



# GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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

### **CANDIDATE: SHANNON WRIGHT (R)**

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. Require the Baltimore City Police Department to undergo a full certification and accreditation process.*

*2. Institute a military-style grid block plan for the city.*

*3. Institute community policing satellites in community centers around the city.*

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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 would institute a city-wide restorative justice initiative with all partners and stakeholders at the table.*

*1. I would do direct outreach across all involved agencies and the judiciary.*

*2. Develop a coordinated strategy making the case for why it is critical for all to work intergovernmentally to address the issue of criminal justice reform and to improve the lives of all in Baltimore City*

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

*I would create a series of therapeutic foster boarding schools to accommodate youth that are without families to give them a safe place to live. I would include trades in the curriculum and offer paid internships for maintaining good grades. I would also include a hands-on curriculum that includes entrepreneurship, trades, and business management with a wide variety of life skills leading our vulnerable youth to a position of self-sufficiency.*

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?

*Remove the roadblocks to taking full advantage of the opportunity zones.*

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

*We need to address the quality of life issues and include incentives through a business-friendly economic development model.*

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

*I would phase in a tax reduction to bring us in line with the national averages at the same time diligently work to improve the business climate to offset the difference and set us on a path of growth.*

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

*1. Remove TIF's*

*2. Get abandoned properties back on the books*

*3. Offer school vouchers to attract families*

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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 bring no political baggage. Unlike many of my opponents, I do not have a criminal record. My goals of transparency and efficacy to improve the lives of all the citizens of Baltimore.*

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

*I would ask the resignation of every department head and ask if they would like to re-apply. Ask and what they intend to do differently to fulfill their mission mandate.*

*1. Every agency would be expected to reveal monthly what it spent and on what and how it improved the lives of Baltimore city residents*

*2. A thorough and sifting analysis of the city's procurement process*

*3. Every quarter the cities head of finance would be required to give a state of the city address in Education, Finance, Mayoral, and Board of estimates*

- 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?

*The board of estimates is dysfunctional. Under the boards current composition the 2 mayoral appointees are too close to the Mayor. These are folks who should be objective and not mouthpieces for the Mayor. There needs to be a selection process. Also, the City Solicitor should only be on the board as an ex-officio member, not a voting member.*

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

*No this would merely add another unnecessary level of bureaucracy. We need to elect leaders from the start to lead and properly manage and delegate.*

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

*Chief of staff, deputy Mayors, Department heads all with specific and particular requirements to make sure all of the citizens of Baltimore are served efficiently and without excuse.*

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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.

*This is not simply putting more money into the school system so it can be wasted. We first would need to evaluate what we are spending on and whether it is working or not.*

*1. Analysis of problems*

*2. Design for addressing the problem*

*3. Develop the strategy*

*4. Implement the strategy with regular assessments of outcomes and measures.*

- 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?

*Until we have a thorough audit it is irresponsible to state a specific percentage point. I will, however, say we need to prioritize workforce development, or the result will be a continued crime crisis like we are seeing now.*

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

*This is the opportunity to engage HBCU's to position the schools and the city to make full use of the wealth of educational institutions and groom the next generation of thought leaders to move our city forward.*

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?

*There needs to a comprehensive review of our transportation system particular to where the jobs are in a reasonable and safe manner.*

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

*I absolutely support enhanced investment in transportation infrastructure provided we have a thorough analysis and it is structured in the best interest of all the residents.*

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

*I think it is important to create a regional authority to oversee the transit network.*