



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: Prince George's County Council - District 9

Candidate's Name: Imara Crooms

Current Occupation: Unemployed - Previously a subawardee for USAID and the State Dept.

Party: Democrat

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

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

a. **Answer:** Engagement must be more than a checkbox. While the County Executive's Office of Multicultural Affairs provides a county-wide liaison, I believe the legislature deserves a dedicated Legislative Advisory Group to ensure our Caribbean-American community has a direct seat at the Council table. I would be happy to host quarterly "Policy & Budget Briefings" specifically for heritage organizations to ensure small business owners aren't sidelined by the county's government by waiver approach. My office will operate on a model of co-governance, where the community and its leaders are co-authors of the legislation that impacts our district.

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?

a. **Answer:** Access is a matter of transparency, not just translation. Many Caribbean immigrants face barriers because of the sheer complexity of our county's "one-size-fits-all" bureaucracy. My office



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will tackle this by advocating for integrated service hubs within our Community Schools, providing one-stop access to health, housing, and social programs. I will fight to preserve the Homestead Tax Credit and simplify DPIE permitting to protect the high rate of Caribbean home and business ownership in District 9. We must also increase funding for our Health Department to ensure culturally competent care that recognizes the specific needs of our immigrant neighbors. By recapturing public wealth from luxury developers, we can fund the navigational staff needed to ensure no resident is left behind by a "top-down" system

3. How do you ensure culturally responsive services for Caribbean-American residents across agencies (e.g., health, education, law enforcement, etc.)?
 - a. **Answer:** Cultural responsiveness must be a mandate, not a suggestion. I will bring my anti-corruption expertise to the Council to establish community-led oversight for agency training programs. We need unit-specific standards (especially in healthcare and law enforcement) that recognize the history, nuances, and social dynamics of the Caribbean diaspora and all other groups. I intend to champion the expansion of the Community Schools model, which turns school buildings into neighborhood hubs staffed by practitioners who reflect our community's diversity. Furthermore, I will ensure that county contracts prioritize local, union and minority-owned firms that already possess this cultural fluency. True responsiveness happens when the people delivering the services are co-governing with the people receiving them.

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?
 - a. **Answer:** I will champion an "Infrastructure-First" economy that prioritizes local workers over luxury developers. As you know, Caribbean-Americans are heavily represented in our vital healthcare, construction, and service industries, sectors I will protect through mandatory Project Labor Agreements, prevailing wage enforcement, and safe staffing legislation. For small business owners, I intend to lead the charge to overhaul our broken



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permitting system, which currently treats a mom-and-pop shop with the same bureaucratic weight as a massive corporation. I support buy local procurement mandates to ensure our tax dollars stay within our community. By recapturing public wealth from corporate tax breaks, we can fund micro-grants and technical support for the entrepreneurs who are actually building our district's future.

5. What support would you provide for Caribbean-American students and parents, including language assistance and help navigating the school system?
- a. **Answer:** Prince George's County is home to one of the most vibrant Caribbean-American communities in the country, yet our school system often fails to recognize the unique cultural and structural challenges these families face. As your Councilmember, I will advocate for:
 - i. **Cultural & Linguistic Inclusion:** While most Caribbean students are English-proficient, linguistic nuances and different educational backgrounds can lead to misplacement in ESOL or a lack of specialized support. I will push for PGCPS to expand its Language Access Office to include specific cultural competency training that recognizes Caribbean dialects and educational systems, ensuring that "English-speaking" doesn't translate into underserved.
 - ii. **Navigating the System via Community Schools:** I plan to champion the expansion of the Community Schools model in District 9. I would love to support the schools with "Parent Navigators" (ideally including from the local Caribbean community) to help families navigate the complex PGCPS lottery, specialty programs, and the Blueprint for Maryland's Future requirements.
 - iii. **Targeted Parent Advocacy Programs:** I will support funding for the Office of Multicultural Affairs to host Caribbean-specific "Education Town Halls" that explain Maryland's new College and Career Readiness pathways. Parents shouldn't need a law degree to understand how to get their child into a specialized program.



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iv. **Accountability through a Fully Elected Board:**

Transparency starts with leadership. I have made clear that I will fight to return to a fully elected Board of Education so that Caribbean-American parents have a direct, accountable representative who is focused on the success of their children, not on political appointments.

