



The Caribbean-American Political Action Committee

1015 18th Street, N.W., Suite 200, Washington, D.C., 20036 | 202-349-1498
| www.CaribbeanPac.org

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

Please upload the completed form here: <https://www.caribbeanpac.org/news-candidate-responses.php>
and submit it by 11:59 PM (EST) on Friday, June 13, 2022. Responses will be shared with C-PAC's membership.

Office Sought: **Montgomery County Executive**

Candidate's Name: **Marc Elrich**

Current Occupation: **Montgomery County Executive**

Party: **Democrat**

Campaign contact information (Address, Phone, Fax, Email, Website): **12320 Parklawn Drive Rockville, MD 20852 | 240-723-6005 | info@marcelrich.org | www.marcelrich.org**

1. What have you done, or will you do to ensure the interests of the Caribbean community in Montgomery County are being adequately addressed?

I meet regularly with the Caribbean American Advisory Group and others and try to address issues when raised. It is helpful to me to learn about concerns through our meetings with different groups. I try to be approachable, and I want to hear from you about what you think is going well and what needs to be improved.

Also, I know that many small businesses are started by immigrants, and we have been working to make this county more small and local business friendly.

Since becoming County Executive, I have increased transparency in procurement so that it would be more accessible for smaller, less connected businesses. We also reduced the complexity of the contracts, some of which were way too long for the services requested.

I have created a preference for local businesses in procurement, which has increased spending on local businesses. I created the Business Advancement Team (BAT), which is focused on smaller and neighborhood businesses. The BAT is designed to provide resources and information to new entrepreneurs and existing small business owners.

My most recent budget, which was just approved by the County Council, includes \$877,000 to better address disparities in the Black business community and to provide increased training and resources, via funding to the Black Chamber of Commerce and the Black Business



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Council. Funding to the Black Chamber will allow increased outreach and engagement between the County and our business community, allow the development of a Small Business Lending Program, and provide funding for technical assistance, training, capacity building, and resources to businesses throughout the County. Funding to the Black Business Council will allow for the growth of a database and information sharing initiative for the County's Minority, Female and Disabled-owned Businesses Program.

As County Executive, I have also consistently increased funding for Early Childhood Education, providing a record \$20 million this year and record funding for our schools and students, to help with the learning loss from Covid. I changed the leadership at Worksource Montgomery so that we now have an Executive Director who is helping workers upscale their skills to earn better wages rather than remaining in minimum wage jobs, and I have supported workforce training at Montgomery College and the Universities at Shady Grove. I have also worked with Montgomery College to bring a campus to East County. The location will provide increased opportunities for high schools in the area to partner with Montgomery College and it will give residents easier access to higher education. I also made permanent the community hubs that popped up during Covid, which were important for outreach into the different diverse communities.

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

Yes, I very much appreciate hearing from the Advisory Group.

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.

Yes, it is important to make sure notices of County Board vacancies are being properly communicated to our diverse communities so there is accurate representation of Montgomery County residents on County Boards.

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

I was very proud to issue the Promoting Community Trust Executive Order in 2019; we made very clear that we are a welcoming community and we value and embrace our diversity. We also made clear that we will continue our policy of non-cooperation with immigration agents of



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ICE and continue to ensure our police do not enforce immigration laws. We also provide funding for nonprofits to help immigrants with legal matters.

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

Yes.

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

Yes. And it's important to let us know if you think there needs to be more.

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?

We can and are doing both - the two goals are not incompatible - we are working to make all communities feel protected.

My most recent budget, which the Council just approved, increases police officer pay to make us more competitive in the region and enable us to get more recruits. We've also implemented crisis teams to help the police respond to situations that require more comprehensive supports. We've also increased police presence and complementary strategies in areas having crime problems. For example in Silver Spring, we have created a Silver Spring task force to bring a multi-faceted approach to addressing issues in downtown Silver Spring. We have increased police presence in the area on foot and in patrol cars, and we have begun occasional late night checks at area establishments that have been the subject of complaints of alcohol and other violations. We are also addressing unacceptable behavior on the civic plaza and providing mental health support to individuals in need. We have been working with a number of the business owners in the area. We have received favorable reports and appreciation from businesses and residents for our efforts because they have seen some improvement. We're also building a Restoration center that will let us provide people in a mental health crisis with an alternative to jails - we can't continue to treat mental health crises as crimes.

Also, while the County cannot impose additional gun control, I have and will continue to advocate for more at the state level, including potentially raising the age of gun possession to age 25, and I actively support banning assault weapons.

We have also been re-imagining public safety so that all communities feel protected. In the first year of my term, I held a community forum to hear from residents about their concerns and suggestions; I had a community advisory group and their recommendations are being incorporated into a report from an outside consultant, EL4A, who include former public safety officials who want to help improve the system. I also negotiated with the police union a "duty to intervene" and I changed the protocol on traffic stops so that the stop ends after a ticket or warning was issued and there should be no "fishing" expeditions with questions like



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“do you have a body in your trunk and do you mind if I look?”