



League of Women Voters 2008 General Election Voters' Guide For Howard County

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Miscellaneous Voting Information

- POLLS are OPEN 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.
- EMERGENCY ABSENTEE BALLOTS may be obtained at your local Board of Elections office in the 7 days prior to and on election day. You may fill out the application form, obtain the absentee ballot and VOTE in one visit.
- POLLING PLACES are usually less crowded between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Try voting on your lunch hour.

[For More Information](#)
(Located at the end of this document)

PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

About the Office

SALARY: \$400,000 per year

TERM: Four years. Limit of two terms.

HOW ELECTED: Every four years political parties nominate candidates to run for President of the United States in a general election that is held on the first Tuesday in November of years divisible by the number four. Although the parties use conventions to nominate their candidates, in most states the Democratic and Republican parties also run state-wide primary elections. The results of the primary influence how the delegates to their respective party's convention will cast ballots for candidates for President. The degree to which the result of the primary election influences the votes of delegates at conventions varies from state to state.

DUTIES: The President is the head of state of the United States of America and is the Chief Executive Officer and the Commander in Chief of all military forces. The powers of the President are described in the Constitution and federal law. The President appoints the members of the Cabinet, ambassadors to other nations and the United Nations, Supreme Court Justices and federal judges subject to Senate approval. The President, along with the Cabinet and its agencies, is responsible for carrying out and enforcing the laws of the United States. The President may also recommend legislation to the United States Congress.

Questions asked candidates for President:

The League of Women Voters of the United States posed questions to the candidates for President in accordance with the following criteria:

- All qualified presidential candidates were invited to provide biographical information and responses to five issue specific questions. Candidates were qualified if they met the following criteria: 1) the candidate must have made a public announcement of her/his intention to run for President; 2) the candidate must qualify for the ballot in enough states to win a majority of electoral votes; and 3) the candidate must meet the Presidential Election Campaign Fund Act's minimum contribution threshold requirements for qualifying for matching funds, based on the most recent data publicly available on the FEC Web site as of August 8, 2008.
- Responses were limited to 50 words and truncated after the 50th word.
- Additional information on presidential candidates is available on the League's voter information Web site, www.VOTE411.org.

In Maryland Write-in candidates are allowed to file, after spending \$50.00 in pursuit of the office, until seven days prior to the election. If they file as write-ins, their names will be posted in each polling place on Election Day and votes for them will be counted. Their names will NOT be on any ballots.

BIOGRAPHY:

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE: What, if anything, do you believe the federal government should do to control global climate change?

COST OF HEALTH CARE: What should be done at the federal level, if anything, to combat the high cost of health care?

ECONOMIC DISPARITY: What, if anything, should the federal government do about the growing economic disparity between the middleclass and the well-to-do?

EDUCATION: What, if anything, should the federal government do to create the world's best educational system for all children in America?

U.S. STRATEGY – RISING GLOBAL POWERS: What should the U.S. strategy be towards rising global powers like Russia and China?

The responses to these questions are copyrighted by the League of Women Voters of the United States.

Vote for One:

Barack Obama (Illinois) -- **Joe Biden** (Delaware)

Party: Democratic

Website: www.barackobama.com

BIOGRAPHY: Obama began his career as a community organizer on Chicago's South Side and headed a voter registration drive. Obama practiced civil rights law and taught constitutional law. He served eight years in the State Senate before his election to the U.S. Senate. He graduated from Columbia University and Harvard Law.

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE: I believe the federal government should pursue multiple paths to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address the threat of global climate change, including implementing aggressive cap and trade requirements to reduce U.S. emissions by 80% from 1990 levels and investing heavily in clean energy and advanced vehicle technologies.

COST OF HEALTH CARE: My healthcare plan will make aggressive investments in cost-cutting technologies and will place more focus on prevention and chronic care management. The net result will be to bring down the costs of healthcare spending by \$2,500 for a typical family, annually, and lower the expense of Medicare's services.

ECONOMIC DISPARITY: I will cut taxes for the middle class and roll back some of the Bush tax cuts for those making over \$250,000 to restore fairness to the tax code. I will make long term public investments in R&D, clean energy, infrastructure, and manufacturing to create millions of good-paying jobs.

EDUCATION: I will strengthen public schools by expanding early childhood education, reforming and funding No Child Left Behind, recruiting and rewarding high-quality teachers, and expanding afterschool and summer learning opportunities. I will create a \$4,000 American Opportunity Tax Credit and expand financial aid to make higher education affordable for all.

