

ETHICS BALLOT QUESTIONNAIRE

Howard County General Election 2022

County Executive

Congratulations on your decision to run for Howard County Executive. The People's Voice is a civic/political organization in Howard and Montgomery Counties. We have over 4,000 members in Howard County and sponsor the non-partisan Ethics Ballot. If you would like to seek endorsement please return this Questionnaire to EthicsBallot@Gmail.com by midnight September 20, 2022. Please note that all questionnaires are published on the website, www.EthicsBallot.com. We will be in touch regarding endorsement dates soon after getting the questionnaires back. We pride ourselves on working hard for our endorsed candidates, and look forward to hearing your positions on important County issues. THANK YOU so very much for your time!

Be sure to address all aspects of each question.

Name: Allan Kittleman

Campaign Address/Phone/Email: 3375 Ellicott Center Drive, #1517, Ellicott City, MD 21042

(443) 340-7398

phil@kittleman.com

Educational History: University of Maryland School of Law, Juris Doctor with Honors
1988

University of Maryland, College Park - Education courses
including a semester as a Student Teacher (HCPSS Glenelg HS &
Dunloggin MS), 1983 - 1984

University of Maryland, Baltimore County - BS Political Science
1981

Howard County Public Schools - Atholton HS 1976

Languages Spoken/Other Skills/Relevant Experience:

Howard County Executive, 2014 - 2018

Maryland State Senate, District 9, 2004 - 2014

Howard County Council, District 5, 1998 - 2004

1. Why are you participating, or not, in the Citizens Election fund? How do you address concerns about conflicts of interest?

When I announced my candidacy last September, I made a commitment to participate in the Citizens' Election Fund (CEF), Howard County's public campaign finance program. The goal of this program is to end big money influence in politics by limiting donations from individuals to no more than \$250 for the entire election, as well as prohibiting donations from any businesses, PACs, or other special interest groups.

I made history by becoming the first County Executive candidate to announce that I would be participating in the CEF, and then made history as the first County Executive candidate to be certified in the program. My campaign has been funded strictly by small dollar donations from individuals, while my opponent, Calvin Ball, has continued to raise significant funds from PACs, developers, and other special interests. Ball has received more than \$675,000 from special interests, including more than \$85,000 from one developer alone.

While I vetoed the bill to create the CEF, I have always been a proponent of public campaign financing. As a State Senator, I voted for the bill that allowed local jurisdictions to create public campaign financing programs. My only concern was that Howard County's program was funded through taxpayer dollars, while state and federal programs are funded voluntarily through a check-off box on your taxes. I lost that policy battle, but still believe strongly in the program.

I believe government must be accountable to the people—not influenced by deep-pocketed groups trying to buy favors. My campaign is building the largest grassroots campaign in Howard County history and we're demonstrating that we can successfully get big money out of our local government.

Additionally, I have pledged to continue my participation in the program when elected County Executive this November to ensure that special interests play no role in decision-making, which will mark the first time in Howard County history that the County Executive will not accept large dollar donations while in office.

2. What do you believe are the three most important issues currently facing Howard County? What are your plans to address these?

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We live in an amazing county. I have been fortunate to have been born here and to raise my family here. I can't think of a better place to call home. But we've lost our way the last four years under the current county executive. Our county is less safe, development is outpacing infrastructure, and our schools have become more and more political.

We need a more effective Howard County Police Department. And let me start by saying that I don't direct that statement to our brave police officers. The trouble is that we have allowed politics to play too much of a role in how we allow our officers to do their jobs. As some officers have confided in me, we have become more reactive and less proactive in protecting our community. They feel that way because they don't feel support from the current county executive. That will change when I am County Executive, and while I will get into more details in the following questions, it starts with leadership at the top.

I will also curb irresponsible development and deliver on community revitalization. Immediately, I will restart the failed planning process under the Ball administration and bring the community to the table to reevaluate the future growth planned in HoCo By Design—the county's 20-year General Plan update. I will also strengthen community participation in reviewing the County's development management tool—the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance.

Not only that, but I will take action to revitalize declining community assets, including revisiting the innovative plans to replace the Long Reach Village Center that County Executive Ball let fall apart. We had a community-driven plan to turn the Village Center into a showcase for affordable housing, renewable energy use, as well as serving as a community meeting place. I am committed to taking action when elected to provide Long Reach with the community hub it has so long deserved.

Finally, and most importantly, I will work to make the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) stronger and safer. On the first day of my administration, I will reverse County Executive Ball's policy of removing School Resource Officers and authorize them to return to HCPSS Middle Schools.

I will work with HCPSS leadership to end the policy of giving greater weight to socioeconomic factors when redistricting and focus on giving the students the support they need in their community schools. I will advocate for parents to have a greater voice in the school system, and ensure all students have the resources they need to be successful. In addition, I will pursue new approaches to school capacity issues, such as a Public-Private Partnership (P3) construction model. I will also fully fund Special Education.

These next four years are crucial for the future of our communities, and I believe we need new leadership to get Howard County back on track.

