

The Mandate for People

A Plan To Reclaim Power, Justice, and
Affordability for the Working People of Maryland

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Preamble: Corporations have bought politicians to silence the voices of hard-working Marylanders. Our state does not lack money, talent, or people willing to do the work. Instead, it lacks the political courage from the people who control the agenda. Senate President Bill Ferguson decides what gets a vote, what dies quietly in committee, and whose interests come first. For years, that power has been used to protect utilities, developers, and political insiders while ordinary people are told to wait, accept less, or pay more.

This is what that corruption looks like: Utilities are guaranteed profits while families struggle to keep the lights on. Essential workers and teachers are pushed to the brink while the state pleads poverty. Developers receive public giveaways while neighborhoods are hollowed out. Politicians draw their own maps, take money from the industries they regulate, and block votes behind closed doors. Federal agencies operate in our communities without accountability while state leaders look the other way. This is not what democracy looks like.

The General Assembly has the power to change these rules if politicians choose people over profits and fear. This document lists the minimum standards for a government that answers to the public instead of the lobbyists who crowd the halls of Annapolis. We demand votes, not excuses. We demand action, not just task forces. **We demand power, justice, and affordability be returned to the working people of Maryland.**

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Section 1: Combatting Authoritarianism and White Nationalism

Protect American Democracy Through Redistricting: Violent authoritarianism is spreading across America. As Donald Trump and his allies aggressively redraw congressional maps in Republican-led states to cement the extreme Project 2025 agenda, Maryland must act as a firewall for democracy. When the Maryland House of Delegates overwhelmingly passed a new congressional map (in a 99-37 vote) to counter this national power grab, a map supported by every single Delegate in Baltimore, Senate President Bill Ferguson used his unilateral power to kill the bill. He denied the map a fair debate and a vote on the Senate floor. The Maryland Senate belongs to the people, not to one man. As your State Senator, I will demand transparent, democratic processes and prioritize the will of the voters over the political calculations of a party boss.

End 287(g) Agreements (Ensuring Local Sovereignty): Hundreds of Maryland families have been torn apart because Senate President Bill Ferguson repeatedly used his unilateral power to block bans on 287(g) agreements in 2024 and 2025. By killing this critical legislation, he actively allowed local Maryland law enforcement to act as an arm of federal ICE agents. Now, facing a political challenger, he has suddenly reversed his stance. While a watered down version of the bill has been signed into law, it should not take the fear of losing an election for a politician to finally do the right thing for our immigrant communities. We must ensure local police should stay focused on keeping our neighborhoods safe, not tearing families apart to satisfy an extreme federal deportation agenda.

End Anonymous Policing: To preserve public accountability and the rule of law, Maryland must enact a law prohibiting any law enforcement officer, including federal agencies, from wearing identity-concealing masks, such as balaclavas or gaiters, while conducting operations within our state. As well as require all uniformed law enforcement to clearly display their name, identification number, and agency. Recent federal "Operation Tidal Wave" activities have seen masked agents in unmarked vehicles operating in Maryland neighborhoods without clear identification, creating a climate of fear and lawlessness. This law would require any federal agent operating on Maryland soil to be clearly identifiable and would mandate that state and local agencies "digitally unmask" and document the identities of any federal partners in a state-managed database. Transparency is the bedrock of a free society; no agent of the government should be permitted to exercise the power of the state from behind a mask.

Support The ICE Breaker Act (Community Trust & Police Standards): Pass the ICE Breaker Act of 2026 to bar state and local law enforcement from hiring federal 1801 and 1811 series law enforcement recruited by the Department of Homeland Security on or after January 20, 2025. Recent reports reveal that federal recruitment campaigns during this period utilized white nationalist imagery and extremist recruitment tactics to attract an ideological demographic for mass deportation task forces. These methods prioritize ethno-nationalist rhetoric over professional de-escalation training and are fundamentally incompatible with Maryland community policing standards. By barring these hires, we ensure Maryland officers are defined

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by their commitment to the law and public trust rather than federal extremist agendas.