U.S. STRATEGY – RISING GLOBAL POWERS: We must enhance our abilities both to collaborate and compete with China, while being vigilant about China's military modernization and respect for human rights. As we seek a future of clear-eyed engagement with Russia, we must ensure Russia acts as a force for progress, not regression to past conflicts.

John McCain (Arizona) -- **Sarah Palin** (Alaska)

Party: Republican

Website: www.johnmccain.com

BIOGRAPHY: John McCain graduated from the Naval Academy and served for 22 years as a naval aviator. He was elected to the House of Representatives in 1982 and the Senate in 1986. He has served as chairman of the Commerce Committee and ranking member of the Armed Services Committee.

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE: I support developing a cap-and-trade system to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 60% by 2050, providing tax credits for alternative energy, promoting zero-carbon nuclear power, reducing the federal government's carbon footprint, funding research into clean-coal technology, and offering incentives for America's automobile industry to develop electric cars.

COST OF HEALTH CARE: Under my plan, American families will receive \$5,000 tax credits to purchase insurance, either through employers or the private market—insurance that can follow them if they change jobs or leave the workforce. I will work for reforms to lower costs and provide coverage to Americans with pre-existing conditions.

ECONOMIC DISPARITY: We must spur growth, create jobs, improve educational attainment, and enhance financial security. My plan will keep income and payroll taxes low, reduce the price of gas, double the dependent exemption, bring down health-care costs, give deserving homeowners new fixed mortgages, slash our high business taxes, and expand trade.

EDUCATION: Our education system must focus on standards, accountability, and choice. My plan calls for recruiting highly qualified teachers in the neediest communities, empowering parents to choose the best schools for their children, expanding online educational opportunities, providing low-income families with access to tutors, and funding professional development for teachers.

U.S. STRATEGY – RISING GLOBAL POWERS: As President, I will work to establish good relations with other nations. At the same time, I will stand up for democratic values and human rights, and I will oppose aggression and international lawlessness that threaten our security.

Cynthia McKinney (California) -- **Rosa Clemente** (North Carolina)

Party: Green

Website: www.mckinney2008.com

Did not meet LWVUS/EF criteria stated above.

Bob Barr (Georgia) -- **Wayne A. Root** (Nevada)

Party: Libertarian

Website: www.bobbarr2008.com

Did not meet LWVUS/EF criteria stated above.

Ralph Nader (Connecticut) -- **Matt Gonzalez** (California)

Party: Independent

Website: www.votenader.org

BIOGRAPHY: Attorney, author, and consumer advocate, named by Time Magazine one of the "100 Most Influential Americans in the 20th Century." Over 4 decades of public service. Helped establish the OSHA, EPA, Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Safe Drinking Water Act, Motor Vehicle Safety Act, and Freedom of Information Act.

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE: The government should stop subsidizing fossil fuels: oil, electric and coal mining interests. Invest in renewable energy that is efficient, sustainable, and environmentally friendly: wind and solar power. Encourage more efficient automobiles, homes and businesses. Ratify the Kyoto Protocol. Create an independent Oceanic Protection Agency. Adopt a carbon pollution tax.

COST OF HEALTH CARE: Adopt a private delivery, free choice of hospital and doctor, single payer public health insurance system. This would save \$350 billion annually by eliminating exorbitant executive pay, advertising, computerized billing fraud and abuse, and apply those savings to comprehensively cover everyone without increasing taxpayer costs. Lower costs through bulk purchasing.

ECONOMIC DISPARITY: Unfair legislation allows the middle class to suffer while the rich entrench their status. To correct this we should enact a living \$10 wage, adopt a fair tax, and provide equal pay for women. We must end corporate subsidies and bailouts. Repeal NAFTA and the anti-union Taft/Hartley Law.

EDUCATION: Increase civic education and decrease standardized testing. Repeal “No Child Left Behind” Act. Do not tie test performance to school funding. Provide full funding for pre-school and nutrition programs. Get product marketing out of the schools. Ensure that the nation's crumbling schools are repaired within 3 years.

U.S. STRATEGY – RISING GLOBAL POWERS: The US should be a humanitarian superpower. Our foreign policy must redefine global security, peace, arms control, an end to nuclear weapons and expand the many assets of our country to assist with major initiatives against global infectious diseases. Stop support of foreign dictators. Human rights come before trade, profit.

