

# The People's Voice, LLC

## Ethics Ballot™

3600 Saint Johns Lane, Suite D, Ellicott City, MD 21042

### ETHICS BALLOT QUESTIONNAIRE

#### Howard County Legislative Primary 2022

Congratulations on your decision to run for Howard County State Delegate. 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](mailto:EthicsBallot@Gmail.com) by midnight May 24, 2022. Please note that all questionnaires are published on the website, [www.EthicsBallot.com](http://www.EthicsBallot.com). We will be in touch regarding endorsement dates soon after getting the questionnaires back. We pride ourselves in 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/District: Vanessa Atterbeary/District 13

Campaign Address/Phone/Email: PO Box 728, Fulton, MD 20759; [vanessa@vanessaatterbeary.org](mailto:vanessa@vanessaatterbeary.org)

Educational History: Atholton High School 93';  
The College of William and Mary 97';  
Villanova University School of Law 00'

Languages Spoken/Other Skills/Relevant Experience:

I speak English. I have been a member of House of Delegates since 2015. Currently, I Chair the Ways and Means Committee, serve on the Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families; Rules and Executive Nominations Committee; Legislative Black Caucus; Women Legislators of Maryland; and, the Governor's Workforce Development Board. I Chaired the Work Group to Address Police Reform and Accountability in Maryland in 2020. I have served as a member of the 2016 Public Safety and Policing Work Group; as Deputy Majority Whip; a member of the Marijuana Legalization Work Group; Vice-Chair of the Judiciary Committee; Chair of the Judiciary family law and public safety subcommittees; Chair of the Howard County Delegation multiple sessions; member of the Neshante and Chloe Davis Domestic Violence Prevention Task Force; Work Group to Study Child Custody Court Proceedings Involving Child Abuse or Domestic Violence Allegations; and, Task Force to Study the Maryland Orphans' Courts. I am a member of the Leadership Maryland, Class of 2012.

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1. Why are you running for this office? Describe how your campaign is viable. What qualifications do you uniquely bring to hold this office? What experience do you have with the General Assembly?

I am running for re-election to continue the work I have been able to accomplish to protect Maryland's women, children and families. During my time in office, I have been able to sponsor and pass legislation to increase the age of marriage in Maryland, keep guns out of the hands of abusers, strengthening prosecutors' ability to convict sexual predators, increasing circumstances under which a protective order may be granted; alter how Howard County elects its school board members providing greater representation for all schools, create a workgroup that established the need for universal pre-k, require background checks on all longuns and establish parameters that protect survivors of human trafficking.

I have listed my experience with the General Assembly above under "Relevant Experience." I believe my experience as a practicing attorney for over 20 years and my ability during my 8 years I the General Assembly to gain consensus, to for issues and my prior leadership roles specifically as Vice Chair of the Judiciary Committee, Chair or the Howard County Delegation and now Chair of the Ways and Means Committee

2. Have you signed the No Dark Money, No Developer Money pledge? If NOT how do you eliminate the appearance of conflicts?

I have not received the pledge; however, I have never received or accepted donations from developers and I don't intend to.

3. If you are elected, what are your top priorities for 2022? Discuss at least three legislative areas in need of change, and how you would address them.

Some of my top priorities would include:

Priority 1 – Since 2019 I have introduced legislation to alter how divorces are obtained in Maryland. The current statutory structure makes it difficult, if not impossible, for a financially dependent or abused spouse to obtain a divorce. The House has passed legislation that I introduced to alter the divorce statute each year. In 2021 I participated in an interim workgroup with the family law section of the Maryland Bar Association, The Woman's Law Center, the House of Ruth and other stakeholders, and we proposed legislation in 2022 that would revamp laws related to divorce and separation in Maryland. I would reintroduce this legislation in the 2023 Legislative Session. If passed, this would help a significant number of individuals, including children, trapped in unhealthy and abusive marriages.

Priority 2 – During the 2022 Legislative Session, I introduced legislation that would hold firearm dealers responsible for certain actions. The legislation prohibits a "firearm industry member" from knowingly and recklessly engaging in conduct that (1) is unlawful or (2) under the totality of the circumstances, is unreasonable and creates, maintains, or contributes to a condition in the State that endangers the health and safety of the public through the sale, manufacturing, importing, or marketing of a "qualified product."