Protect Private Data: The Trump Administration has weaponized state-held data against our residents. While Maryland has taken initial steps to protect state records, federal agencies have pivoted to "data laundering" strategies to bypass our laws. Maryland must now enact a comprehensive measure to close the "Nlets loophole" and prohibit state agencies from uploading Marylanders' sensitive information into national databases that lack our state's warrant requirements. The legislation must ban the state from contracting with third-party vendors who sell Marylanders' biometric or location data to federal "dragnet" surveillance programs. By tightening the definition of "exigent circumstances" and cutting off the commercial purchase of our residents' private lives, Maryland will ensure that its promise of digital sanctuary is not just a policy on paper, but a technical reality that federal overreach cannot circumvent.

Protect Scientific Independence for Vaccines: The federal government's recent decisions to overhaul and reduce the childhood vaccine schedule without transparent, peer-reviewed evidence have put the health of our communities at risk. Maryland must pass a law to formally decouple our state's public health authority from shifting federal political agendas. This legislation establishes the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Health as the final, independent authority on immunization and screening recommendations, ensuring our state follows the rigorous standards of trusted organizations like the American Academy of Pediatrics rather than elective federal guidance. .

Section 2: Energy Justice and Affordability for Working People

Utility Rate Relief and Accountability: Last year, BGE saw historic profits of more than a half-billion dollars, yet working families in Maryland saw their electric bills surge by hundreds of dollars. And they are still rising. To end this era of "automatic" corporate wealth transfers, we must **repeal the anti-consumer provisions of the Next Generation Energy Act**, specifically stripping out the language that allows utilities to lock in multi-year rate plans. Utilities must be required to justify their rates every year in a full public proceeding, not hide behind long-term guarantees.

Moratorium on High-Impact Data Centers: Data Centers are driving up energy prices and threatening our environment. While they are often pitched as economic engines, we cannot allow the "gold rush" of Big Tech to outpace our state's ability to protect its own resources. We must enact a **Statewide Data Center Moratorium** to halt all new permits and construction until the completion of the state-mandated impact analysis in September 2026. This pause is essential to establish a **Universal State Tax Standard** that replaces the current patchwork of local incentives with a unified "Grid Impact Fee," ensuring these billion-dollar corporations pay their fair share for the infrastructure they strain while codify strict Environmental Standards that mandate water-neutral cooling technologies and high-efficiency power requirements to safeguard Maryland's energy grid and precious water supply from depletion.

Fairness in the Grid: Beyond closing the Data Center Loophole by mandating that high-demand tech giants pay a Grid Impact Fee, we must empower the Public Service Commission to reject PJM-driven price spikes that penalize Maryland families for broader grid inefficiencies.

Power as a Human Right: No Marylander should lose their life or health because they cannot afford a bill. We must **ban utility shutoffs during extreme heat or cold** and permanently protect households with children, seniors, people with disabilities, and medically vulnerable residents from losing basic service. We should also transform EmPOWER Maryland into a "Direct-Service" model that replaces slow rebates with immediate, zero-cost weatherization for low-income households, ensuring energy efficiency is accessible to those who need it most.

Enable Public Power: Power is a basic human need and it should belong to the people. We should empower jurisdictions to municipalize their energy systems into cooperatives or publicly owned utilities when investor owned utilities fail to meet the needs of the people. . By reclaiming our energy sovereignty, we ensure that affordable power is a guaranteed right, not a luxury subject to the whims of out-of-state conglomerates.

Section 3: Housing Justice and Affordability For All

Rent Caps & Just-Cause Eviction: Establish a statewide rent-increase cap (e.g., CPI + 2%) and mandate that landlords provide a "just cause" for any eviction or non-renewal.

Ban Luxury Subsidies: Maryland must end the practice of handing out state subsidies, tax breaks, and public financing for luxury megaprojects and developer vanity deals that offer no real benefit to the public. We must prohibit the use of taxpayer dollars to underwrite high-end developments while our communities lack affordable housing and basic infrastructure. Leadership must stop prioritizing the profits of wealthy developers over the needs of working families.

Ban Corporate Bulk Buying: We must ban corporations and Wall Street investment funds from bulk-buying single-family homes and turning Maryland neighborhoods into speculative assets. Housing is for people, not for profit margins. By prohibiting large-scale corporate acquisition of our housing stock, we ensure that families are not forced to compete against billion-dollar hedge funds just to buy a home in their own community.