Chuck Baldwin (Florida) -- **Darrell L. Castle** (Tennessee)

Party: Constitution

Website: www.baldwin08.com

Did not meet LWVUS/EF criteria stated above.

WRITE-IN CANDIDATES WHO HAVE FILED IN MARYLAND:

Donald K. Allen (Ohio)

Party: Unaffiliated

Website: www.donaldkallenforpresident.com

Lawson Mitchell Bone (Tennessee)

Party: Independent

Theodis (Ted) Brown, Sr. (Missouri)

Party: Independent

James D. Criveau (Virginia)

Party: Non_Partisan

RaeDeen R. Heupel (Montana)

Party: Independent

Website: www.raedeen.com/

Ronald G. Hobbs (Pennsylvania)

Party: Independent

Keith Russell Judd (Texas)

Party: Non-Partisan

Frank Moore (California)

Party: Independent

Website: www.frankmooreforpresident08.com

Lynne A. Starr (Florida)

Party: Independent

Blaine Taylor (Maryland)

Party: Democratic

CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATES

About the U.S. House of Representatives:

SALARY: \$169,300 per year.

TERM: Two years, no term limit.

HOW ELECTED: The United States is divided into 435 Congressional Districts that are reapportioned after every decennial census. All seats in the House of Representatives are up for election in every even-numbered year.

DUTIES: Representatives share responsibility with Senators for enactment of the nation's laws as provided for in the U.S. Constitution.

Questions asked candidates for Representative in Congress:

BACKGROUND: What are your qualifications for this office?

IMMIGRATION: What changes, if any, do you support in regard to immigration policy?

CLIMATE CHANGE: Describe Federal legislation you would support to address global climate changes.

ECONOMY: Identify a major challenge to the U.S. economy and how Congress should address it.

EDUCATION: What are your views on the No Child Left Behind legislation?

HEALTH CARE: What plans need to be put into place to meet the country's health care needs?

NATIONAL SECURITY: Identify a national security issue and how Congress should address it.

Vote for no more than one candidate.

REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS – DISTRICT 3

John P. Sarbanes

Party: Democratic

Website: www.johnsarbanes.com

BACKGROUND: Prior to my time in congress I spent two decades in the private, public and non-profit sectors. Since elected I have served on 3 committees including, the Education and Labor Committee, Natural Resources Committee, and Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

IMMIGRATION: Responsible immigration reform requires balancing America's security with opportunity for earned citizenship. I support a comprehensive reform strategy that strongly enforces our borders, punishes businesses that hire outside the law, and affords a fair and structured path to citizenship for those who abide by the rules.

CLIMATE CHANGE: Our focus has to primarily be a combination of developing clean technology including solar and wind power, and other renewable energy sources as well as reducing consumption. The best way to combat climate change is to educate the next generation on good environmental habits. This is why I introduced the No Child Left Inside act

ECONOMY: The most immediate challenge is the deteriorating financial crisis which was precipitated by the sub prime mortgage industry. Congress has already taken some steps to assist people who are in foreclosure or facing foreclosure, while at the same time seeking to ensure that there is enough credit liquidity in the market

EDUCATION: I believe that NCLB needs a significant overhaul that will lesson the hyper focus and high stakes testing around math and reading proficiency, and allow more flexibility for schools to prepare students in all subjects. Additionally, while important to maintain high standards, we need sufficient resources to meet those standards. ...

HEALTH CARE: We need to move quickly and deliberately to establish universal healthcare coverage as we work towards that we should take immediate steps to provide adequate coverage for children, our veterans and seniors.

NATIONAL SECURITY: Making sure that we have strong infrastructure in our own country that will allow us to meet any challenges of natural disasters or attacks on our country is absolutely critical. And the democratic congress has been working very hard to strengthen those crucial infrastructures like bridges, tunnels and highways.

Thomas E. "Pinkston" Harris

Party: Republican

Website: None given.

BACKGROUND: Educated at Delaware State, Coppin and Johns Hopkins Universities. Trained in Economics at Hopkins Masters program. Also owned health business for 20 years. I'm an expert here.

IMMIGRATION: We should commit to rigorously enforcing the laws already on the books. We should secure our northern border better. Next deny sanctuary cities federal funds. Deport all alien law breakers.

CLIMATE CHANGE: Mandate that within five years at least 25% of all new cars and trucks powered by natural gas. It's cheaper and cleaner than oil. Expedite the building of new nuclear power plants. Improve clean coal technology. Invest more into alternative fuels such as wind sun and next generation bio-fuels.