3. The Hoco By Design plan originally had several different density proposals. The updated plan presents regional planning goals instead. Please note what proposals you support and what changes you feel are necessary before finalizing the plan. Include your positions regarding both residential and commercial land use plans.

I have heard from many who participated in the process that they felt the outcomes have been pre-determined from the start. I think it is hugely important to let community input shape the plan, and that is why, when elected, I will ensure the community has the opportunity to comprehensively review the proposed plan. I also believe that future planning should place a stronger emphasis on our commercial sector. A healthy commercial property tax base reduces the burden on the residential tax base because commercial properties require less services. We also have some incredible opportunities to grow our commercial sector in Long Reach, Oakland Mills, along the Rt. 1 corridor, and in Gateway. I am excited for where Howard County can go, and I look forward to truly making that a reality with greater community involvement.

4. Currently, the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) pauses residential development for a maximum of four years before proceeding, independent of school capacities. Do you believe this should be changed?

When I took office in 2014, the APFO had not been comprehensively reviewed since 2000. I brought all stakeholders together to evaluate APFO. This was a key component of my last administration, and as a result of their hard work, one recommendation was to review APFO after each General Plan update. I look forward to re-establishing a task force after the general plan update is finished and ensure stronger community representation on it. The task force will ensure all infrastructure capacity is analyzed, including schools, roads and public safety, as well as ensure accurate data on the number of students generated from new/existing development. We need to have the accurate data and evaluation in order to ensure our current infrastructure is able to handle development before allowing more. I will also ask the task force to evaluate other aspects of APFO including when, and the length of time, a residential development can be delayed or paused.

5. What do you believe are the best methods to provide more affordable housing units? What do you believe are the pros and cons of our current policies? Do you believe that State or County funded housing trust funds should be utilized to provide affordable housing? If so, should they be restricted to government usage and not private projects? Why or why not?

It's important to ensure we have a full spectrum residential housing, including affordable housing with access to transportation, jobs, and resources. In addition to current approaches, we should explore developing Land Trusts. Used successfully in other jurisdictions, including Frederick County, Land Trusts allow home ownership and

provide the opportunity for families to build intergenerational wealth. This is a great opportunity that should be evaluated comprehensively within the General Plan update. Unfortunately, due to re-election concerns, Dr. Ball postponed the General Plan update after spending \$100,000's on consultants. The update must review affordable housing in a more comprehensive and inclusive manner, including innovative ways to add affordable units such as through Land Trusts. I look forward to bringing the community to the table and moving creative programs like this forward.

6. How would you specifically, as County Executive, accelerate school construction and acquisition of school sites? Are you willing to budget for high school 14 sooner than the current 2031 plan?

I think we have to start thinking out of the box to ensure our school system has the capacity it needs to teach our children. As County Executive previously, I pioneered a Public-Private Partnership for a new Courthouse, and that project has since received international recognition. I believe we should look at a P3 model for school construction, and also look at expanding our existing schools upward. With limited land available to build new schools, we have to look at growing capacity at our existing schools, and I really believe that a P3 approach would generate the largest improvement per dollar.

In 2018, I established a community task force to evaluate potential sites for a high school in Elkridge. After reviewing numerous sites, the task force recommended that the high school be built in Troy Park. I will ensure that we have both the land and the budget ready to move forward on HS 14 in Elkridge when we receive state authorization. I am committed to ensuring that we have great learning environments for our students in their communities.

7. Do you believe our current storm water management regulations and forest conservation requirements are adequate? What would you change, if anything?

My record has proven a strong commitment to water quality by achieving the MS4 permit at almost \$300 million less than original projections, because we used competition and innovative practices to stretch every dollar. I certainly feel that as we look at infill development, the current regulations are not accounting enough for downstream impacts, and that is something we need to take a stronger look at. I was recently touring the Dunloggin community and heard from one resident that it cost him \$50,000 in improvements to fix the flooding caused by upstream infill development. We should not allow infill development to harm others, and we should also ensure our forest conservation regulations are adequately preserving our environment. Looking at our forest conservation regulations in the context of a Green Infrastructure Network is an important way to ensure that we are doing just that.

8. As the Howard County senior population continues to increase, how would you address their service needs?

It's clear that recent tax hikes by County Executive Ball are compounding record inflation and are making it even harder for seniors to live here. We should be working harder to keep them in Howard County. Our seniors are incredible assets in our community providing institutional knowledge and incredible volunteer service to those in need. I am committed to reducing taxes across the board, and to also expanding the Aging in Place Tax Credit that I instituted, as well as the Senior Tax Credit. While these are important steps, they are not enough, and I would continue to work with the senior community to ensure they have access to the resources they need, including quality transportation options.

9. How do you propose to improve public transportation?

When I took office in 2014, it was clear our transit system was broken. People couldn't even rely on the bus making it to its destination because the fleet was in disrepair. During my term, we replaced over half of the fleet, and worked with the community to begin to redo the route structure so that it took people to where they needed to go. This was just a start, and I think the next step we need to take is harnessing the power of technology. By embracing even small concepts like Traffic Signal Prioritization to improve travel reliability, to working with the Ubers and the Lyfts of the world to operate paratransit more effectively, there are a lot of ways to immediately improve our public transit system. We also have to think outside-of-the-box and work to deliver concepts like Bus Rapid Transit to Washington, D.C. by working with Montgomery County. Technology is one of the greatest ways that we can immediately improve the quality of transit in Howard County and that is where we need to take our system next.