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Priority 3 – During the 2023 Legislative Session, I would like to continue to focus on the various responsibilities related to Chairing the Ways and Means Committee. One of these responsibilities includes again passing the shifting the burden of proof in Special Education litigation out of the House.

4. What do you believe are the strengths and weaknesses of the current Howard County Delegation? How have you demonstrated your ability to work with people who have diverse opinions and party affiliations?

During my 8 years in the General Assembly, I have worked with members, advocates and other interested parties, with varying opinions and varying party affiliations to accomplish the best result possible on different issues. All of my work reflects my ability to collaborate with others. In my efforts over the years to create districts in the county for Board of Education Members and to obtain funds for school differed maintenance projects, I collaborated with others in a bipartisan manner. As Chair of the Howard County Delegation in 2016-2017 and 2019-2020 I promoted collaboration among members.

5. 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?

I believe that the state and county housing trust funds should be utilized to provide affordable housing that is run and administered by the county.

6. Do you support shifting the burden of proof in Special Education litigation from parents/guardians to the County School System? If not, why? If so, should legislation have a sunset clause?

Yes, I supported the local Howard County legislation shifting the burden of proof in Special Education litigation from parents/guardians to the County School System. As Chair of the Ways and Means Committee, I ushered the local legislation through committee and it passed the House of Delegates. I will continue to support this legislation at a local and statewide level.

7. Do you believe any State laws need to change regarding reproductive health?

During the 2022 Legislative Session, the House passed House Bill 1171 which would have put a Constitutional Amendment on the ballot that would guarantee reproductive liberty in Maryland's constitution. Enshrining reproductive liberty in the state's constitution will ensure that access to reproductive health care can never be negotiated or bargained for. Unfortunately, this legislation did not pass the Senate. As we can see, women's reproductive rights are under attack. This legislation will be a priority again for the House in 2023 and will hopefully pass the Senate as well.

In 2022, the General Assembly passed House Bill 937 that removed unnecessary and outdated barriers to accessing reproductive health care by allowing more types of providers to perform abortions and providing more access to clinical training for those providers. It also removes financial barriers by requiring Medicaid and private insurance plans to cover abortion care without cost-sharing or deductible requirements.

I believe that there still needs to be legislation related to access across Maryland to reproductive health care. Specifically, the legislature needs to ensure that there are enough facilities and providers across the state to ensure woman have access to reproductive healthcare.

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8. What changes, if any, do you support regarding employment law?

During the 2022 Legislative Session, I supported the Time to Care Act of 2022 and voted to override the Governor's veto of the legislation. The legislation establishes the Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) Fund to provide up to 12 weeks of benefits to covered workers who need to take extended time away from work to care for themselves or a loved one. This will allow workers to take paid time off for events like the birth or adoption of a child, caring for an aging family member or caring for themselves during a medical emergency without having to endure hardship. I support the actual passage and implementation of the FAMLI program.

9. Do you believe there is a need to change the MD Forest Conservation requirements or any other environmental protection or storm water management requirements?

At the state level, I support efforts that move towards no net loss forest conservation. Locally and statewide, I support the preservation of specimen trees.

10. What legislation do you feel is necessary to address Climate change concerns?

During the 2022 Legislative Session, I supported the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022. This landmark legislation strengthens Maryland's commitment to mitigating the effects of climate change by setting achievable goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60% from 2006 levels by 2031 and meet the goal of net-zero statewide emissions by 2045.

The bill requires MDE to develop building energy performance standards to achieve a 20% reduction in net direct greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net-zero direct by 2040. Buildings covered in the bill include state, commercial, or multifamily residential buildings, with at least 35,000 square feet. The bill creates necessary exceptions for agricultural facilities (including greenhouses), schools, and manufacturing buildings. It also allows regulations to provide special provisions for hospitals, military facilities, assisted living facilities, and more, to be adopted as necessary to ensure normal operation. Future legislation should address ensuring that the goals I the legislation are met.

11. What changes or extensions to the MD agricultural preservation program do you believe are necessary?

The legislature needs to ensure that the state's agricultural preservation program is being applied equally and fairly in each jurisdiction. In Howard County, this means preservation of farmlands in the East as well as the West areas of the county.

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