ECONOMY: Keep U.S. dollars home. Renew the Bush tax cuts. This will give investors the incentive to invest here. Drilling at home and building new nuclear power plants means jobs. End capital gains to invest in the economy.

EDUCATION: A failure. It had teachers teaching for the test and this is not education. It led to too many teachers cheating. Education should be localized.

HEALTH CARE: A program similar to the IRA. Individuals place what they can afford in a tax deductible fund. These monies can be used as a deductible for coverage in a nonprofit insurance company that handles preexisting conditions.

NATIONAL SECURITY: Our number one security issue is that we get 70% of our energy from people that hate us. We give them billions to kill us with. We need to become self sufficient in energy

REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS – DISTRICT 7

(If you live in this district, vote for no more than one candidate)

Elijah Cummings

Party: Democratic

E-mail: campaign@cummingsforcongress.com

CAMPAIGN WEB-SITE ADDRESS: <http://www.cummingsforcongress.com>

BACKGROUND: Howard University (Phi Beta Kappa) 1973. University of Maryland Law School (JD 1976). Maryland General Assembly (14 years Speaker Pro Tem). U.S. House of Representatives (1996 -) Oversight, Armed Services Joint Economic & Transportation Committees (Chair, Coast Guard Subcommittee). Task Force on Health Care Reform. Past Chair, Congressional Black Caucus. Attorney.

IMMIGRATION: I support comprehensive immigration reform to better secure our borders, protect workers against abuse, limit the downward pressure on wages and unify families. We must act both realistically and humanely toward the millions of undocumented workers and their families who currently are within the U.S.

CLIMATE CHANGE: I support the "1Sky" Coalition goals: (1) create 5 million green jobs - conserve 20% of our energy by 2015; (2) freeze pollution levels now, cut by at least 25% below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80% by 2050; (3) limit new coal plants; & (4) invest in renewable energy.

ECONOMY: The federal deficit: We should reinstate the more progressive tax structure of the 1990s, remain true to the "pay-go" budget discipline re-established by the current Democratic leadership and end the War in Iraq as soon as possible.

EDUCATION: No Child Left Behind has existed as an under-funded federal mandate for far too long. We must provide the resources to our schools and teachers that will allow us to properly educate every child.

HEALTH CARE: I have long supported a universal, single-payer health care system for all Americans based upon Medicare.

NATIONAL SECURITY: I voted against the Bush Administration's unilateral invasion of Iraq. Now, it is time for a new strategy: a responsible redeployment of American troops and diplomacy that encourages political reconciliation in Iraq - and a refocusing of international action in Afghanistan.

Michael T. Hargadon

Party: Republican

CAMPAIGN WEB-SITE ADDRESS: www.HargadonForUSCongress.com

BACKGROUND: I have run a successful health care practice for 25 years. I know how to balance budgets and make difficult decisions to discontinue staff or overhead expenses. I have served in leadership of several groups, which serve the community and the church. I can bring common sense to Congress.

IMMIGRATION: I would enforce the current immigration laws without amnesty. Immediately deport persons who are here illegally who have committed a crime, or threaten our society. Discontinue any government services to people who are here illegally. Secure our borders, and end "anchor" baby abuse. Enforce visa rules, and pass immigration reform.

CLIMATE CHANGE: I would not involve the Federal Government in legislation concerning climate change unless it can be demonstrated that this phenomenon is occurring, and that we are responsible. A strict enforcement of property rights should protect our environment. I would support the Congressional Green Scissors Coalition.

ECONOMY: Our deficit is the major challenge to the U.S. economy. Living beyond our means is a terminal condition which needs to be stopped. Every program lacking constitutional mandate should transitionally be eliminated or offered to the states. Congress must balance the budget, and take back control of the money supply.

EDUCATION: Education of children is the primary responsibility of parents. Local education authorities, teachers, and parents, can much better deal with education issues than a federal Department of Education. I would repeal NCLB. Why send funds to Washington, when they can be used effectively, and accounted for, at the local level.

HEALTH CARE: The health care needs of our citizens are private, and best made by the individual. Government involvement at the federal level is a huge mistake. Bureaucracies cannot compete with consumer driven health care options which need to provide for an available, quality, and cost effective delivery system.

NATIONAL SECURITY: Our foreign policy is wed to the military industrial complex. We are overextended. We spend \$1,000,000,000,000 a year to maintain our 700 bases in 130 foreign countries. Would we want foreign troops in our country? We have no constitutional authority, nor can we afford to be the world's policemen.