10. What changes do you believe are necessary to address public safety concerns in Howard County?

As I already mentioned, I will tackle rising violent crime rates by leading our Police Department and redirecting HCPD officers and resources to focus on community-based practices aimed to serve, protect, and foster stronger relationships with residents and businesses. I will immediately order a review of available county-wide resources that could be used to address operational gaps, including crisis services and aviation support. Finally, I will equip officers with the training, tools, and support they need to effectively do their jobs. We have tremendous officers in HCPD, and at the end of the day, they just need to know their leader will have their back. That is exactly what I will do, and with that support and coordination with the community, I know we will be able to address this growing problem.

11. Would you support the creation of an independent office of inspector general in Howard County?

I am committed to working on legislation to create an independent Office of the Inspector General on Day One. I am also committed to seeking state authority to expand the Office's oversight to include HCPSS and Howard Community College. This will give the community another advocate to ensure that no matter who is in charge, the community can trust that their institutions will be kept in check. After County Executive Ball and his administration violated the Public Information Act and the Open Meetings law, we need to restore the people's trust in their government, and this is one step we can take immediately to put us on that path. Not only that, but it is an opportunity to ensure stronger community access and oversight to our most important institutions. I look forward to creating this office and giving it the support it needs to be an important community safeguard.

12. What are your views on current County taxes and services? Are there any taxes you would propose to change? How would services or programs be impacted by your decisions?

Economically, we need to make Howard County a more affordable place to live and work. The pandemic has had a crippling impact on businesses and households across the country. Even a prosperous place such as Howard County wasn't immune to the impact. While I can't blame Calvin Ball for the pandemic or record inflation, his policies have compounded the damage. Simply put, under Calvin Ball we have become overtaxed.

Unlike County Executive Ball, I am committed to cutting taxes and putting money back into the pockets of our hard-working residents and businesses, and we can do this without hurting county services. This year, the County will see an additional \$80M in revenue growth. Not only that, but the Fire Tax, which Calvin Ball raised 34%, is generating tens of millions more than what is needed. We are on pace to have over \$70M just sitting in the fire fund next year. Those funds shouldn't be sitting in a line item in a budget -- they should be back in our local economy, especially during these difficult inflationary times. That is why I am committed to cutting the fire tax and expanding other tax credits to put more money back into our local economy. Over my next term, we will give over \$70 million back without hurting services, because simply, Calvin Ball is overtaxing our residents and small businesses.

13. How would you ensure diversity and varied advocacy views are represented in County decision-making?

I think my record proves that I strongly value diversity and community input in decision-

making. As you may have heard from me before, I believe that if you aren't at the table, you are on the menu. I maintained a strong and diverse leadership team throughout my previous term, and I am committed to doing so again. I also not only created new advocacy avenues through programs like the PlanHoward Academy, but also went out to meet the public through at least 4 town halls a year. I believe in my heart that as County Executive, I work for you. I will never ignore your opinion or leave an event without hearing from everybody who wants to share their thoughts. I want to make sure everybody has a seat at the table, and I would continue that philosophy as your next County Executive.

14. What do you believe are the top financial priorities in the budget, given so many competing needs for resources?

Our school system, and ensuring our students are receiving an excellent and safe education, has to be our top priority. As a component of that, I believe we need to return and expand our School Resource Officer program. They are critical to preventing school violence and are also specially trained to de-escalate incidents. We need to give our SRO program new life, but looking more broadly at the rising violent crime rates in our community, we also have to ensure our police officers have the tools they need to do their jobs effectively. Giving our students a world-class education safely in a community school would be a top priority of mine.

15. What do you believe the County should be doing to address climate change concerns?

In Howard County, people need to look no further than Ellicott City to witness the impact of climate change on the environment. The devastating floods in 2016 and 2018 demonstrate the escalating frequency and severity of weather events. The county and its residents have to better prepare for the impacts of climate change through more resilient infrastructure, as well as work to reduce its impacts. As county executive, I finalized a Climate Action Plan started by the Ulman administration, as well as took other steps to improve the county's energy stewardship. I hired the county's first Energy Manager to work in the community to incentivize the use of more renewable energy. We also extended the Residential High Performance Building Tax Credit and established a Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy program to incentivize improved energy efficiency throughout the county. In addition, we also expanded the county's electric transit bus fleet and brought on board the first ambulance that would run on battery while in park to reduce emissions – almost 150,000 lbs of CO2 over its life.

Looking ahead, I see even more opportunities to be good stewards of our environment, including encouraging rooftop solar on commercial buildings in the Route 1 corridor, where there is more opportunity and better access to the electric grid. I think we all know that much more needs to be done to reduce, and mitigate, the impacts of climate change,

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and I am committed to building upon the work we did and keep Howard County on a path to environmental sustainability.

By Authority: The People's Voice, Lisa Markovitz Treasurer