



MCCC 2014 Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Will Smith

Email: Will@WillSmithForD20.com **Campaign Website:** www.SmithForMaryland.com

Office you are seeking: State Delegate **District:** District 20

Years of residence in the district in which you are running: Born and raised (left for college, grad school, and law school)

Education Information

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

The College of William and Mary - J.D. The Johns Hopkins University - M.A. The College of William and Mary - B.A.

Employment Information

Current Occupation: Attorney **Current Employer:** Obsidian Analysis (Most recent - left to focus on campaign full time. Will most likely start at a small civil rights firm after the election)

How long have you been employed here? 1 year (no longer there)

If less than two years, please provide immediate previous employer: Political Appointee, Director, Homeland Security Advisory Council - Department of Homeland Security 2011-2013

Questions

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

Creating jobs, supporting our public schools and building public transit networks are all essential to move our economy forward. As we slowly emerge from the Great Recession, it is vital that our state develop strategies to spur innovation, attract new jobs, and ensure that those hit hardest by the economic downturn can find a place to live and work in our community. My plan to strengthen our community's economy: Expanding Opportunities for Small Businesses to Thrive - According to the United States Small Business Administration, 97.5% of all employers in Maryland are small businesses. These employers range from the "Mom and Pop" restaurants and shops like Kefa Café and Zeds that make our favorite dishes to high-tech startups developing the newest app. I support increased funding and expanded eligibility for Maryland's Small Business Reserve Program and Maryland's Minority Business Enterprise Program. These programs allow small businesses to compete amongst themselves for government work rather than with big businesses and ultimately bring innovative companies and high-paying jobs to Maryland. Protecting Working Families: Raising the minimum wage is a critical component to growing our economy and protecting working families. As of 2013, the

District of Columbia and 19 states have higher minimum wages, while Maryland has one of the highest costs of living in the U.S. I strongly support tying Maryland's minimum wage to inflation, which will give working families a fighting chance at living near their workplaces. Ten other states have already tied their minimum wage to inflation with tremendous results. Tying the minimum wage to inflation (also called "indexing") also provides critical protection from rising costs for low wage earners. When low wage workers are not protected from inflation, their purchasing power decreases thereby demising their ability to purchase essential goods and services they might otherwise be in the market for. I am a strong proponent of increasing the minimum wage and index it - and will make it a top priority my first term in office.

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 a Delegate include but are not limited to: - Zealous advocacy for the issues and people you represent. - Providing thought leadership on the critical issues concerning the district and state. With respect to the business community - I look forward to working with our county council and the rest of our delegation to strengthen the economic well-being of our community and state through the creation of jobs, supporting our public schools and building public transit networks. As we slowly emerge from the Great Recession, it is vital that our state develop strategies to spur innovation, attract new jobs, and ensure that those hit hardest by the economic downturn can find a place to live and work in our community.

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

When it comes to budgetary matters, Maryland's Governor has more power and influence than any Governor in the nation. In fact, when the budget comes to the General Assembly, legislators can only subtract from, not add to the budget. With that said, our County delegation must always present a united front to ensure Montgomery County's spending needs are addressed. As your Delegate, I will work to propose legislation that secures funding for crucial projects in our community. Schools, parks, and other neighborhood spaces are vital to bringing our community together and will benefit from additional funding from the State.

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

1. Ensuring Purple Line Progress Stays on Track The Purple Line will run through the heart of District 20, connecting College Park to Bethesda, providing an efficient and affordable option for those commuting across and within county lines. Transporting almost 70,000 people each day, taking roughly 17,000 cars off the road, the Purple Line will ease congestion and provide quicker commuting options for those who rely on public transportation. The Purple Line will promote smart growth and continue the progress toward making Montgomery County a more walkable community.
2. Making Transportation Options Safer and More Reliable I was pleased to see Maryland set up a funding source dedicated for transportation. This fund will accomplish a great number of improvements for the state's transportation infrastructure. Annapolis simply must do better in the future at protecting our roads, bridges and tunnels. I intend to continue the fight for our community's fair share of state funding to improve our roads and bridges.
3. Making District 20 More Walkable It's no secret that our community's streets and highways are packed with too many cars. I believe the district's greatest asset is the ease with which our residents can get around by walking or biking. While this issue is almost solely in the hands of the County Council, I believe a stronger partnership than currently exists will allow our community to grow in a manner consistent with our values and I will work to ensure that all new development emphasizes walkability, and easy access to safe, efficient public transit. This also includes the creation and maintenance of safe sidewalks and bike lanes.

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

By focusing on small business and through supporting the expansion of the small business reserve program - According to the United States Small Business Administration, 97.5% of all employers in Maryland are small businesses. These employers range from the “Mom and Pop” restaurants and shops like Kefa Café and Zeds that make our favorite dishes to high-tech startups developing the newest app. I support increased funding and expanded eligibility for Maryland’s Small Business Reserve Program and Maryland’s Minority Business Enterprise Program. These programs allow small businesses to compete amongst themselves for government work rather than with big businesses and ultimately bring innovative companies and high-paying jobs to Maryland.

How do you define economic development?

Economic development means the creation of new well paying jobs that afford members of our community to live and thrive in Montgomery County. As a legislator, it will be my responsibility to work with the private sector to create an environment that will attract socially responsible large and small businesses.

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

Government can and should incentivize socially responsible businesses to come and stay in Maryland. More specifically, government should play a larger role in attracting small business by increasing funding and expanded eligibility for Maryland’s Small Business Reserve Program and Maryland’s Minority Business Enterprise Program.

What current economic development initiatives do you support?

As before-mentioned according to the United States Small Business Administration, 97.5% of all employers in Maryland are small businesses. These employers range from the “Mom and Pop” restaurants and shops like Kefa Café and Zeds that make our favorite dishes to high-tech startups developing the newest app. Therefore, I support increased funding and expanded eligibility for Maryland’s Small Business Reserve Program and Maryland’s Minority Business Enterprise Program. These programs allow small businesses to compete amongst themselves for government work rather than with big businesses and ultimately bring innovative companies and high-paying jobs to Maryland.

What new economic development initiatives would you propose?

My primary focus in my first term will be to build on and expand eligibility for Maryland’s Small Business Reserve Program and Maryland’s Minority Business Enterprise Program.

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