End Tax Sales on Primary Homes: It is unconscionable that Marylanders can lose their homes over small, unpaid bills while leadership looks the other way. We must abolish tax sales on primary residences and replace them with fair payment plans and liens. This reform ensures that no family is evicted or stripped of their equity due to temporary financial hardship, prioritizing housing stability over predatory debt collection.

LLC Transparency: Landlords and speculators should not be allowed to hide behind anonymous shell companies while extracting wealth from our neighborhoods. We must require full public disclosure of the "real human owners" behind any LLC or corporate entity that owns residential property. Transparency is the first step to accountability; tenants and communities have a right to know exactly who owns the land they live on.

Anti-Warehousing Penalties: We must penalize investors who warehouse foreclosed or vacant homes, letting them rot to manipulate market supply and drive up prices. Housing should be a resource for the community, not a line item on a balance sheet. By imposing strict fines on intentionally blighted or withheld properties, we force speculators to either rehabilitate these homes for families or sell them to someone who will.

Land Bank Expansion: We must expand the legal authority of city and county land banks to take control of vacant and abandoned properties effectively. Instead of allowing leadership to protect absent speculators, we will empower local governments to acquire neglected lots and return them to productive use as affordable housing or community green spaces. We must prioritize neighborhood revitalization over the property rights of absentee neglect.

Section 4: Protecting The People and Taxing The Rich

Grocery Price Stabilization: As corporate retailers experiment with "dynamic pricing" and algorithmic markups, Maryland families are being squeezed at the checkout line by prices that change by the hour. We must enact legislation to prohibit the use of AI-driven "surge pricing" on essential food and medicine. This law will ensure that the price of a gallon of milk or a life-saving prescription doesn't fluctuate based on a computer's predatory data-scraping. Maryland's Food Desert Workgroup should take a deep focus on the feasibility of state-owned grocery stores, similar to the model being explored in Chicago.

Universal Childcare and Pre-K Promise: Childcare in Maryland has become a "second mortgage" that forces many parents out of the workforce entirely. We must establish a Universal Childcare Trust that caps childcare costs at 7% of a household's income for every Maryland family, regardless of their tax bracket, that ensures Maryland's children still have a safe, high-quality place to learn. We aren't just funding daycares. We are building a state infrastructure where having a family is a source of joy, not a cause of financial ruin.

Expand and Protect The Maryland Child Tax Credit: Working families in Maryland are struggling. We must enact a universal child tax credit that benefits all qualifying dependents regardless of age or disability. As federal authorities threaten to reduce national family support programs and reintroduce restrictive work requirements, Maryland must serve as a stable foundation for families. By making the Maryland CTC fully permanent and adjusting it annually for inflation, we ensure that the rising cost of living never erodes the ability of Maryland parents to provide for their children's basic needs.

Universal Basic Income (UBI) Pilots: Fund statewide pilot programs providing no-string-attached monthly stipends to families living below the poverty line. **These pilots are essential for preparing the workforce and economy for the large-scale disruption and job replacement anticipated from artificial intelligence.**

Transit Equity and Regional Connectivity: Baltimore's current transit system is a barrier to opportunity, with typical riders reaching only 8.5% of regional jobs within an hour. To end this "time tax" on working people, we must enact legislation that mandates state funding be prioritized for high-need communities rather than political influence. We should fast-track the Red Line light rail to finally connect underserved communities to major job hubs, implement dedicated Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lanes to ensure "rapid" isn't just a slogan, and eliminate "ghost buses" by fully funding operator recruitment and maintenance. Reliable transportation is not a luxury. It is a civil right. By investing in real-time tracking and dignified, lighted shelters, we will ensure every Marylander can travel with safety, respect, and a guaranteed connection to their future.

Combined Reporting/Closing Corporate Loophole: Require corporations operating in the state to use "combined reporting" to calculate their taxable income, closing the loophole that

allows them to shift profits out-of-state and avoid paying taxes. **This reform is estimated to generate over \$175 million annually in General Fund revenue once fully phased in, with total State revenue exceeding \$225 million per year.**

Discretionary Consumption Act (Luxury Tax): Implement a higher tax rate (e.g., 10%) on non-essential, high-end luxury goods and services to ensure proportional contributions from the highest earners. This measure is estimated to generate up to **\$500 million** annually.

