



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) 2026 Candidate Questionnaire

Please return the completed form via email to cpac.dmv@gmail.com by 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, March 31, 2026. Responses will be shared with C-PAC's membership.

Office Sought: Montgomery County Council District 4

Candidate's Name: Kate Stewart

Current Occupation: Councilmember, Montgomery County Council District 4

Party: Democrat

Campaign contact information (Address, Phone, Fax, Email, Website): 316 Elm Ave, Takoma Park, MD 20912, 301-257-0098, votekatestewart@gmail.com, votekatestewart.com

1. If elected, how would you proactively and consistently engage with Caribbean-American constituents, groups, local leaders, and organizations in your constituency?

As an elected official, I take very seriously my role, and by extension, the work of my staff, as representative of residents. As such, I prioritize outreach and collaboration with constituents, groups, local leaders and organizations. This is critical because I understand the diversity within our Caribbean-American community. This was important when I was a city council member in Takoma Park, when I was Mayor of Takoma Park and as the District 4 Representative on the Montgomery County Council.

I believe it is important to build strong relationships before an issue or matter of urgency arises. I reach out periodically, especially to leaders of the community to better understand issues and challenges they are facing. My role is to assist residents and the community and if I can put into action a policy or introduce legislation, or even just help solve issues using my position that is what I focus on. I have found that the best way to legislate is to first listen to the community about their needs and experiences. The result is better public policies.

In Montgomery County, we are fortunate to have the Office of Community Partnerships which includes the Montgomery County Caribbean Community Advisory Group. Last year, while serving as Council President, I connected the Council with the advisory groups by establishing regular meetings with Councilmembers to better connect our work with the advisory groups and their robust outreach and work.



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A current example of work I am engaged in surrounds the Trump administration's unlawful work to target the immigrant community for deportation, harassment, and cruel threats to remove protective legal status, such as Temporary Protective Status for our Haitian community. I have worked closely with organizations, community leaders and groups to support legislation like the Trust Act, the Values Act and a piece of legislation I introduced, the Vehicle Recovery Act. This bill would reduce barriers for families impacted by federal immigration detention to recover impounded vehicles when the vehicle owner is not present. When our neighbors are taken from our communities, many times their vehicles are left behind on the road and towed thereafter. Impacted families are forced to navigate one hurdle after another, and this bill would facilitate the recovery of their vehicle by a trusted person upon presentation of required documentation. I introduced this bill after hearing from impacted families, community leaders and organizations like the Montgomery County Immigrant Rights Collective and We Are CASA. I would like to discuss this bill and any priorities CAPAC has related to their community in Montgomery County and in Maryland.

2. How would your office address barriers Caribbean immigrants face when accessing public services such as healthcare, safe, affordable housing, education or social programs that disproportionately affect them?

As an elected official, I have prioritized removing barriers for residents, especially barriers that immigrants face when accessing public services.

During my time as Mayor of Takoma Park, I championed and defended the city's Sanctuary City status, protected the City's rent stabilization policy, reformed our police department and worked on reimaging public safety. Under my leadership, Takoma Park became one of the first cities in the country to adopt a racial equity framework for decision-making. I also worked to share learning from our work regionally and across the country. During COVID, I focused on making direct supportive payments to immigrants and families in need. Recognizing that many immigrant families lacked access to federal safety nets, I led local efforts to bridge gaps in food access and provided essential supplies.

As a Montgomery County Councilmember, I have worked to promote programs and policy solutions to protect and help renters, such as the Landlord Tenant Protection and Notification Bill which includes the requirement for multifamily rental building operators to develop and submit an Emergency Safety Plan as part of their annual permit process.



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We have a housing affordability crisis, and we need to attack this crisis through policies and programs such as rent stabilization which I supported at the council, but we also need to encourage building more housing. It is why I introduced and the Council also supported the FAITH ZTA, allowing faith institutions to build affordable housing on their properties across the county and why I also support other efforts to build more housing. Too often these positions are framed as incompatible, but I believe they are complementary and can help immigrants and those who are housing insecure.

I have also supported and truly appreciate the work of the County's minority health initiatives and programs under the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Our three initiatives and programs – the African American Health Program, Asian American Health Initiative, and Latino Health Initiative – implement culturally led practices that provide trusted, appropriate health services and care to our diverse communities. During my term as Council President last year, I worked with the health initiatives and programs, among numerous county and community partners, to raise awareness on mental health and resources and help reduce stigma that continues to live in many of our households and communities.