Ronald M. Owens-Bey

Party: Libertarian

BACKGROUND: Married, two college trained adult sons, two grandchildren. Paul Laurence Dunbar High School; Baltimore City Community College, A.A. Degree; Morgan State University, B.A. Degree. License Social Worker Associate since 1977. Lifelong Baltimorean - formerly a resident of the Oliver Community who is presently residing in the Forest Park Community.

IMMIGRATION: No response by deadline.

CLIMATE CHANGE: No response by deadline.

ECONOMY: No response by deadline.

EDUCATION: No response by deadline.

HEALTH: No response by deadline.

NATIONAL SECURITY: No response by deadline.

Write-In Candidates

Ray Bly

Party: Independent

E-mail: raybly@verizon.net

BACKGROUND: Self employed, 35 years, owner operator of two businesses, activist, champion of the Bill of Rights, Christian, manager of a lot of places I've worked, Vietnam combat vet.

IMMIGRATION: Easier to immigrate. National ID cards. Financial and criminal penalties enforced against anybody that helps illegals in any way, including states.

CLIMATE CHANGE: Mass transit in urban areas. Drill, explore, solar and wind will help save our environment. We've got to get the cars off the road and the airplanes out of the air.

ECONOMY: No more income tax. Value added tax like Europe. The rich would have to pay their fair share and the poor would pay a lot less, which would give them more spending power. Tariffs on a lot of imports.

EDUCATION: No Child Left Behind is a disaster. Discipline, respect, ABCs, 123s is what we should be teaching our children and with vouchers, parents would have a choice of schools, and our public education would go out of business, like they did in Europe.

HEALTH CARE: You have to be right wing and a Christian to be a Republican. What hypocrites! I'm a Christian and as Jesus put it to his rich disciples, "Give your money away and help the poor." We all help each other and national health care should be a priority, for eyes, teeth and prescriptions also.

NATIONAL SECURITY: The left wing Democrats want to ban guns in America and ban the right to defend yourself. What hypocrites! Arm America. Make it a requirement to learn how to use and handle firearms. Americans will defend our country ourselves, like they did on that airplane in 9/11.

Charles U. Smith

Party: Democratic

BACKGROUND: I have devoted my career to public service unpaid; Major in mental health at Morgan State (1972); Ordained Minister (1971), youth services (1973-1993); 39th and York Road in Baltimore.

IMMIGRATION: Should be enforced on an individual basis.

CLIMATE CHANGE: Current and future legislation should be used to gain control over the problem.

ECONOMY: Mortgage and credit crisis people through no fault of their own should be given by congress legislation.

EDUCATION: It is not working.

HEALTH: National non-profit system should be set up.

NATIONAL SECURITY: There are so many, but it should start at the top. Our elected officials have failed the American people.

JUDGE OF CIRCUIT COURT

About the Office:

SALARY: \$140,352 annual base.

TERM: Fifteen years, no term limit.

HOW ELECTED: When there is a vacancy, the Governor appoints a qualified person to fill the office. Each newly appointed Circuit Judge then must stand for election at the first election that occurs at least one year later. The judge may be opposed formally by one or more qualified members of the bar. All candidates run on both the Democratic and Republican ballots. Independents vote only in the general election.

DUTIES: Judges preside in the Circuit Court which is a trial court of general jurisdiction covering major civil cases and more serious criminal matters. Circuit Courts also may decide appeals from District Court and certain administrative agencies.

Questions asked the Judges:

BACKGROUND: What education and life experiences qualify you to hold this office?

JUSTICE SYSTEM NEEDS: What is the area of greatest need in the Maryland judicial system?

LEGAL ACCESS: What can be done to provide individuals with wider and better access to legal help and the legal system?

JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT – CIRCUIT 5

Tim McCrone -- Howard

BACKGROUND One of the professional experiences which prepared me to serve as a Maryland Judge was serving as law clerk to Judge J. Thomas Nissel, Judge Raymond J. Kane and Judge Robert F. Fischer during law school. To have been privileged to work for these extraordinary jurists was a wonderful learning opportunity. Also, having served as Howard County's State's Attorney.

JUSTICE SYSTEM NEEDS: The judicial system depends upon integrity and fairness. It is essential that the litigants be treated with appropriate dignity and respect in reaching a resolution in each case.

LEGAL ACCESS I believe it is appropriate to manage the courthouse in a manner that allows every citizen to access the full resources of the court, and to be treated with courtesy and respect. The court must do justice for all citizens and the services provided by the court must be accessible to all.

