

RESOLUTION TITLE

Resolution to Approve a Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire for the Metro DC DSA Chapter.

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BACKGROUND

1. **Whereas**, at the 2020 Local Convention, members of the Metro DC Democratic Socialists of America amended [our chapter Bylaws](#) to create the Political Engagement Committee;
2. **Whereas**, the Political Engagement Committee (PEC) was tasked with, among other things, “compil[ing] requirements and deadlines involved in the endorsement process into a public, reader-friendly document that will be approved by the Steering Committee”;
3. **Whereas**, at [a meeting on June 22, 2021](#), the Steering Committee approved the [Candidate Endorsement Process for Metro DC DSA](#).
4. **Whereas**, the PEC was also tasked with, among other things, “distribut[ing] questionnaires approved by the general body to candidates and provide information about the chapter’s endorsement process”;
5. **Whereas**, Metro DC DSA last updated its Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire in 2019;
6. **Whereas**, the PEC held several meetings open to all members to seek input on the chapter’s endorsement process and what questions should be included in a Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire;
7. **Whereas**, the Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire incorporates feedback from the aforementioned PEC meetings with members and includes questions relevant to the four priority campaigns that the Metro DC DSA General Body democratically selected in February 2021;
8. **And, Whereas**, per Section 6.1.4 of the Metro DC DSA Bylaws, the Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire requires the approval of the General Body.

RESOLUTION

1. **Therefore, be it resolved**, that the Metro DC DSA General Body approves the Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire written below;
2. **And, be it finally resolved**, that the Metro DC DSA General Body permits and directs the Political Engagement Committee to forward the Candidate Endorsement

Questionnaire in response to all queries for the chapter's endorsement of candidates for elected office in the region within the chapter's jurisdiction.

CANDIDATE ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Basic information

1. Name: **Gabriel Acevero**
2. Current Occupation (if applicable): **State Delegate**
3. Party Affiliation: **Democrat**
4. Have you been a public servant before? **Yes**. What positions and when? **State Delegate 2019-present.**
5. How long have you lived in your jurisdiction? **Over a decade**
6. Which office are you seeking? **Re-election – State Delegate**
7. Why are you seeking this office? **To build on the legislative work I started.**
8. Why are you soliciting Metro DC DSA's endorsement for this office? **As a member of Metro DC DSA, I'm seeking my organization's endorsement/support to advance our shared values as well as socialist policies in Maryland.**
9. Please list other significant endorsements you've received for this position or for prior races: **CASA, Our Revolution, Progressive Maryland, MCEA/MSEA, SEIU Local 500, SEIU 32BJ, SEIU 1199, UNITE Here Local 25, Metropolitan Washington AFL CIO, Maryland State AFL CIO.**

DSA and democratic socialism

1. Are you a member of DSA? **Yes**. 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? **We must organize our community, resources and then power if we ever hope to change the material conditions of oppressed people. I believe social change can occur outside of elective office, however, I also believe we need strong elected officials who will unapologetically fight for a working class agenda that prioritizes the people and disrupts politics as usual.**
3. Do you identify as a democratic socialist? **Yes**. Why? **I consider myself a "Dr. King Democratic Socialist"**
4. Are you willing to run publicly as a democratic socialist? **Yes [Yes/No]**
5. Will you be willing to run with other DSA-endorsed candidates as a slate? **Yes [Yes/No]**
6. Will you publicize DSA's endorsement? **Yes [Yes/No]**
7. Will you pledge not to take any campaign contributions from for-profit corporations or for-profit corporate PACs? **Yes [Yes/No]**
8. Will you pledge not to take any campaign contributions from real estate developers, corporate lobbyists, and landlords? **Yes [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 [Yes/No]**
10. Are you open to working with DSA when developing your platform? **Yes [Yes/No]**

11. Will you allow Metro DC DSA to create campaign materials to distribute during its work on your campaign? **Yes [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 [Yes/No]**
13. Will you allow DSA to collaborate with you on your field plan and program? **Yes [Yes/No]**
14. Will you allow DSA to keep copies of all data we collect through voter contact, if legal in your jurisdiction? **Yes [Yes/No]**

Goals of your campaign

15. What is your estimated number of votes needed to win? **6,000**
16. What are your plans, beyond what Metro DC DSA can bring to the table, for obtaining the number of votes needed to win? **Organizing, Fundraising and Door knocking.**
17. What are the issues that will distinguish you from other candidates? How are those issues popular with the electorate? **Universal Basic Income, police transparency and accountability and Medicare for All.**
 - 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? **\$50K+**
19. What relationships do you have in your district that could form a base of support, through activism, organizing, work or personal networks? **As a community organizer and State Delegate, I've cultivated relationships with organizations representing various communities in D39 as well as I have a body of work I can point to in the community.**
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? **By organizing with Metro DC DSA both inside and outside the legislature on our shared values as well as socialist policies.**
22. How do you strike the balance between your positions as a socialist and your ability to appeal to the broader electorate? **I fight for the working class and those left behind by an economy that prioritizes profit over people. My district is a diverse, working class district and the issues I advocate for in Annapolis such as transit, healthcare, the environment, public safety and economic justice are all priorities of the electorate. I'll continue to communicate my vision for a better district, county, and state and advocate for the socialist policies I believe would squarely address the challenges we face.**

