



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: District 6, Montgomery County Council

Candidate's Name: Vicki Vergagni

Current Occupation: Condominium Community Manager

Party: Democrat

Campaign contact information (Address, Phone, Fax, Email, Website):

2305 Greenery Lane #203, Silver Spring, Maryland 20906

(240) 482-5001

No fax

vickivergagni@gmail.com

No website at this time

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

My understanding is that CAAG's mission is to focus on public policy initiatives that will strengthen the economic, educational, social, and cultural conditions of individuals of Caribbean heritage residing in metropolitan Washington. To that end, CAAG will build bridges between the U.S. Federal, state and local governments and the nations of the Caribbean.

My first step would be to meet with the elected representatives of CAAG (as well as some of my Caribbean friends and colleagues such as Causton Toney, Esq; Les Hyman, Esq; Patricia Lengermann) within 90 days of taking office to determine the specific interests of the community. My second step would be to determine what has been done in the past – successfully and unsuccessfully -- to address these interests. Then I would ask staff to work with CAAG representatives to prepare a list of interests and potential approaches to address each of them. And then the work of raising the profile of our Caribbean neighbors begins through cultural, social and educational events – culminating in a focus on business that will serve not only the Caribbean community, but those “outsiders” who have yet to become familiar with the unique offerings of the Caribbean.



The Caribbean-American Political Action Committee

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

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

Absolutely. The strength of Montgomery County is based in large part on the County's rich diversity; this also is where I believe the future of the County's economic development lies.

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, I would be proactive in securing candidates from the County's Caribbean community for the County's Boards and Commissions. This is done by reaching out to CAAG as these opportunities arise and having my staff follow up on recommendations and with volunteers to facilitate the development of a candidate package and introduce these candidates to agency personnel with whom they would work and with Councilmembers who vote on the Consent Calendar.

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

There are so many excellent examples of jurisdictions nationwide that have created safe havens for undocumented immigrants, that we can initially compare the County's approach to those and identify additional avenues to support the safe haven policy.

In addition to an overall County steering group for undocumented immigrants, the County's housing/health and human services agencies can provide housing, household goods, food, diapers, medical/mental/dental services, etc. Since jobs are key to undocumented immigrants, I would look for legal means to employ these workers, and then promote those approaches to Montgomery County employers. The County's office of education, school districts and charter/private schools also must be committed to reassuring students, parents and educators that all are welcome on school sites, regardless of immigration status.

Equally important is providing information to immigrants so that they understand their rights and responsibilities, and when and whom to call if facing an emergency.



The Caribbean-American Political Action Committee

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

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

Absolutely.

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

Absolutely.

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?

The cultural relationship between the police and the citizens in much of the Caribbean is unhealthy, in part due to the how the police force is hired and "managed". One of the greatest challenges in this regard is assuring that immigrants can differentiate between policing in the U.S. and policing back home.

One of the most successful approaches to addressing this difference is hiring police officers from the Caribbean community who will build trust and improve relations with the community by their daily actions. This will not happen overnight; however, as the police force consistently reinforces its role as a public safety servant for all citizens, the perception will change for the good. Also including Caribbeans on the County's Boards and Commissions will assure a presence to all County agencies so that the unique issues of Caribbean immigrants can be addressed.