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

a. **Answer:** To truly improve health outcomes, we must meet the Caribbean-American community (like all others) where they are, from churches, to festivals, and across community centers. My strategy for wellness focuses on three pillars of partnership:

- i. **Investing in 'Healthy Hubs' with Caribbean Nonprofits:** I will leverage the FY 2026 Community Partnership Grant Program to specifically fund nonprofits that provide culturally tailored wellness. We need programs that don't just say 'eat better,' but provide cooking demonstrations for traditional Caribbean diets for example modified for heart health, and mental health resources that address the specific cultural stigmas often found in immigrant communities.
- ii. **Integrating Mental Health into Community Spaces:** We are seeing a 2026 push for integrated wellness, such as the new Healing Arts Integrative Wellness Hub. I will fight to bring similar 'Safe Haven' models to District 9, partnering with community organizations to provide 'Safety Through Care.' This means using peer-to-peer counseling and creative arts therapy that resonates with Caribbean youth and seniors.
- iii. **Chronic Disease Prevention via 'PreventionLink':** I will expand the county's PreventionLink program to include targeted outreach in Caribbean neighborhoods for hypertension and diabetes screenings. By partnering with Caribbean-American medical professional associations, we



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can ensure that residents are being treated by providers who understand their history and cultural background.

- iv. **Health Equity through Public Wealth:** Wellness is tied to the cost of living. By Recapturing Public Wealth from developer tax breaks, I will ensure our Health Department is fully funded to provide mobile clinics and screenings including at Caribbean community events, ensuring that high-quality care isn't a luxury, but a right."

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?

- a. **Answer:** I firmly believe that trust is not given; it is earned through consistent accountability. In District 9, Caribbean-American residents (many of whom live in mixed-status households) deserve to know that their local police are there to protect them, not to act as a funnel for federal immigration authorities. My plan for robust oversight focuses on three strategic areas:

- i. **Championing the 2026 'Safe Haven' Legislative Package:** I fully support the emergency bills currently before the Council, including the Community Safe Spaces Act (CB-006-2026) and the Resident Kidnapping Protection Act (CB-007-2026). These bills aren't just about immigration; they are about police accountability. They require local officers to verify the identity of any federal agents operating in our neighborhoods, ensuring that no resident is subjected to 'impersonation' or illegal seizure.
- ii. **Empowering the Police Accountability Board (PAB):** I will fight to restore the \$225,000 cut from the PAB's 2026 budget. Accountability requires resources. I will ensure the PAB has the funding to conduct independent investigations and to translate its 'Know Your Rights' materials into the multiple languages and dialects spoken across our Caribbean community.
- iii. **Prioritizing Care over Policing:** Real safety comes from fully funded schools, healthcare, and housing, not increased patrol budgets. By **Recapturing Public Wealth** from luxury



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developers, I will prioritize funding for the **Community Defense Against ICE** program and wraparound services, moving our county toward a model of safety through care, not coercion.

- iv. **Ending 287(g) and 'Masked Policing':** I stand firmly behind HB 444, the state law signed in February 2026 that prohibits our local agencies from entering into 287(g) agreements with ICE. Furthermore, I support CB-008-2026, which bans law enforcement from wearing facial coverings in public. We do not have a 'secret police' in Prince George's County; if an officer is interacting with our community, their face must be visible and their badge number must be clear.

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

- a. **Answer:** To improve outcomes for our community, we must move beyond 'recognition' and into resource allocation. My administration will champion four specific funding and policy efforts:
 - i. **Small Business Procurement Reform:** I will push for a Small Business Empowerment overhaul that helps Caribbean-owned firms navigate the licensing process and win county contracts, ensuring our community's tax dollars circulate back into our own neighborhoods.
 - ii. **Universal Child Care & The Hardship Clause:** I am a staunch supporter of the Roadmap to Universal Child Care (CB-14 through CB-18-2026). Crucially, I will champion CB-18, which includes a 'Hardship Withdrawal' clause. This allows parents to terminate child care contracts without penalty if they face deportation or sudden economic loss, a vital safety net for our mixed-status Caribbean families.
 - iii. **The 'Safe Haven' Legal Defense Fund:** Building on the Community Defense Against ICE program, I will fight to baseline funding for immigration legal services. With the



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\$5.9 billion FY 2027 budget now under Council review, I will advocate for a permanent Immigrant Legal Defense Fund to ensure that Caribbean residents have the counsel they need to protect their status and their families.

- iv. **Senior Utility & Housing Assistance:** Our seniors are the anchors of the Caribbean diaspora, like so many groups. I support the \$1 million Senior Electricity Assistance program in the new budget, but I will go further by advocating for property tax deferment for long-time homeowners. We must ensure that the pioneers who built this county are not taxed out of it by rising assessments.