Section 5: Respecting Workers & Small Businesses

Create One Fair Wage: Establish a One Fair Wage for Maryland that establishes a tiered statewide minimum wage tailored to the actual cost of living in each region. This ensures workers in our high-cost corridors can afford local housing, while providing essential protections for small businesses in our rural communities. To guarantee these wages keep pace with the cost of groceries and energy, all tiers (including a phased-in full wage for tipped workers) should be indexed annually to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). To ensure long-term stability, this policy should include a built-in 'safety valve' to pause increases during significant economic downturns, protecting both workers' livelihoods and our state's economic health.

Protecting the Right to Organize and Bargain: Pass a state-level law codifying the fundamental right of all private and public sector workers to organize, strike, and engage in collective bargaining without fear of employer intimidation. This **includes state and local public employees**, particularly our teachers, who for too long have been told to sit down and be quiet. This legislation will mandate severe penalties for union-busting activities and ensure that the right to negotiate fair contracts is protected under Maryland law.

End Non-Compete Agreements: Ban the use of non-compete clauses for all workers, regardless of salary, to ensure labor mobility and fair competition.

Worker Representation on Corporate Boards: Require large, state-chartered corporations to reserve a specific number of seats on their corporate boards for non-management, elected employee representatives.

State Public Bank: Charter a state-owned bank to provide low-interest loans for local infrastructure, green energy projects, and small businesses.

Incentivize Workplace Democracy (Employee Ownership): To build a resilient economy that resists corporate consolidation and federal market volatility, Maryland must enact legislation would provide significant tax credits and low-interest financing through the State Public Bank to businesses that transition to Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs) or worker cooperatives. By exempting a portion of the sale gains from state taxes when a business owner sells to their employees, we keep Maryland-grown companies rooted in our communities and prevent the "private equity stripping" that often follows federal deregulation. When workers own the means of their labor, they gain a direct stake in our state's prosperity, creating a democratic economic buffer against the boom-and-bust cycles of Wall Street.

Section 6: Protecting Teachers and Students

The 60/40 Collaborative Time Pilot: We must stop the legislative retreat from the Blueprint's most critical promise: giving teachers the time to actually teach. We should immediately implement a 60/40 Collaborative Time Pilot that mandates 40% non-instructional time for planning and collaboration, specifically for educators in high-needs Title I schools, special educators, and STEM specialists. By targeting this relief where the achievement gap is widest, we stop the burnout of our most vital educators and ensure that our most vulnerable students receive the world-class instruction they were promised.

Classroom Excellence Over "Paper Tigers": Maryland currently rewards expensive, low-return on investment Master's degrees that research shows have little impact on student achievement. We will shift our state's investment away from luxury-priced private credentials and toward high-impact **Instructional Coaching**. By establishing a state-led Coaching Corps, we provide teachers with job-embedded, daily support that is proven to improve instruction by twice the margin of a veteran teacher's experience alone. We will prioritize excellence in the classroom over credentials in a lecture hall.

The Maryland State Teaching Residency (MSTR): To end the "revolving door" of educators, we must move beyond recruitment-only models and invest in rigorous, state-led training. We should establish the Maryland State Teaching Residency, a "public-path" initiative that partners with state universities to provide subsidized training in exchange for a five-year service commitment in high-needs schools. This program creates a stable, homegrown workforce of resident teachers who are rooted in our communities and supported by expert coaches from day one.

"Work Where You Live" Homeownership: We cannot expect teachers to build our children's futures if they cannot afford a future in our own neighborhoods. We should enact a "Work Where You Live" initiative, providing \$20,000 down-payment grants and tiered property tax credits for educators in high-needs schools who purchase homes within their teaching districts. By leveraging state infrastructure to encourage educator homeownership, we keep Maryland-grown talent rooted in our local schools and prevent the constant turnover that destabilizes our classrooms.