JUDGE OF THE COURT OF SPECIAL APPEALS AT LARGE

About the Office:

SALARY: \$149,552. annual base

TERM: 10 years – no term limit

HOW ELECTED: The Governor appoints judges to the Court of Special Appeals. The State Senate must confirm these appointments. At the end of a ten-year term, these judges' names must appear on the ballot. Voters vote "yes" for retention, or "no" to remove from office. Judges may not be opposed by other candidates in retention elections. Maryland is divided into 7 Appellate Judicial Circuits. One judge is appointed from each of these circuits and six members are appointed from the state at large. There are a total of 13 judges in the Court of Special Appeals.

DUTIES: Judges preside over The Maryland Court of Special Appeals, which is the intermediate appellate court for Maryland. It was created in 1966 in response to the rapidly growing caseload in the Maryland Court of Appeals. The Court of Special Appeals originally could hear only criminal cases. However, its jurisdiction has expanded so it now considers any reviewable action of the circuit court, unless otherwise provided by law. Judges sitting on the Court of Special Appeals generally hear and decide cases in panels of three.

Questions asked the Court of Appeals candidates:

BACKGROUND: What are your qualifications for this office?

JUDICIAL SYSTEM NEEDS: What is area of greatest need in the Maryland judicial system?

LEGAL ACCESS: What can be done to provide individuals with wider and better access to legal help and the legal system?

Vote "yes" for continuance in office or "no" for removal.

Deborah Eyler

BACKGROUND: In 11 years of service as a judge on the Court of Special Appeals, I have authored more than 1,000 case opinions. From that experience, I have gained in-depth knowledge of all aspects of Maryland law and have become skilled at producing case opinions that are thorough, fair, and timely.

JUDICIAL SYSTEM NEEDS: In the criminal justice system, additional "drug court" diversion programs because the vast majority of crimes in Maryland are rooted in the distribution and use of illegal drugs. In the civil justice system, affordable legal representation, especially for parents and children in contested custody cases.

LEGAL ACCESS: More outreach by courts and the judiciary's local pro-bono committees, which exist in each county, to link up, early in a case, a party who cannot afford representation with a pro bono lawyer who can handle the matter for free or at a substantially reduced rate.

Robert A. Zarnoch

BACKGROUND: Before my appointment, I served 30 sessions as the Attorney General's Counsel to the General Assembly. I reviewed 20,000 bills and authored thousands of advice letters. I argued in the Supreme Court and participated in 39 cases in the State's highest court, including one making the Camden Yards stadiums possible.

JUDICIAL SYSTEM NEEDS: A 2008 Harris Poll discloses that only 16% of the public has a great deal of confidence in the courts and the justice system. Such numbers will never be reversed until judges demonstrate by performance that the system is accessible, deals fairly with all, and reaches just results.

LEGAL ACCESS: Studies note that a citizen is more likely to go to court than be hospitalized. Greater support for legal aid and pro bono lawyering is needed. Promotion of pre-paid legal plans and self-help, expanding small claims courts and streamlining legal procedures would also help citizens obtain affordable legal assistance.

BOARD OF EDUCATION – HOWARD COUNTY

About the Office:

DUTIES: The Board of Education of Howard County is responsible for setting local education policy consistent with state and federal laws governing public education. At the direction of the Board, the Superintendent and the school system's administrative staff develop procedures and administrative regulations to support policy decisions. The Board is composed of seven members elected at-large for four-year terms, and a student member elected by students for a one-year term.

TERM: 4 years

SALARY: \$15,000 chair; \$12,000 individual

Questions asked the Board of Education candidates:

WANT TO ACCOMPLISH: What do you want to accomplish as a member of the Board of Education?

ADVOCATE FOR FUNDS FOR SCHOOL MAINTENANCE: How will you advocate for the funds needed for school maintenance and renovations?

PUBLIC ACCESS TO REPORTS: How will you support the right of the public to access school department reports, contracts and budget documents?

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY OPPORTUNITIES: What opportunities are there to make Howard County Schools more environmentally friendly or green?

CHILD OBESITY: Child obesity is a major issue. How can the school system address this issue?

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS: How will you recognize and reward the teaching of critical thinking skills in the classroom?

LOW PERFORMANCE: How should the Department of Education help low-performing students and low-performing schools?

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: Howard County Schools are ranked as excellent. What ideas do you have that will challenge the school system to strive for even higher academic achievement?

