

**Caribbean-American Political Action Committee (C-PAC)
Montgomery County - 2022 Candidate Questionnaire**

Office Sought: State's Attorney of Montgomery County
Candidate's Name: John McCarthy
Current Occupation: State's Attorney of Montgomery County
Party: Democrat
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- 1) What have you done, or will you do to ensure the interests of the Caribbean community in Montgomery Country are being adequately addressed?

All members of the Montgomery County community, especially underrepresented individuals, must be provided with a platform to voice their concerns, needs and priorities. It is my responsibility as State's Attorney to make sure their concerns are heard. Myself or another representative from my office sits on several different citizen's review boards to include the NAACP meeting, the Chief of Police African American Liaison Committee meeting, the Chief of Police Hispanic Liaison Committee meeting, the Latino Public Safety workgroup, and cluster meetings for several Montgomery County Public Schools. Through these citizen review boards, we are able to continue to understand the evolving needs within our community so that we can address those needs. In order to better meet the needs and address the concerns of the Caribbean community, I would be happy to meet with member of your organization.

- 2) The Caribbean- American Advisory Group (CAAG) was established by former County Executive Isaiah Leggett and continued by the current County Executive Marc Elrich, if you are elected will you support continuity of CAAG in its current form as an autonomous group?

I am certainly open to having a dialogue with all community members. I not familiar with CAAG but would welcome a chance to become better informed. If you would provide me with materials regarding your organization, I would be in a better position to answer this question.

- 3) Will you proactively encourage and facilitate members of the Caribbean community of Montgomery County to be appointed to County Boards? Please explain what mechanism your office would establish to give effect to this policy.

The State's Attorney's Office does not have the authority or ability to appoint anyone to County Boards. However, in the fall of 2021, we began a project in partnership with Prosecutorial Performance Indicators and researchers at the University of Maryland to analyze data on criminal prosecution in Montgomery County in order to ensure the fair administration of justice. As part of that project, we will be engaging the community in a series of "listening tours" for the purpose of gaining information from different community members as to how we can better serve the needs of the community. The listening tours are in the process of being scheduled and I will make sure to invite members of your organization. Additionally, we are working together with PPI to create a community advisory board which will be staffed with a cross section of individuals from different areas of Montgomery County in order better serve the community. Through this partnership, I believe we can continue to improve the ways in which we promote justice and protect public safety for everyone in our community. As we move towards the creation of the community advisory board, I will make sure your organization is made aware of how that board is created so that your organization can be represented.

- 4) Please explain what policies you would espouse and implement to make Montgomery County a safe haven for undocumented Caribbean immigrants.

As State's Attorney, I have instituted a number of policies to guard against anti-immigration practices. The Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office does not inquire as to the immigration status of defendants or witnesses associated with any case. If our office becomes aware of an individual's illegal status, we will not contact or inform ICE of any individual's status. Violation of that policy would result in the employee being terminated. Prosecutors in this office are also encouraged to consider "immigration friendly" resolutions to cases when traditional prosecution could lead to unfair or unequitable collateral consequences for a defendant. We also have a longstanding procedure in place to ensure that victims requesting u visas have their cases reviewed expeditiously.

Additionally, I have consistently supported legislation which seeks protection for non-citizens including allowing anyone to get a driver's license regardless of their status in this County. I have also supported legislation for in-state tuition to apply to every Maryland resident regardless of their immigration status. In fact, in 2018, I was presented with the public service award by the Hispanic Bar Association because of my commitment to the fair and equal treatment of members of our community facing immigration issues. I will continue to support such legislation and ensure that everyone in my office complies with the policies I have set in place regarding immigration.

- 5) Will you support continuity of Montgomery County as welcoming Caribbean immigrants and settlement of the Region's refugees?

As State's Attorney, I would support welcoming Caribbean immigrants and settlement of the Region's refugees. Throughout my tenure as State's Attorney, I have been dedicated to the aggressive prosecution of hate crimes. In fact, the anti-defamation league has twice recognized my Office with the Shield Award for our aggressive prosecution of hate crimes.

We received the Shield Award in 2011 after our successful prosecution of a case which involved a victim who was targeted because of his Hispanic heritage. I am proud of this Office's history of aggressively prosecuting hate crimes committed against all minority groups including the Caribbean community.

Community outreach and educational programs are critical aspects of our ability to effectively prosecute hate crimes. I created the "Stop the Hate" program in order to educate the community on existing hate crime legislation. The mission of the "Stop the Hate" program is to protect everyone in our community regardless of race, national origin, religious belief, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, homelessness, disability or immigration status. Through this program, the State's Attorney's Office has successfully reached out to schools, religious institutions and other groups about the law surrounding hate crimes and how to report incidents of hate crime. I have also created an informational brochure which has been translated into 9 languages.

6) Will you support availability of books by Caribbean authors and about the Caribbean in libraries and in the schools?

Yes.

7) It is difficult to balance crime prevention and community safety with trust and improved relations with local law enforcement. How will you work to strike this balance?

There is no question that systematic racial and ethnic inequalities exist throughout the criminal justice system and those inequalities negatively impact the feeling of community safety and trust between our office and the community. It is impossible to adequately address the disparities within the

system without data driven analysis of criminal justice agencies including prosecution offices. To that end, in the Fall of 2020, I began to research how to best conduct a meaningful and comprehensive analysis of how cases are prosecuted once they are referred to the State's Attorney's Office and whether there are discrepancies in how cases are handled at different data points. We have a responsibility to analyze what happens to criminal cases as they move through this office in order to ensure that cases are handled equitably across racial and ethnic lines.

Through my research, I learned about Prosecutorial Performance Indicators' (PPI), a partnership between Florida International University, Loyola University and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. PPI is a nationally recognized organization which has facilitated studies in numerous jurisdictions throughout the country including Cook County, Illinois, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and multiple jurisdictions in Florida.

In the Fall of 2020, we began speaking with PPI policy director, Melba Pearson and Brian Johnson, a professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Maryland who agreed to work with my office after I agreed to several conditions. First, PPI would be permitted to publish any findings from the study conducted by the University of Maryland (which is rated as the number one criminology and criminal justice program in

the Country), no matter the results. Second, my office would agree to work with PPI to make systematic changes within the office to address any disparities found from the analysis. Finally, we will work with PPI to create and maintain a forward-facing dashboard to improve transparency between our office and the community. I believe that when the community is able to learn more about our office and how we prosecute crime, we will build a sense of trust and community understanding which is critical to our mission of keeping the community safe.