The Turnover Reinvestment Fund: Maryland currently loses \$125 million every year to teacher turnover, a cost borne by every taxpayer. We should establish the Turnover Reinvestment Fund to capture these savings and redirect them into aggressive retention stipends for experienced teachers. By providing annual stipends of up to \$10,000 for educators who reach the 10-year mark in high-needs cohorts, we reward the veterans who stabilize our schools and transform them into the mentors and coaches our next generation of teachers desperately needs.

The Student Mental Health Emergency: Our children are facing a suicide and mental health epidemic, yet Maryland schools remain critically understaffed, with some counselors managing caseloads of over 400 students. While the state "recommends" a lower ratio, we must **mandate**

and fully fund the 1:250 counselor-to-student ratio in every single school district, regardless of zip code. Furthermore, we must expand the Blueprint to establish school-based wellness centers in **every high school—not just those in specific zip codes**—to provide immediate, on-site clinical support. Finally, we will integrate "Mental Health First Aid" into the student curriculum, ensuring every graduate knows how to identify a crisis and save a life. We cannot expect students to learn when they are fighting to survive; we must treat mental healthcare as a fundamental pillar of public education.

Freedom From Fear (Ending Gun Violence in Schools): Students cannot learn and teachers cannot teach when they are terrified. While Maryland has passed Jaelynn's Law, we must give it real teeth by **elevating the penalty to a felony** whenever an unsecured weapon is accessed by a minor and brought onto school grounds. We must also move beyond "guidance" and **statistically ban** "trauma-inducing" active shooter simulations for students, replacing them with developmentally appropriate safety planning. Finally, since the Safe to Learn Act mandated threat assessment teams, we must **fully fund the mental health interventions** these teams recommend, ensuring they have the resources to stop violence before it starts. We must ensure our schools are sanctuaries of learning, not fortresses of fear.

READ THE WHOLE PLAN FOR TEACHERS AND EDUCATION: [CLICK HERE](#)

Section 7: Climate & Environmental Justice

Smart Building Decarbonization (Healthier Homes, Lower Bills): We cannot continue to lock Maryland families into decades of volatile fossil fuel prices and toxic indoor air. We must require all new commercial and residential constructions to be fully electric by 2027, phasing out outdated and dangerous gas hookups. Gas appliances leak benzene and nitrogen dioxide directly into our kitchens, acting as a major trigger for childhood asthma. By building all-electric homes from day one, we not only improve indoor air quality, but we also save homeowners money on construction costs and long-term utility bills through highly efficient heat pumps. Furthermore, this transition will create thousands of high-paying, union jobs in the electrical and HVAC sectors. We must build the future of Maryland for our families, not for the fossil fuel lobby.

PFAS Accountability and Phase Out: For too long, chemical corporations have profited while dumping toxic "forever chemicals" (PFAS) into our environment, leaving Maryland taxpayers to foot massive utility cleanup bills and our children to suffer the lifelong health consequences. While the current federal administration actively rolls back protections and approves new PFAS-laden pesticides for use on our food crops, Maryland must draw a hard line. We will pass a comprehensive PFAS eradication plan that strictly phases out the sale of consumer products containing these chemicals and enacts a total state-level ban on the agricultural use of any pesticide, insecticide, or fertilizer containing PFAS. Furthermore, we will establish enforceable numeric limits on agricultural biosolids to permanently stop the practice of spreading contaminated sewage sludge on our farmland. Finally, we must mandate industrial pretreatment transparency, forcing corporate polluters to monitor and treat their PFAS footprint *before* it ever enters our public sewer systems. By stopping this pollution at the source, we will protect the Chesapeake Bay, safeguard our children's health, and ensure working families are no longer forced to pay higher water rates to clean up a corporate mess.

The CHERISH Mandate: Stop Cumulative Poisoning: Maryland currently evaluates pollution permits in a vacuum, ignoring the reality of neighborhoods already "maxed out" on industrial burden. We must pass the CHERISH Our Communities Act to end this "death by a thousand cuts" by granting the state the power to deny new permits in census tracts already struggling with high asthma rates and environmental saturation.

