



## MCCC 2014 Candidate Questionnaire

**Name:** Aruna Miller

**Email:** arunamiller@gmail.com **Campaign Website:** www.arunamiller.com

**Office you are seeking:** State Delegate **District:** 15

**Years of residence in the district in which you are running:** 11

### Education Information

**College, Post-graduate, Technical School or Certificate Program you completed and the degree(s) you attained.**

University of Missouri - Rolla, MO Bachelors of Science Civil Engineering

### Employment Information

**Current Occupation:** Transportation Engineer **Current Employer:** Montgomery County

**How long have you been employed here?** 24 years

**If less than two years, please provide immediate previous employer:**

### Questions

**In your opinion, what are the key issues facing the business community in the district/county/state you seek to represent?**

Businesses in Maryland need to compete in a global market. Our states higher learning institutions need to work together with our businesses in Maryland to ensure we have a pipeline of workers with the skills that can add value to emerging industries and are ready to add value as soon as possible after employment. We must reduce the gap between research & commercialization, streamlining the regulatory process, & tax incentives to support small businesses which represent 97% of Maryland's employers.

**What do you believe are the core responsibilities of the position you seek and what will you do to carry these out?**

I believe the primary responsibilities of the state delegate include: 1. Serving My Constituency in Legislative District 15 My number one priority as a State Delegate is constituent services. This is a responsibility that comes natural to me as I have been a public servant for 24 years in my professional capacity as a transportation engineer for Montgomery County. 2. Enacting laws to Improve the Quality of Life for All Marylanders Many of the bills I introduce often arise from concerned constituents, business owners, and experts and leaders of industries. Enacting legislation requires one to know the rules, teamwork, consensus building and a great deal of adapting oneself to a dynamic environment. 3. Passing a Balanced Budget Our state constitution requires the legislature to pass a balanced budget each year that

meets the needs of our shared priorities including education, job creation, public safety, healthcare, transportation access, social services, and protecting our environment. During these difficult fiscal times, I am mindful that we must either cut spending or raise revenue or a combination of both in order to balance our state budget. 4. Ensure Programs Administered by the Executive Branch are Working Efficiently. I often inquire with Departments on the decisions they make, spending allocation, and requested annual reports that will provide greater transparency.

**Please explain your budget priorities and describe your approach to the role you will play in impacting the County/State budget.**

Maryland's budget reflects our shared priorities including public education, healthcare, public safety & the environment. Balancing expenditures/revenues should include eliminating programs that are no longer aligned with our priorities, combined reporting, strategically lowering existing taxes, broadening the base, & spending that is more efficient to support our shared priorities.

**What improvements do you believe are needed to the transportation infrastructure In Montgomery County and Maryland? Please list them in your priority order.**

Improving and expanding transportation options for Maryland citizens and businesses must include (1) preservation of our existing transportation infrastructure; (2) a comprehensive investment in sustainable, walkable, bikable, transit-oriented communities; (3) the expansion of highway and transit networks; (4) promotion of a culture of conservation in the workforce by reducing strain on our transportation infrastructure by encouraging alternative work schedule strategies like telework and compressed work weeks. These investments will form the backbone of Maryland's economy, help create jobs, increase our tax base, protect the environment, and provide safe and accessible means of transport for all. Montgomery County's role is vital to the State's overall economy. The I-270/MD355 Technology Corridor in Montgomery County accounts for 60% of the County's jobs. As such, Maryland's priority must include the funding the planning/design/construction entire 15 mile section of the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) which will relieve congestion and spur economic activity along the I-270/MD355 Technology Corridor, Watkins Mill interchange, Purple Line, and funding Maryland's portion of WMATA's long range Momentum plan to supply increased capacity, station improvements, expansion of the Bus Priority Corridors Network, and increased bus fleet.

**If elected, how do you plan to address the perception and reality of Montgomery County and Maryland having a less competitive business climate?**

I was appointed by Speaker Busch to the Business Climate Workgroup (BCW) where I have met, listened and came to understand the needs and concerns of the business community and its leaders. Business leaders have expressed concerns for (1) streamline the regulatory process; (2) develop a transportation strategy that will maximize economic growth; (3) strengthen Maryland's workforce to meet the region's economic need such as those related to 21st century emerging markets related STEM and; (4) modernize the tax structure that is fair and competitive and; (5) encourage government as a better business partner. The BCW's on-going dialogue with business leaders led to a public-private-academic commission who will focus on the State's economic development structure and recommend a blueprint for the Governor and legislature to guide our policy making decisions to continue Maryland's economic and private sector growth and prosperity.

**How do you define economic development?**

I define economic development as a comprehensive process to improve the quality of life for the people of Maryland where our State creates, retains, and reinvests wealth. Thus, in order to attract companies to Maryland, we must create communities that are good places to live, work, and conduct business. This begins with sustainable communities that

have top quality schools, sound transportation infrastructure, exceptional medical care, diverse recreational opportunities, clean water, public safety, community aesthetics, and civic engagement.

**What role should government play to help attract, grow and retain business?**

1) Help sustain a strong educated workforce, including: a strong investment in public schools, affordable and quality university system, and an accessible community college system for continuing education. Maryland must significantly ramp up efforts to attract and train STEM educators through incentives such as higher salaries and student loan forgiveness. We must also inject greater STEM literacy preK-12, encourage more STEM college graduates, specifically female students to meet the 21st century workforce needs. Incentives could include greater availability of scholarships, business that partner with STEM students to provide internships. 2) Build a transportation system that can continue to meet our demands as we expand. A balanced transportation infrastructure investment must include expansion of highways, transit, preservation of our existing transportation infrastructure, and sustainable, walkable, bikable, transit-oriented communities, and encouraging alternative work schedule strategies like telework and compressed work weeks. 3) Modernize our regulatory process. We must improve the timeliness and process, identify outdated and overlapping regulations, and work towards reaching common sense solutions as opposed to following strict and overaggressive regulations.

**What current economic development initiatives do you support?**

I support Enhanced tax credits to foster economic development such as R&D/Biotech/Cybersecurity Tax Credit Programs, InvestMaryland, Employment Advancement Right Now (EARN), Leveraging public and private sector capital for higher-education research endowments (MD E-nnovation) and Establishing reduced Tax Zones to support investment around Anchor Institutions (RISE Zones), Fostering private-sector investment in early-stage, innovative Maryland startups.

**What new economic development initiatives would you propose?**

Private Sector Commission who will review the State’s economic development programs and business climate, examine the strengths and weaknesses of existing economic incentive and investment programs; and make recommendations about the structure of the State’s economic development agencies, including interaction between the agencies and the private sector. Improving Government Responsiveness that will include one-on-one mentoring to Maryland’s entrepreneurs through an executive-level network and skill development program; enhance front-line, public and private sector interactions through additional agency customer service training opportunities; and improve transparency on State tax forms by disclosing how taxpayer dollars are spent.

**Please use this opportunity to provide any other information you would like MCCC members to know.**