

ETHICS BALLOT QUESTIONNAIRE

County Council Primary 2026

Name/District: Shamioka Preston, Howard County Council District 4

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Educational History

I hold an MBA in Marketing and have professional training in marketing, technology implementation, and financial services. My formal education is complemented by decades of hands-on leadership through PTAs, nonprofit and civic organizations, and community advocacy.

Languages Spoken / Other Skills / Relevant Experience

I bring strong skills in coalition-building, public communication, data analysis, and ethical decision-making. My professional background includes work in regulated industries, along with deep grassroots organizing experience.

1. Why are you running for this office? (Non-Incumbents: Please describe how your campaign is viable.)

When my neighborhood faced a proposal from WR Grace, our corporate neighbor, a multi-national chemical company headquartered in Howard County, to burn plastics next to our homes, I stepped up to protect my community. That experience opened my eyes to how local decisions are made and how deeply they affect our families. It strengthened my resolve to make sure every voice in Howard County is heard and valued.

I am running for County Council because I have seen how decisions made locally can deeply affect families, neighborhoods, and trust in government. My focus is on building a Howard County that works for every family, every community, and every generation.

My commitment is simple: I'm **Working for the People** of Howard County.

I'm proud to be running a publicly financed campaign that is fueled by the people, no big money, or special interests. Choosing public financing was important to me because I am committed to being a trusted member of the community. I want it to be abundantly clear that I am accountable only to the residents of Howard County. My campaign reflects my belief that government should work for the people and be funded by the people it serves.

My campaign is viable because it is people-powered and rooted in real community work. Over the past year, I have organized neighbors, worked with PTAs and countywide civic organizations, testified before public bodies at the county and state level, and built broad relationships across Howard County. And the community is responding well to my campaign! Though I kicked off just 2 months ago, I am only a few donors away from meeting my 125 Howard County donor goal for public finance candidates. I anticipate meeting my goal within the coming days.

2. What qualifications do you uniquely bring to this office? What experience do you have with the County Council? Have you testified before it?

I have testified before the County Council many times for various issues, including environmental protection, school funding, and government transparency. In each case, my positions emphasize responsible government, supporting residents' needs, and in support of policies that prioritize community well-being.

3. Are you using the Citizens Election Fund (CEF)? Why or why not?

Yes. I am using the Citizens Election Fund because ethical leadership begins with how campaigns are funded. Public financing reflects an accountability to residents rather than special interests and strengthens public trust in local government.

4. If elected, what are your top priorities for 2026? (Discuss at least three areas in need of change under the purview of the County Council.)

My top 3 priorities are:

- 1) Fully funding schools
- 2) Lowering costs for families and seniors
- 3) Providing transparency in government

Fully funding our public schools is important for Howard County to remain an attractive place for families to live, work, and raise children. Strong schools are not only an education issue; they are fundamental to long-term

community success. I will prioritize budgets that support instructional quality, educator retention, student services, and investment in facilities maintenance.

My second priority is supporting family affordability and stability. Federal decisions are increasingly creating funding gaps in healthcare, childcare, and housing. The County must be proactive in mitigating these costs to families. I will propose and support policies that reduce financial pressure on residents so they can remain in the county.

I also support the aging in place tax credits for our seniors. Our seniors deserve to live affordably in the county they helped to build.

Thirdly, I will work to restore trust in local government by ensuring decisions are made with regard for the people we serve. We cannot do anything effective for the residents of our county if we are not transparent in our decision-making. As a council member, I will model what I believe it means to have good government: clear communications, partnership with key constituents, and openness.

Most importantly, I want to bring young people into the conversation. Having attended many council meetings, I've seen firsthand how many issues that come before the Council directly affect students and how often young people themselves testify about the impact on their lives. I want to interact directly with students to understand their needs and ensure our policies are conducive to their success and growth in the county.

5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current County Council? How have you worked with people with diverse positions?

In my opinion, many members of the current County Council should listen more to the residents instead of prioritizing our corporate neighbors. I believe that because of this, the council has lost the trust of many county residents. Additionally, decision-making seems to become less transparent as the weeks go on, as evidenced by the many closed sessions this Fall and Winter. In my opinion, closed sessions should be an occasional occurrence, not an every other week event!

I have demonstrated my ability to work with people holding diverse viewpoints by building coalitions that include parents, civic associations, educators, environmental advocates, and elected officials. I focus on listening, identifying shared goals, and grounding decisions in transparency, data, and community impact.

6. What are your funding priorities for the County? What changes should be made compared to past budgets?

My funding priorities include using council funding discretion and proposing legislation that will:

- Increase the amount of funding for the operating budget for our public schools
- Increase the capital budget annually to catch up on renovations

- Lower costs for families and seniors, which may mean subsidizing health care or child care costs

Given growing uncertainty at the federal level, the County must plan responsibly for reduced or inconsistent federal support in areas such as healthcare, childcare, and food and housing insecurity.