Hold Big Coal Accountable (Asthma Mitigation Fund): For decades, coal dust has settled in our playgrounds and our lungs while out-of-state companies reap the profits. We must establish an Asthma Mitigation Fund, placing a \$13-per-ton fee on coal transported through Maryland to generate \$300 million annually for climate resilience. This isn't just a fee, it is accountability that directly funds asthma treatment for the children and seniors living along our rail lines and port corridors.

Nearshore Farm Finance Act: Restoring the Bay: Protecting the Chesapeake Bay requires more than just slogans; it requires supporting the farmers who steward our land. We must enact the Nearshore Farm Finance Act to implement 100-foot waterfront buffers that stop nutrient runoff at the source. Unlike previous "pay-to-pollute" schemes, this law provides direct \$150-per-acre financial incentives to both landowners and tenant farmers, ensuring we save the

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Bay while keeping our family farms financially whole.

The W.I.P.E.S. Act: Protecting Our Sewers and Taxpayers: Each year, Maryland municipal utilities pay more than \$10 million in routine emergency maintenance because of deceptive corporate marketing practices in regard to “flushable” wipes. Not to mention the hundreds of dollars families are forced to pay out-of-pocket for plumbers when their own pipes back up. Bobby’s will propose the **Wastewater Infrastructure Protection and Environmental Standards (W.I.P.E.S.) Act** to mandate prominent, high-contrast "DO NOT FLUSH" warnings on wipe packaging and establish strict, independent wastewater standards for any product claiming to be "flushable." By joining states like California, Colorado, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, Oregon, and Washington that have already enacted similar truth-in-labeling laws, we will hold wipe manufacturers accountable, protect our critical clean water infrastructure, and stop working Marylanders from footing the bill for corporate greenwashing.

The Maryland Bottle Bill: Right now, only one in four beverage containers in Maryland is ever recycled, leaving over 4 billion bottles and cans to clog our waterways, litter our roads, and fill our landfills every year. We must pass legislation to implement a refundable 10-cent deposit on all glass, plastic, and aluminum beverage containers. This shifts the cost of waste management from the taxpayer to the beverage producers where it belongs. By aiming for a 90% redemption rate, a standard already proven in other states, we will eliminate over 200,000 metric tons of carbon emissions annually, clean our Chesapeake Bay, and ensure that a "circular economy" in Maryland is a reality, not just a goal.

Abundant, Affordable Clean Energy (AACE): To achieve true energy sovereignty, Maryland must build its own power that DOES NOT require the use of fossil fuels. We should pass legislation to jumpstart a massive build-out of Maryland-made solar and wind power by streamlining the state's procurement and storage standards. This should include massive investment in micro-grids. By bypassing the bureaucratic bottlenecks of the regional grid, we will lower capacity costs, create thousands of high-paying union jobs, and ensure our energy future is independent and reliable.

Section 8: Civil Rights & Voting Rights

Independent Redistricting: Move the power to draw legislative and congressional maps from the General Assembly to an independent, non-partisan commission by 2030.

Empowering Our Voices Through Rank Choice Voting: Maryland's current "winner-take-all" system often forces voters to choose the "lesser of two evils" rather than the candidate they truly support. While Maryland has taken small steps, such as Greenbelt joining Takoma Park in adopting local RCV and the State moving toward Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) for the 2028 Presidential Primary, we must go further to protect our democracy from polarization. We should enact legislation to establish RCV for all statewide and local elections, creating an environment of diverse candidates and civil, issue-focused campaigning. RCV ensures all voices are heard and counted at the ballot box.

Automatic Voter Registration (AVR): Implement "back-end" AVR where eligible citizens are automatically registered through the DMV unless they opt out.

End Voter Exclusion: Nearly one million Marylanders, roughly 20% of the electorate, are currently registered as "unaffiliated," effectively barring them from participating in the primary elections that often determine the final outcome of our representation. While state law allows parties to open their doors, both major parties currently operate "closed" systems that exclude independent voices from taxpayer-funded elections. We should enact legislation to mandate Semi-Closed Primaries, ensuring that any voter not affiliated with a party has the right to cast a ballot in the primary of their choice. By opening the process to unaffiliated Marylanders, we move past the era of partisan echo chambers and empower a broader, more representative coalition to shape the future of our state.

