



MCCC 2014 Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Maricé Ivette Morales

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Office you are seeking: State Delegate **District:** 19

Years of residence in the district in which you are running: 1

Education Information

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

1. Juris Doctorate, University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law
2. Masters in Public Policy, Certificate in Global Trade Management, George Mason University, School of Public Policy
3. BA Global Affairs and in Foreign Languages - French G

Employment Information

Current Occupation: Prevailing Wage Investigator/ Labor Relations **Current Employer:** DC Building and Construction Trades

How long have you been employed here? Since February 2014

If less than two years, please provide immediate previous employer: Was finishing up my law degree, while working for the Maryland State Senate.

Questions

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

My father was a small business owner and both parents are self-employed, so I have experienced first hand the needs of business owners and their families. First, businesses need predictable rules regarding their industry and relevant tax policies that affect their area of business or expertise they wish to thrive in. Second, access to credit and low interest-rates are avenues to make a region attractive for businesses to locate to. Third, local governments and the State should enable any individual with a business idea to easily incorporate and legally establish their enterprise with the least red tape possible. Further, local government programs that seek to achieve similar goals should coordinate in order to eliminate duplicative efforts and waste. For example, the Montgomery County Small Business Navigator Assistance Program could work alongside the Montgomery County Economy Task Force which is seeking to revitalize the restaurant market and nightlife in areas of Montgomery County which have been dormant but that are ready to expand – the Glenmont Shopping Center at the intersection of Layhill Ave. & Georgia Avenue, for example.

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

The core responsibilities of an elected legislator are: first, to represent the will of my constituents, and second, to put our shared values into action. As legislators, we have been elected to see that the needs and concerns of our constituents are addressed. That means being willing to fight to get legislation that will benefit our communities, and sometimes to stop other legislation. However, we can't just be representatives; we need to be leaders, as well. We must look at short-term needs, within the context of what is best for the long term growth and well-being of our state. Legislators need to collaborate, based on mutual respect and concern for other areas around the state, to maximize resources and improve life for Marylanders. We must find a healthy balance between these aspects of the job. We must also be held accountable if we do not serve our constituents as we set out to do.

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

Maryland's \$39 billion annual Operating Budget supports the vast needs of our great state – more than 50 percent of which supports K–12 education. We must continue making investments in education, health care, transportation, public safety and the environment. To do so, we must ensure that our hard-earned tax dollars are working for us and that we maintain our commitments to our public employees. If cuts are necessary, they should be targeted at waste, fraud and abuse, as well as services that do not serve a critical function in funding our priorities.

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

I am focused on smart transportation solutions, like Bus Rapid Transit and light rail, as well as sensible commuting options, like carpooling tax incentives that reduce congestion and stress on our roads. In addition, I support the transportation priorities of the Montgomery County Delegation, the County Executive and the County Council. Having actually worked on the passage of the 2012 landmark Transportation Funding bill in the State Senate, I studied the transportation needs of our county, and I also understand how to fund those projects through the Consolidated Transportation Plan, and the state budget.

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

As referenced in question number ten, I understand what businesses need to thrive. I believe in a smart tax policy that requires multinational corporations to pay their fair share into our tax base, which could also support business inducing programs. I would implement small business incentives to keep young talent with a background in the Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and in Media Entrepreneurship to create a thriving business environment that both utilizes our comparative advantage of a highly educated population so that we can also incentivize the creation of durable and sustainable jobs right here in Montgomery County.

How do you define economic development?

Economic development boils down to the purchasing power of our residents. It is a multifaceted policy initiative that seeks to strengthen and expand our middle class with job creation initiatives – jobs that pay a living wage and that give families the independence to live comfortably and to contribute meaningfully to our economy. The State should not be in the business of subsidizing corporations that can afford to contribute to our tax base, but should support the development of start-ups and small businesses that help create meaningful jobs. Currently, the popular corporate business plan does not create sustainable jobs, rather, it creates minimum-wage jobs for temporary employment, which only perpetuates the need for programs to support the working poor, due to the inability of folks to afford to live on

such earnings. There are some larger companies which do provide quality jobs, having found that it is less expensive to treat their employees well than to have to spend on recruiting and training employees who quickly move on; we need to recruit and maintain them in Maryland, as well. The taxes and supporting companies is a balancing act that the Maryland legislature deals with yearly – and pretty successfully.

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

Refer to question #10. Government should make it fairly easy for anyone to create a business by deregulating to the extent possible, and creating predictable tax and business regulatory schemes.

What current economic development initiatives do you support?

I support expanding enterprise zones and the County Council’s initiative to revitalize the restaurant and nightlife zones and town centers. Studies reveal that millennials prefer to live near jobs and shopping and are buying into these microcommunities.

What new economic development initiatives would you propose?

I will introduce legislation to incentivize the creation of media entrepreneurship and start-ups in the STEM areas in order to attract and retain our Maryland graduates and our other highly educated populace to stay and invest in Maryland.

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

I strongly believe that small businesses create good jobs. While it is true that all profit-seeking business models are concerned with the bottom line profit margin, there is a significant difference in the nature of small businesses and multi-national corporations. Policies regarding the development of business for too long have lumped both into one sector of the economy, as if they shared the same role in local economies. While I am a strong advocate for the thriving of a healthy small business climate, I strongly believe that some larger corporations in Maryland are subsidized enough, possibly to the extent of actually hurting small business. Parting from the premise that small business and large corporations are at odds in terms of their needs and roles, legislators could work together to ensure that distinctions are reflected in what we require from each – from income tax contribution, to minimum wage regulations, to paid sick leave, etc. I grew up in a household where my father often had to pay his employees before paying himself. We lived like this for a few years while his business grew - this was a risk he was prepared to assume. Under the Clinton years, my father’s computer repair shop thrived, until we could no longer compete with Best Buy’s Geek Squad, or Wal-Mart’s astounding hardware prices, often making it cheaper to just buy a new computer, versus paying to get it repaired. These are real consequences to the state and its citizens. Corporations have incredible advantages in their funding structures – including federal tax breaks for moving jobs offshore, and which have benefited from years of under-regulation. We need elected officials that understand the significant differences between small business models that truly help local economies thrive, versus global corporations that kill local creativity and investment, and which create jobs with wages that no family can survive on.