

### Candidate Questionnaire from VOCAL MOCO

**Background: Voters Opposing County Alcohol Laws in Montgomery County, Maryland (VOCAL MOCO) is a nonprofit advocacy organization established by Montgomery County consumers. Its purpose is to end MOCO's alcohol monopoly and modernize the County's alcohol laws. Our website is located at [www.vocalmoco.org](http://www.vocalmoco.org)**

**VOCAL MOCO realizes an end to the County's alcohol monopoly and modernization of its alcohol laws will require legislation at the County and State levels that may ultimately require popular referenda.**

**Accordingly, VOCAL MOCO asks:**

- 1. If elected, would you support legislation to end Montgomery County's wholesale monopoly on the sale of liquor, wine and beer to restaurants and wine and beer to County retailers?**
- 2. If elected, would you support legislation to end the County's retail monopoly on the sale of liquor and permit licensed County retailers to sell liquor?**
- 3. If elected, would you not only support legislation ending the County's monopoly but support ending the County's wholesale and retail alcohol sales altogether?**
- 4. If elected, would you support legislation to permit grocery stores, convenience and other stores, large and small, to sell alcoholic beverages, subject to reasonable licensing requirements, as is allowed in DC and Virginia?**
- 5. If elected, would you support efforts to address any revenue shortfall resulting from an end to the County's monopoly, including requiring the State of Maryland to allot a portion of sales taxes on County alcohol sales to the County?**
- 6. If the monopoly were ended, would you support efforts to help affected County Department of Liquor Control employees transition to good public and private sector jobs?**
- 7. Finally, if elected, would you support legislation that would remove statutory and regulatory impediments to the growth and success of Maryland's craft beer industry, specifically provisions that cap production, sale, and distribution of Maryland craft beer products?**

As I've noted before on this issue (see my [interview on The Kojo Nnamdi Show](#), starting around 26 minutes in), those who want to "end MOCO's alcohol monopoly" fail to acknowledge that it would be replaced with a private-sector monopoly - you can count the number of distributors in the state of Maryland on two hands. Proponents of privatization also fail to acknowledge that mere "efforts" to replace the more than \$30 million in profit the Department of Liquor Control (DLC) brings in aren't good enough - anyone who proposes getting rid of the DLC needs to

**PLEASE SEND COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE TO [ken@vocalmoco.org](mailto:ken@vocalmoco.org) BY MAY 24, 2018**

**Candidate's Name** Marc Elrich

**Office Sought** Montgomery County Executive

have a viable plan in place to replace that money, and I've yet to see one. DLC profits support critical county services, including almost \$11 million for bond payments; we cannot afford to lose that money. The DLC also provides hundreds of good jobs that come with livable wages and decent benefits.

I think that, instead, we should continue to look for ways to make the DLC more efficient, responsive, and effective than it has been in the past. We should also look to increase the revenue the DLC generates, and, as noted [on my website](#), I would implement a plan to increase its profits by 50%. And as I've explained [in Seventh State](#), "we've already begun to turn the DLC around by bringing in industry professionals, including the director and the warehouse manager, who have improved the operations of the liquor system and brought in a philosophy of continuous improvement. I've also encouraged introducing lower markups for more expensive items, which they did, and I've supported and will continue to support efforts to help local breweries and wineries sell and distribute their goods. [I also supported recent successful efforts to have an equal wholesale price for the "mom and pop" stores and the county-owned retail liquor stores.] Both the new director and I want to hear and consider other ideas for helping transition the DLC from something that the county has long taken for granted into a professionally run system."

On #2, I have heard mixed responses from beer and wine stores. Only the larger stores could add a true liquor component to their stores because of limitations on storage and sales floor space. They're afraid that combination stores would suck up all the business because residents could make a single trip. One owner suggested that, instead, they'd prefer that the county open smaller liquor-only stores close to existing wine stores so that a customer could more easily combine trips. I'm open to exploring options.

On #4, state law prohibits any business to hold multiple licenses, and I certainly wouldn't allow liquor sales in convenience stores and "other" stores - whatever "other" means.

On #5, the county has no ability to require the state to do anything, let alone share its sales taxes with the county. If they did it for Montgomery County they'd have to do it for every county - that would drive a hole in the state budget and there is no way that is going to happen.

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