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? **Yes.**
24. Will you agree to appear periodically at DSA meetings in your district? **Yes.**
25. Will you endorse and campaign for other DSA endorsed candidates in the future? **Yes**

26. How will you use your office, if elected, to build socialism and working class power? **By continuing to organize with DSA, labor unions and progressive groups both inside and outside the legislature on a working class agenda.**
27. If elected, what are your top 3 priorities? **Ending police violence, Medicare for All and Universal Basic Income.**
28. How will you implement those priorities, given that you will likely face opposition from other elected officials? **By building countywide/statewide coalitions and organizing support for legislative priorities.**

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? **Anton's Law - legislation that I introduced and helped pass that fundamentally shifts the way law enforcement is held accountable as well as increases transparency by reforming the Maryland Public information Act.**
2. What obstacles did you face in office and how do you plan to address these obstacles if re-elected? **Incrementalism. And I intend to address it by building countywide/statewide coalitions, organizing support for legislative priorities, and supporting DSA candidates for office.**

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? **Yes. Why? We can't police our way to prosperity.**
2. What actions would you take in office to shift power away from the police? **I've introduced legislation that would repeal the LEOBR, end qualified immunity in state**

- court, statewide use of force policy, remove police or SROs from schools and helped pass police transparency legislation named for Anton Black.
3. What actions would you take in office to end mass incarceration? **Through increased investments in education, housing, transit, and mental health resources as well as legalizing cannabis and decriminalizing poverty.**
 4. Do you support removing school resource officers from schools? **Yes, I've introduced and will continue for the passage of the Police Free Schools Act that ends the damaging practice of armed police in 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? **Yes.**
 6. Which demands of the Defund MPD coalition do you support? **All. Why? I believe we must divest from the carceral state and invest in social infrastructure that will truly keep us safe. While I do not have jurisdiction in DC, I'll continue to show solidarity and support efforts to Defund MPD and refund our communities.**
 7. Do you disagree with the ideas behind the demands of the Defund MPD coalition? **No. Solidarity. 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? **Yes.**
2. What steps would you take to expand renter protections in your jurisdiction? **I've supported and will continue to fight for the passage of Just Cause eviction legislation.**
3. What steps would you take to expand rent control in your jurisdiction? **Supporting efforts at the local level as well as introducing rent control legislation at the state level.**
4. What will you do to increase affordable housing in your jurisdiction? **Support efforts at the local level to dismantle exclusionary zoning.**
5. Do you support ending exclusionary zoning? **Yes.**

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? **Yes**. Why or why not?
2. Do you support ending utility shut offs and forgiving utility debt in your jurisdiction? **Yes**. Why or why not?
3. Will you accept donations from energy utilities? **No**
4. What steps should your jurisdiction take to decarbonize the economy by 2030? How will you ensure that this happens? **By supporting transit and renewable energy investments, as well as efforts to divest from fossil fuel, phase out incinerators, and Maryland's reliance on coal for energy.**

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? **By supporting organizing efforts, stronger contracts for public sector union members and increased funding for public services.**
2. How will you expand union density in the DC area? **I've introduced collective bargaining rights legislation, helped pass collective bargaining rights for community college employees and will continue to show up in solidarity for all workers and labor unions.**
3. How will you support collective bargaining and the right to strike in your jurisdiction? **By sponsoring collective bargaining legislation, joining union picket lines and demanding a strong contract for unionized workers.**

4. Do you support increasing the minimum wage in your jurisdiction? **Yes, I voted in favor of legislation that raises the minimum wage in Maryland to 15/hr and believe any effort to increase the minimum wage must include indexing and tipped workers.**

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.** [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.** [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.** [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.** [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? **By decolonizing school curriculums so an accurate account of history is taught as well as creating pathways for more educators of color into the classroom. I'll continue to introduce my bill that would create the Commission on History, Culture and Civics in Education to examine and work with state and local Boards of Education on our curriculum and culturally responsive pedagogy.**
2. How would you address racism in access to employment and the racial wealth gap?
 1. **Reparations.**
 2. **Stronger labor laws and union density in industries where workers of color are overrepresented.**
 3. **Increasing MBE participation in state contracting.**
 4. **Free tuition at Maryland public universities.**
 5. **Working with trade unions to support, promote and invest in apprenticeship programs.**

Health justice

1. Do you believe that healthcare is a human right? **Yes.** What actions would you take to support universal healthcare? **I've introduced the Healthy Maryland Act, legislation that when passed would make Medicare for All a reality in Maryland.**
2. How would you support ending medical debt? **I've co-sponsored legislation that ends medical debt in Maryland.**
3. How would you support expanding abortion rights? **I'm fortunate to live in a state that has some of the strongest protections for abortion rights in the country. As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I'll continue to fight for health care funding that includes access to abortion services for everyone who needs it.**

Migrant justice

1. Do you support classifying and publicly announcing your jurisdiction as a sanctuary for undocumented immigrants? **Yes.**
2. Do you support the unconditional abolition of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE)? **Yes.**
3. Do you support prohibiting local law enforcement from cooperating with ICE or participating in deportation activities? **Yes.**

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? **Yes.**