Worker To Representative Campaign Funding Initiative: Maryland's voluntary public financing system is restricted to gubernatorial tickets and a handful of progressive counties. This creates a two-tiered democracy where candidates for the General Assembly, the very people writing our state laws, must often rely on wealthy donors and special interest PACs to remain competitive. We must enact legislation to expand small-dollar matching programs to all state legislative races. By providing a multi-tiered match for small donations from local residents, we lower the barrier for grassroots candidates, reduce the influence of corporate lobbyists, and ensure that our representatives are accountable to their constituents rather than corporations. We must reclaim the legislature for the people.

The Maryland Citizen Initiative Act: Power to People to Propose New Laws: Maryland is currently one of the few states where citizens lack the "power of the proposal." While we can petition to stop a bad law through a referendum, we have no mechanism to bypass the backroom politics of Annapolis to introduce new ones. As a result, popular reforms for healthcare, housing, and environmental justice are often silenced by wealthy corporate backers who exert disproportionate influence over the legislative process. We must enact legislation to establish a true, citizen-led initiative process. This will empower Marylanders to gather signatures and place new statutes and constitutional amendments directly on the ballot. By

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breaking the monopoly of legislative gatekeeping, we ensure that when the General Assembly refuses to act on the will of the people, the people have the sovereign right to lead the way.

Ban Regulated Industry Donations: We must prohibit regulated industries from donating money to the elected officials and agencies that are supposed to regulate them. It is a fundamental conflict of interest for Senate and House leadership to be financed by the same corporate monopolies they oversee. Maryland must enact a strict ban on these contributions to ensure that our laws are written to protect the public, not to guarantee returns for industry donors.

Codify and Expand Gender Identity Protections: While Maryland currently allows 'X' gender markers on driver's licenses, we must codify this right for **all** state documentation, including birth certificates, to ensure it is permanent and protected from future executive rollback. Furthermore, we must expand our state's ban on "conversion therapy" to cover **adults as well as minors**. This practice is pseudo-scientific fraud, and no Marylander, regardless of age, should be subjected to psychological torture disguised as healthcare.

AI Accountability Act: As the federal government moves to block states from regulating Big Tech, Maryland must exert its sovereignty over the tools our own state agencies use. We must enact legislation to mandate absolute transparency for any algorithmic system used by state agencies for hiring, policing, or social services. This law will require independent, public-facing "Bias Audits" before any AI tool is deployed, ensuring that Maryland's digital infrastructure never automates discrimination or hides its logic behind "proprietary" black boxes. By codifying these standards into state law, we ensure that as the federal government deregulates AI, Marylanders remain protected by a transparent, human-led government that is accountable to the people, not an algorithm.

Section 9: Criminal Justice Reform

Maryland Second Chance Act: We must establish a "Total Reentry" model that moves beyond simple supervision. This includes creating an independent school board for prison education, establishing guaranteed apprenticeship-to-work pipelines, and enacting "Clean Slate" automatic expungement for non-violent offenses to ensure that a past mistake does not become a lifetime sentence to poverty. This is not only the right thing to do, the Council of Economic Advisers shows that for every \$1.00 Maryland spends on effective reentry services (job training, housing, mental health), the state saves \$5.27 in future correctional costs.

End Restrictive Housing (Solitary Confinement): Limit the use of solitary confinement to no more than 15 consecutive days, aligning with international human rights standards.

Police Accountability & Decertification: Establish a public, searchable statewide database of police misconduct which treats police certifications with the same transparency as medical or legal licenses.

Eliminate Cash Bail: Fully abolish cash bail for non-violent offenses and replace it with a validated, risk-based pretrial assessment tool. This ensures a person's freedom is determined by their criminal history and the severity of the crime, not by their bank account. Expand pretrial services to ensure every defendant returns for their day in court. Maryland has many rules guiding this, but we must have laws.

Evidence-Based Sentencing Reform: Repeal all remaining mandatory minimum sentences to restore judicial discretion, allowing Maryland judges to consider the specific facts of each case and the potential for rehabilitation. Legislation should expand "second look" resentencing to 15 years for crimes committed by youth and emerging adults, ensuring that our justice system reflects the scientific reality of brain development and the power of rehabilitation.