Diane Butler

Ellicott City, Age 53

Biography: Home school mom of a 15 year old daughter. Previous PTA and Fundraising Coordinator in California (8 years ago). President of the St. John's Community Association for 4 of the last 5 years. Currently Vice President. Served on the County Infill and Rt. 40 Committees. Howard School Board Citizen's Committee.

Want to Accomplish: To help educate the public about our exploding budget and to help our students compete in a math, science global environment. Introduce magnet programs and an International Baccalaureate program.

Advocate for Funds for school maintenance: Make better decisions with the outrageous amounts of money that we currently spend.

Public access to reports: All school department reports, contracts, and budget documents should be public records easily accessible and easy to read. Our masses of paper work hide the most inconvenient truths. These are public tax dollars being spent.

Environmentally friendly opportunities: Leading by example we need to stop bussing our kids all over the county. We waste so much in the county as adults, it is hard to teach children the right thing when we are not doing it ourselves. Teach by example. A crucial sense of community is lost by bussing. "Green" county, my eye!

Child Obesity: Put physical education back in the Elementary Schools. Do at least 20 minutes of calisthenics every school day. Get rid of all the test prep time and use it to get back to some movement.

Critical Thinking Skills: Allow teachers to teach in their classrooms. The rigidity of teaching to the assessment tests is why our children do not develop their own critical thinking skills. The "reward" will be in the child's own personal development.

Low Performance: We shouldn't have any low performing schools as long as we back the teachers on proper discipline and work with the parents of the children. I was able to set up "at risk" reading programs for elementary children in California for \$100 a school. They involved parent/teacher partnerships!

Academic Achievement: Quit saying how great you are and start being a truly good, efficient system for all students, including the gifted. Introduce magnet schools and an International Baccalaureate Program.

Allen Dyer

Ellicott City, Age: 60

www.lawlab.com/campaign/

BIOGRAPHY: As a lawyer, I know the MARYLAND EDUCATION ARTICLE. I am a computer consultant experienced in network systems and I have taught at Anne Arundel Community College. I was an Air Force flight instructor and I flew combat in Southeast Asia. My children graduated from Howard County Public Schools.

WANT TO ACCOMPLISH: Adhere to state requirements, improve partnerships with the county government and all communities. Open communication with, and honestly disclose issues important to, the communities. Create a safe and healthy school environment that provides each child with the foundation and opportunity to reach his/her potential as a human being.

ADVOCATE FOR FUNDS FOR SCHOOL MAINTENANCE: Require evaluations using standardized process and specs. Fully disclose findings to public and county officials. Require complete accounting of costs (operating/capital). Estimates driven by needs not arbitrary caps. Education can't be viewed as a separate/distinct entity. A well planned, cost effective method will allow proper prioritization of resources.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO RECORDS: Require that all documents prepared by or for the school system also be provided in computer file format with information not releasable under the Public Information Act segregated or tagged for automated redaction. Require posting of publicly releasable documents to the web within 30 days of creation or receipt.

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY OPPORTUNITIES: Partner closely with Montgomery County and others who have integrated green practices into their operations and construction programs. Work with the Department of Public Works which has already built green buildings. Require LEED certification. Schools represent abundant opportunities for studying how to build a sustainable living environment.

CHILD OBESITY: Focus on improving the quality of all foods and beverages sold on school grounds and providing more opportunities to engage in regular physical activity for students, parents, school employees and board members. Require annual physical fitness tests and body mass index assessments for all students, school employees and board members.

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS: I can't answer this fundamental question in 50 words. But, I would vigorously support every teacher's right to carve out instructional time to devote to the analysis, integration, and application of the fact based content presented to our students. "Learning how to learn" is our most important product.

LOW PERFORMANCE: Excellent teachers are our most valuable resource so financial incentives should be used to match our best teachers with schools and students identified as low performing. Low performing students should also receive extra educational resources such as parental involvement in crafting solutions, community involvement, and after hours access to computers.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: Higher academic achievement is not enough. Our students must be prepared to successfully face the challenges of life in a democracy. To assess whether graduates are having difficulty reaching their full potential and to inform our efforts to improve, we must establish and maintain a system of feedback from graduates.

Ellen Flynn Giles

Scaggsville, Age: 57

BIOGRAPHY: Editor/Analyst; 24-year resident; Four children, HCPSS graduates; Current BOE Vice Chair; 20+-years experience, PTA Exec/SIT, CAC (8-term Chair), Operating Budget Review, Attendance Area Committee, School Health Council, Education Funding & BOE Responsibilities Task Forces; Member, VisionHC, Women's Giving Circle & LWV; National PTA Lifetime & BOE Friends of Education Awards.