3. How do you ensure culturally responsive services for Caribbean-American residents across agencies (e.g., health, education, law enforcement, etc.)?

First, we need to listen to the community and what they need. We also need to make sure we hire people across our agencies who reflect our communities, and provide ongoing training for our staff to ensure they are culturally responsive to the residents they work with. This includes providing services in the appropriate languages and spaces, such as faith-based institutions. Culturally-led programs, such as the DHHS health programs or County's Office of Community Partnership, are critical because they also know how and where to communicate, including appropriately phrasing topics, with our residents.

4. What initiatives will you lead and/or support that benefit Caribbean-American small business owners and workers, particularly in industries where they are heavily represented?

During my first term as a Councilmember, the construction of the Purple Line has dominated a large area across my district, primarily in Silver Spring. A majority of businesses in the line of the construction are owned and operated by first and second generation immigrant families. I pushed for and got grants for these businesses in the county budget, and have advocated for state grants to assist



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these same businesses and also fought for better signage and pedestrian improvements to help customers access these businesses.

I am also working with the Montgomery County Department of Planning to create a new designation of legacy businesses to help protect and support small businesses in areas undergoing redevelopment.

5. What support would you provide for Caribbean-American students and parents, including language assistance and help navigating the school system?

Language assistance and help navigating the school system are all essential for students and their families to feel welcome and for them to succeed. Not only do we need to make sure we have these programs and services in place we also need to make sure the community has a role in creating the programs and that we have a robust outreach so people know what is available. In addition, we need to consider how services are provided and make sure we reduce any potential stigma in accessing resources.

6. How would you advance partnerships with Caribbean-American community organizations to promote mental health, chronic disease prevention, or other wellness initiatives?

Specifically I have focused much of my time on the Council on mental health and wellness. Last year as Council President, we started our mental health initiative. We know when it comes to addressing mental health and promoting wellness there is no universal solution and a one-size-fits-all approach simply does not work. Investing in mental health is not just about treating illness but about promoting an equity-focused holistic approach to well-being, enabling individuals to thrive emotionally, socially and physically. We have worked towards:

- Breaking down silos through partner collaboration, especially to address our diverse county population
- Helping reduce the stigma around mental health access
- Uplifting the voices of people with lived-experience
- Showcasing local providers making change possible
- Identifying service gaps through data analysis by the Office of Legislative Oversight
- Sharing multilingual resources via our "Mental Health Corner" newsletter



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Working together we can reduce the stigma, address issues before they escalate, and create healthier, more supportive communities.

7. How will you build trust and conduct robust oversight on local, law enforcement to protect the rights, security, and safety of Caribbean-American residents?

I have been working on public safety issues and ensuring our local law enforcement upholds people's rights and promote safety. Improving public safety requires working closely with impacted communities, businesses and the police to address constantly changing needs.

When I was first elected Mayor in Takoma Park, I worked to end practices such as the former police chief's practice of photographing young Black men for little to no reason and the use of tinted windows on police vehicles.

Recently, on the County Council with the Trump Administration putting in place cruel policies that are impacting our residents, I have supported every bill to protect our immigrant community including, the Trust Act, The Values Act which denies the use of county owned properties for staging for immigration raids, the Unmask Ice Act, the ICE OUT Act that would deny ICE to rent spaces in the county to enhance immigration operations including office space. I am also leading on the Vehicle Recovery Act. This bill would reduce barriers for families impacted by federal immigration detainment to recover impounded vehicles when the vehicle owner is not present. When our neighbors are taken from our communities, many times their vehicles are left behind on the road and towed thereafter. Impacted families are forced to navigate one hurdle after another, and this bill would facilitate the recovery of their vehicle by a trusted person upon presentation of required documentation. I introduced this bill after hearing from impacted families, community leaders and organizations that recovering vehicles has been an issue.

8. What programs, funding opportunities, or policy efforts will you champion that are aimed at improving outcomes for Caribbean-American communities?

The first step in listening to residents. We are fortunate in the County to have the Gilchrist Center and the Office of Community Partnerships and specifically the Caribbean American Advisory Group we can work with to identify needed



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programs and policy efforts. In addition, we have the Caribbean Help Center which assists immigrants and other low-income residents in the areas of: education, employment, information and referrals, interpretation, food assistance, immigration, public services, and finding health care. We need to make sure offices and organizations such as these receive the funding needed to serve the community.