

# 2024 ELECTION – MD & AACO BALLOT QUESTIONS

## QUESTION 1

### Constitutional Amendment for the State of Maryland

#### Declaration of Rights – Right to Reproductive Freedom

The proposed amendment confirms an individual's fundamental right to reproductive freedom, including but not limited to the ability to make and effectuate decisions to prevent, continue, or end the individual's pregnancy, and provides the State may not, directly or indirectly, deny, burden or abridge, the right unless justified by a compelling State interest achieved by the least restrictive means.

**The Republican position on this question is to VOTE AGAINST IT**

#### *The reason why to vote against it is:*

*\*This Amendment will supersede current law which has a parental notification requirement*

*\*Because it is for "reproductive freedom" the amendment could include gender affirming care.*

*\*Your taxes will pay for gender transition procedures for children under age 18.*

*\*\*The Amendment will limit lawmakers' ability to respond to changing circumstances/new evidence related to abortion policy and the protection of women. Voting no allows flexibility in creating laws that best serve the needs and interests of the State's residents.*

*\*\*The Amendment, may cause unintended legal consequences that will undermine religious freedom, conscience rights and the rights of healthcare providers to practice according to their beliefs.*

*\*\*The Amendment will divert attention and resources away from efforts to promote women's wellbeing such as healthcare, childcare, education and economic assistance to break the chain of unwanted pregnancy.*

**\*\*\*States have constructed a web** of abortion laws and regulations that restrict or support whether, when and under what circumstances providers can offer abortion care and a pregnant individual can obtain an abortion. While a state's abortion policies affect all people seeking care, they are particularly significant for individuals who find it difficult or outright impossible to access care when forced to navigate around abortion bans and restrictions. This includes people already facing barriers due to factors like their race, income, age or gender identity.

#### **Maryland has VERY PROTECTIVE abortion policies currently in effect which includes the following:**

- Abortion is not restricted based on gestational duration
- Parental notice is required for a minor's abortion
- Unnecessary regulations are in force and designed to shutter abortion clinics without basis in medical standards
- State Medicaid funds cover abortion
- Private health insurance plans are required to cover abortion
- Qualified health care professionals, not solely physicians, can provide abortions
- State provides protections from harassment and physical harm for anyone entering an abortion clinic
- State has a shield law to protect abortion providers from investigations by other states; may cover patients and support organizations

\*From [www.healthnotharmmd.org](http://www.healthnotharmmd.org)

\*\*From [www.mdatholic.org/parish-resources/voteno](http://www.mdatholic.org/parish-resources/voteno)

\*\*\*From <https://states.gutmacher.org/policies/maryland/abortion-policies>

## QUESTION A

### Charter Amendment

#### Executive Branch – Small Procurements

To amend the Anne Arundel County Charter to permit the County Council to increase the minimum value of



purchases and contracts subject to a simplified competitive procurement process from greater than \$5,000 to greater than \$10,000 and increase the minimum value of purchases that are required to be published on the County website from \$5,000 or greater to greater than \$10,000

**\*\*\*The Republican position on this question is to VOTE FOR IT**

*The reason why to vote for it, from Councilwoman Amanda Fiedler, is: The procurement process adds time to any project over \$5,000. \$5,000 has been the threshold for many years, and has not changed with inflation. \$10,000 is the new proposed threshold for a purchase that would have to go through the procurement process, thereby letting anything under \$10,000 be purchased without Request For Proposals(RFP), bidding, etc.*

## **QUESTION B**

### **Charter Amendment**

#### **Legislative Branch – Maryland Open Meetings Act**

To amend the Anne Arundel County Charter to require that all meetings and legislative sessions of the County Council comply with the Maryland Open Meetings Act.

**\*\*\*The Republican position on this question is to VOTE FOR IT**

*The reason why to vote for it, from Councilwoman Amanda Fiedler, is: The way that our Charter is currently written, conflicts with the MD Open Meetings Act(OMA). When OMA was established, it allowed for Counties that had more restrictive rules, to supersede the OMA. That has resulted in the council being unable to enter into closed session to deal with personnel matters/staffing discussions. As you can imagine, these are things we would not want to publicly discuss as it involves people we work with and candidates for employment when we are hiring for a position. This Charter Amendment allows the council default to the OMA, which allows us to enter closed sessions. No legislation can be discussed in those meetings and minutes must be provided.*

## **QUESTION C**

### **Charter Amendment**

#### **Executive Branch – Board of Appeals – Term of Office**

To amend the Anne Arundel County Charter to provide that a member of the County Board of Appeals may serve up to three full consecutive four-year terms.

**\*\*\*The Republican position on this question is to VOTE FOR IT**

*The reason why to vote for it, from Councilwoman Amanda Fiedler, is: Now that the County Council can serve 3 terms, this allows for the Board of Appeals members to also serve 3 terms, since these individuals are appointed by the councilmember. This would give any councilmember who serves 3 terms, the opportunity to appoint the same person on the Board of Appeals for each of their terms in office.*

## **QUESTION D**

### **Charter Amendment**

#### **Legislative Branch - Auditor**

To amend the Anne Arundel County Charter to clarify the duties of the County Auditor.

**\*\*\*The Republican position on this question is to VOTE FOR IT**

*The reason why to vote for it, from Councilman Nathan Volke, is: This comes from ... the current Office of Law ... reading is that the Auditor can only audit and investigate programs, spending, etc. I - and the rest of the Council - disagree. We think the Auditor can investigate any use of county funds, including the ways that county employees spend their time (which is paid for by county funds). All 7 of us (County Council members) voted against the Admin and Office of Law to say our Auditor who works for the Legislative Branch has to have the power to investigate waste, fraud, and abuse all over the County - including in the Executive Branch.*

*\*The voting recommendation on Questions A-D above are based on feedback from Republican County Councilman Nathan Volke and Councilwoman Amanda Fiedler.*

