



# GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

## GBC's 2020 Baltimore City Election Coverage Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire

### **CANDIDATE: VALERIE CUNNINGHAM (D)**

The Greater Baltimore Committee has identified key policy priorities to drive discussion in the 2020 Citywide Elections. The priorities are:

1. Prioritize enhanced coordination across criminal justice agencies and support evidence-based crime reduction strategies to improve public safety.
2. Implement strategic and inclusive economic development strategies to attract and retain businesses and residents.
3. Exert solid, steady leadership to stabilize Baltimore City government and create a culture of integrity, transparency, and efficiency.
4. Support education and workforce development programs that prepare Baltimore residents for family-supporting jobs in high-growth industries and create programs or initiatives to attract talent to Baltimore City.
5. Utilize policy, funding, and intergovernmental coordination strategies to enhance Baltimore City's transportation and mobility infrastructure and operations.

*Disclaimer: As a 501(c)4 organization, the Greater Baltimore Committee does not endorse candidates for public office. The information contained on this page and all engagement activities surrounding the election are for educational purposes only.*

1. Prioritize enhanced coordination across criminal justice agencies and support evidence-based crime reduction strategies to improve public safety.
  - What are three actions that you would take in your first year to improve public safety?

- 1. Centralize communication within the police department using digital technologies that will help organize and communicate information to other jurisdictions.*
- 2. Start implementing incentivized programs for our police to start integrating more efficient practices by offering more professional development opportunities for officers.*
- 3. promote transparency by making data open and available to the public. This helps promote accountability and builds public confidence. This will also allow researchers in the community to help identify crime patterns and can help our law enforcement agency do a better job.*

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- As Mayor, what steps would you take to improve coordination across federal, state, and local criminal justice agencies and with the Judiciary?

*I will create a "Anti-Crime Czar" to work with state, local and federal law enforcement agencies to coordinate anti-violence programs and to track criminal activities citywide. As a former federal law enforcement officer, I will work closely with law enforcement officials, policy makers and the judiciary to develop a comprehensive plan geared toward the elimination of violence and crime in our city.*

- What are your plans to address "squeegee kids" and panhandlers in City intersections?

*The immediate enforcement of Baltimore City Code, Section 47-4 that prohibits "solicitation from operator or occupants of a motor vehicle that is in traffic on a public street, whether in exchange for cleaning the vehicle's windows or otherwise", would begin.*

*A profile of the children and adults would then be developed to address the problems they are facing which has them on the street. Appropriate referrals (with follow up) to mental health, drug treatment programs, or social services agencies would be made to individuals as needed.*

2. Implement strategic and inclusive economic development strategies to attract and retain businesses and residents.

- What strategies or programs would you put into place to encourage businesses and residents to move to Baltimore City?

*I will work with federal, state, and local government to create incentives to make Baltimore City attractive to business and citizens.*

- What strategies or programs would you put into place to encourage existing businesses and residents to stay and expand in Baltimore City?

*Immediately work on making ALL communities in Baltimore safe. I will work on improving the educational system and convert abandoned houses into opportunities for people to move into the areas.*

- Do you have ideas or suggestions to reform the property tax structure in the City?

*I believe this will require collaboration between local and state policy makers to develop a comprehensive plan to address the issue.*

- What are your top three priorities or programs to grow Baltimore's tax base?

1. Training/Educating citizens who will provide a stable supply of labor.
2. Reinforce reliable infrastructure including transportation and communication networks.
3. Tout the positive, vibrant, supportive business community that Baltimore City enjoys.

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3. Exert solid, steady leadership to stabilize Baltimore City government and create a culture of integrity, transparency, and efficiency.

- Baltimore City is at a crossroads and in need of strong, ethical leadership. Why are you the best candidate to lead the City into a new decade and chapter?

*I can restore order to our city and honor in city hall. I served 20 years as a federal law enforcement officer and I have an appreciation for the ills of our city and how they can effectively be addressed and overcome.*

*I am a political outsider and have no allegiances to the current (or past) political system. I am the only candidate with the law enforcement experience, the business acumen and political experience who can put our needs ahead of special interests. I am an outsider with the heart and mind to reform Baltimore City's political system.*

- What are three actions that you would take to improve transparency and efficiency in City government?

*1. Make daily meeting agendas available to the public.*

*2. Daily meeting schedules available to the public and identify, who the meeting is with, topic of meeting, and the disposition of the meeting.*

*3. Open door policy for citizens of Baltimore.*

- Several charter amendments have been proposed and are pending legislative review and approval.
  - What is your position on the composition and function of the Board of Estimates?

*I believe that the Board of Estimates should consist of the Mayor, President of the City Council and the Comptroller.*

- Do you think that the Baltimore City Charter should require a Chief Administrative Officer? Please explain your answer.

*While I am open to discuss this Charter Amendment, I would have to study the pros and cons of such a move in Baltimore.*

- How would you structure your Administration (ie, CAO, Deputy Mayors, Chief of Staff, etc.) to provide the most efficient delivery of City services?

*I will study jurisdictions of similar size to Baltimore to decide what system would work best for the citizens of Baltimore.*

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4. Support education and workforce development programs that prepare Baltimore residents for family-supporting jobs in high-growth industries and create programs or initiatives to attract talent to Baltimore City.

- Under the recommendations of the Kirwan Commission, Baltimore City stands to receive an additional \$500 million annually in State education aid by Fiscal 2030. In order to receive this additional funding, Baltimore City must increase its investment as well, by \$330 million annually by Fiscal 2030. According to Maryland Department of Legislative Services figures, Baltimore City currently spends less than 15% of its budget on education compared to a statewide average of 36%. What is your plan to meet the increased obligation of Baltimore City? Please be specific in identifying areas or agencies that will see reduced appropriations as well as revenues that may be increased.

*Being Mayor requires a temperament to act after gathering the facts. Accordingly, I believe it premature to being to answer this question without the benefit of the full knowledge of the departments and how they operate. I would need to review audit findings as well as review all departments before making a statement about reduced appropriations or an increase in revenues.*

- Currently, 0.2% of the City's budget is dedicated to workforce development. What is your position for funding workforce training and adult education programs to reduce unemployment and adequately prepare City residents for jobs in high-demand industries?

*I believe that training and education are a vital part of a successful society and I am 100% in favor of funding workforce training and adult education programs.*

- What role should the City play in attracting and retaining top talent to fill in-demand jobs in high-growth industry sectors?

*The city should play the role of advocate and cheerleader.*

5. Utilize policy, funding, and intergovernmental coordination strategies to enhance Baltimore City's transportation and mobility infrastructure and operations.

- What are three things you would do to improve transportation and mobility in the City?

*1. Fix issue with synchronization of traffic signals.*

*2. Ensure that employees who commute out of the city (early and late) are afforded accommodating transit schedules.*

*3. Ensure that maintenance on vehicle's are up to par and meet safety standards.*

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- Do you support enhanced investment in transportation infrastructure, including that for pedestrians, bicycles, and scooters?

Yes.

- What is your position on the creation of a regional transit authority to oversee the transit network?

*I am supportive of such an authority as I believe that there must be a partnership with surrounding jurisdictions in order to make it work.*