSA participates in the Defund and Reinvest Coalition (see demands [here](#))

1. Do you support defunding the police in your jurisdiction? Why?
2. What actions would you take in office to shift power away from the police?
3. What actions would you take in office to end mass incarceration?
4. Do you support removing school resource officers from schools?
5. Many local police departments participate in training with Israeli military and/or police in what opponents of such programs call the “Deadly Exchange,” furthering practices of surveillance, militarization and racist violence and policing. Would you support ending these police exchanges?
6. Which demands of the Defund MPD coalition do you support? Why?
7. Do you disagree with the ideas behind the demands of the Defund MPD coalition? Why?

Stomp Out Slumlords and housing justice

Stomp Out Slumlords (SOS) fights evictions and supports tenant organizing throughout the Washington metro area. The group began in 2017 as an effort to canvas tenants threatened with eviction to educate them about their rights and encourage them to defend themselves in court. Since then, SOS has gradually focused more and more on organizing tenant unions and going on the offensive to demand concessions from major landlords and developers.

During the pandemic, SOS committed to the movement to cancel rent and expanded their organizing efforts into more than 25 buildings in and around DC and supported rent strikes in most of them. Since the spring 2020, they have mobilized hundreds of people to protest politicians and landlords and stop illegal evictions through direct action.

SOS is now one of the largest and most militant tenant organizations in the region, and they have won rent forgiveness plans from big developers and played an important role in getting and defending some of the nation's strongest emergency tenant protections.

Metro DC DSA is also a member of the [Reclaim Rent Control coalition](#), which seeks to expand and strengthen current rent control laws in DC.

1. Do you believe guaranteed housing is a human right?
2. What steps would you take to expand renter protections in your jurisdiction?
3. What steps would you take to expand rent control in your jurisdiction?
4. What will do to increase affordable housing in your jurisdiction?
5. Do you support ending exclusionary zoning?

Green New Deal

Metro DC DSA's Green New Deal campaign organizes to fight the existential crisis of capitalist-driven climate change and environmental racism in the DMV area.

As a grassroots movement, they build and exercise power through labor and tenant unions, electoral campaigns, diverse coalition-building, political education, and policy change. Their vision is to decommodify and guarantee human needs, democratize and decarbonize the economy by 2030, and repair the generational effects of oppression and displacement of Black, Indigenous, and people of color.

Metro DC DSA is a member of the [We Power DC](#) (WPDC) coalition. WPDC's goal is to replace Pepco with a democratically-run municipal utility rooted in the principles of energy democracy. This coalition launched in October 2019 as the #NoPepcoPledge, which asked DC Council candidates to reject donations from Pepco and support a feasibility study on alternative utility models. The group's current demands include utility debt forgiveness, a permanent ban on utility shut offs and union wages for all Pepco contractors.

1. Do you support municipalizing utilities in your jurisdiction? Why or why not?
2. Do you support ending utility shut offs and forgiving utility debt in your jurisdiction? Why or why not?
3. Will you accept donations from energy utilities?
4. What steps should your jurisdiction take to decarbonize the economy by 2030? How will you ensure that this happens?

Labor

The Labor Working Group organizes with workers, including DSA members, from across the region to fight bad bosses, build new unions, and turn out for solidarity actions. Organizing the working class in their workplaces, whether through traditional collective bargaining and unions or other types of organizations, is central to socialist thought and practice. Especially here in the DMV, unions are diverse working-class organizations that build multi-racial solidarity through collective action for community transformation.

1. How will you support public sector unions in your jurisdiction?

2. How will you expand union density in the DC area?
3. How will you support collective bargaining and the right to strike in your jurisdiction?
4. Do you support increasing the minimum wage in your jurisdiction?

Other issues

Palestine

In 2017, the Democratic Socialists of America adopted a resolution at its national convention in support of Palestinian civil society's call for a global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement until Israel ends its illegal colonization of Palestinian lands, ensures equal rights for Palestinians living within Israel, and guarantees the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes.

Maryland Governor Larry Hogan [issued](#) an executive order in 2017 prohibiting executive agencies from entering into procurement contracts with business entities that engage in boycotts of Israel or territories occupied by Israel. The Maryland General Assembly has also debated and passed bills declaring that it is the policy of the state to oppose public institutions' support for boycotts for Palestinian rights.

In 2016, Virginia lawmakers [passed](#) a non-binding resolution that officially condemns boycotts for Palestinian rights. Two other measures, which would have become binding laws, have failed. These measures include a 2016 anti-boycott bill and a 2017 effort to redefine antisemitism under Virginia's antidiscrimination law to include advocacy for Palestinian rights.

Metro DC DSA expects that any endorsed candidates and public official would oppose anti-BDS legislation and vocally support Palestinian rights.

1. Do you support the Palestinian call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) to pressure Israel until it complies with international law by ending the occupation, instituting equal rights for its Palestinian citizens and respecting Palestinian refugees' right to return? *[Yes/No]*

Would you like to expand on your answer?

2. Do you pledge to refrain from accepting any invitation from the Israeli government or participating in any event sponsored by it, until it fully complies with its obligations under international law? *[Yes/No]*

Would you like to expand on your answer?

3. Do you pledge to oppose any official adoption of a redefinition of antisemitism to include opposition to Israel's policies or legal system, or support for non-violent measures meant to press for changes in Israeli policies or laws? *[Yes/No]*

Would you like to expand on your answer?

4. Do you oppose state legislative and executive efforts that penalize individuals, universities and entities that boycott Israel? *[Yes/No]*

Would you like to expand on your answer?

Racial justice

1. How would you use your office to combat racism in the educational system?
2. How would you address racism in access to employment and the racial wealth gap?

Health justice

1. Do you believe that healthcare is a human right? What actions would you take to support universal healthcare?
2. How would you support ending medical debt?
3. How would you support expanding abortion rights?

Migrant justice

1. Do you support classifying and publicly announcing your jurisdiction as a sanctuary for undocumented immigrants?
2. Do you support the unconditional abolition of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE)?
3. Do you support prohibiting local law enforcement from cooperating with ICE or participating in deportation activities?
4. Will you oppose the operation of any migrant detention facility in your jurisdiction (whether run by ICE, another government agency, or privately run), and oppose the transfer of any migrants in your jurisdiction to such facilities?