Rather than placing additional pressure on local families, I believe the County should focus on smarter allocation of existing resources, using PAYGO and transfer taxes to fund the above priorities and increase transparency around budget decisions.

7. Residential growth and APFO. Should growth increase or decrease? What changes should occur to APFO?

I support carefully managed residential and commercial growth that aligns with infrastructure capacity and environmental limits. Growth should respond to clearly identified needs. I hear the word affordability often, and we assume people want to rent affordably. They also want to buy affordably to build a legacy for their families.

The Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance must apply to every housing unit that is built, without exemptions

I support APFO standards for schools. I believe that by fully funding our schools, we can reach the goals of all of our county stakeholders. We will continue to be a growing county with well-educated, well-paid residents. In order to meet their needs, we must build and preserve housing that middle-income families, people born and raised in Howard County, and our public sector professionals want and can afford. We need to build homes for people who work locally so they can live in the community they serve.

When residents can live near where they work, businesses benefit from a stable workforce, families benefit from stronger schools and shorter commutes, and the County becomes more competitive overall.

Schools, roads, and public services must keep pace with development, and APFO should be strengthened as a planning and accountability tool.

8. What is your position on locations for new multiplexes and/or ADUs? Include owner occupancy and by-right vs. conditional use.

I support multiplexes and accessory dwelling units as part of a broader housing strategy. These housing types can increase supply, support multigenerational families, and help address affordability.

At the same time, location and scale matter. We need better management of where and how these units are built to ensure infrastructure can support them and neighborhoods remain livable. Conditional use and clear standards should remain available tools where appropriate.

The Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance must apply to every housing unit that is built, without exemptions

9. How can the County best increase the supply of affordable housing?

Howard County needs housing solutions that allow residents to build long-term stability, not just rent indefinitely. I strongly support mixed-income homes for purchase so families can build generational wealth and so people who work in our schools, hospitals, and public service roles can afford to live where they serve.

Strategies should include preserving existing affordable units, incentivizing mixed-income ownership models and rental models across the county using public-private partnerships to deliver long-term affordability.

10. What are your positions on low- and moderate-income housing levels? What policies would you sponsor or support?

Current levels of low- and moderate-income housing do not fully meet the needs of our workforce or longtime residents. The County Council has a responsibility to ensure housing policies support access, stability, and opportunity.

I would support strengthening inclusionary zoning, promoting homeownership opportunities, and ensuring County-controlled tools expand housing access without concentrating poverty or wealth or displacing communities.

11. What is your position on County-funded housing trusts?

I support County-funded housing trusts with strong transparency, clear performance metrics, and long-term affordability requirements. Funds should support public and nonprofit partners when they deliver measurable community benefits, particularly for ownership opportunities and workforce housing. And they should deliver adequate, affordable housing, not just marketing terminology to gain county financial support.

12. How do you feel about large-scale commercial uses on preserved agricultural land?

Preserved agricultural land should remain focused on agriculture and environmental stewardship. While I am open to innovation, large-scale commercial or industrial uses must be carefully evaluated.

I am particularly concerned about uses involving chemicals, unproven processes, or activities that negatively impact nearby residents, water, or ecosystems. Preservation policies should not be undermined by uses that conflict with their original purpose.

13. What is your position on using PayGo funds for deferred HCPSS maintenance?

I support the HB 1450 recommendations regarding funding HCPSS maintenance. Investing in existing public assets is fiscally responsible and helps avoid more costly repairs in the future.

Using PayGo funds strategically for deferred maintenance is appropriate as part of a balanced approach that preserves flexibility for other infrastructure needs.

14. What is your position on the ENR cap on excise taxes and MIHU fees?

Given current federal uncertainty, I am cautious about placing additional financial pressure on local families. I believe the County should prioritize efficient use of existing revenue, transparency, and long-term planning.

At the same time, the Council should retain flexibility to ensure funding mechanisms reflect real-world costs and infrastructure needs without defaulting to increased burdens on residents.

15. Should County volunteer boards receive legal or regulatory training? What is your opinion of the Board of Appeals?

Yes. County volunteer boards should receive appropriate legal and regulatory training to promote fairness, consistency, and public confidence. Clear procedures protect applicants, residents, and the integrity of the process.

The Board of Appeals requires but is not held to a high standard of legal understanding, impartiality, and respect for community. I am concerned when Board decisions appear disconnected from residents' lived experiences or override professional expertise without clear justification. I believe the Board's rules, procedures, and accountability mechanisms should be revisited, including legislation proposed in mid-2025.