WANT TO ACCOMPLISH: Improve long-term planning to address the infrastructure and technology required to support ongoing program development and evaluation, design and operation of efficient and effective facilities, implementation of critical staffing models, and the delivery of the quality instruction and assessment critical to graduating students prepared for post-secondary opportunities and responsibilities.

ADVOCATE FOR FUNDS FOR SCHOOL MAINTENANCE: With decreased state funding, we must clearly articulate our priorities and the impact of delay on essential projects, some already long-deferred. Funding options considered must include a bonding authorization increase; partnering in facility development and operation; and designation of critical maintenance as one-time expenditures to qualify for surplus fund allocation.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO REPORTS: Public access is non-negotiable. The Feasibility, Budget, and Attendance Area documents are on the homepage, but improvements should include standardization of school web-sites and links; an FAQ to identify key reports and facilitate navigation and use of Board Docs; and a simplified process for Public Information Office requests for information.

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY OPPORTUNITIES: Through the environmental curriculum and long-term partnerships with MDE, the Conservancy and local groups, students have made a positive impact on local eco-systems and should be supported in taking ownership of additional Green School projects. System-wide, we should expand implementation of energy management, green O&M, and LEED standards in renovations.

CHILD OBESITY: Promote and model healthy life choices during the school day, from stretches during morning announcements, to increased options in lunch/snacks, to recess walking clubs; expand after-school intramurals and physical activity opportunities; and work with community groups, PTAs and Boosters to support healthy concession stand offerings and fund-raising options.

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS: Objectives to develop students' ability to reason, connect and communicate are imbedded throughout the curriculum. Innovative teachers should be provided with opportunities to share best practices and expertise with their peers, showcase their successes through presentations such as the Spotlight on Excellence, and be recognized as mentors.

LOW PERFORMANCE: There is no one size fits all. Allocation of needs-based resources, including staffing, technology, and related supports, must continue for programs that provide for critical assessment, evaluation and continuous improvement of targeted instruction and interventions for individual students. These include tutorials, double-booked classes, co-teaching models, and after-school and summer programs.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: Increased opportunities and participation in honors, GT and independent study; enhancements to the world language program to provide a wider selection for instruction at all levels, increase participation, and introduce language study at the elementary level; and expansion of current offerings, participation and requirements for science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Betsy Grater

Ellicott City

BIOGRAPHY: B.A. Elementary Education, Kutztown University. M.A. Early Childhood Education, Vanderbilt University. Kindergarten through third grade teacher. Elected Raleigh, NC Board of Education 1971. Development Coordinator Maryland Committee for Children. Proprietor Betsy's Bed & Breakfast, owner of Amanda's Bed & Breakfast Reservation Service. Past Co-President the League of Women Voters, HC. Three grandchildren in HCPSS.

WANT TO ACCOMPLISH: I would like to ensure that all the Howard County students receive the best education (all around) that our funding can provide, and that our teachers can provide. HC schools have an excellent reputation and I would work to see our schools reach even higher standards.

ADVOCATE FOR FUNDS FOR SCHOOL MAINTENANCE: Maintenance and renovations are important items to keep the schools safe and welcoming. When budgets are being prepared, I will support adequate funding for maintenance and renovations to keep our schools in good condition and up to date.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO REPORTS: All school documents, reports, contracts, and budgets that are not protected by law, in my opinion should be made available to all parties interested in reviewing them.

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY OPPORTUNITIES: There are green programs happening right now in some schools, building compost bins and creating habitats. These should be supported and encouraged by the administration and teachers. Also, there are organizations that would be interested in helping, for example, Master Gardeners. The schools should use native plants and Bay-wise practices.

CHILD OBESITY: Use every opportunity to educate the students about healthy eating and life styles, (exercise and sports). Limit the non-nutritious food available in vending machines and use the school lunches to demonstrate healthful food groups.

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS: I would have to recommend programs, exhibits, exercises and demonstrations the students produce because school board members are not in the classroom to observe the process taking place. The teachers responsible for instilling good critical thinking should be given special recognition.

LOW PERFORMANCE: Each student and school should be able to take advantage of every resource the system has available to encourage students toward excellence. The administration should make each school and each teacher aware of those resources and how best to access them. Parents should be involved with home activities and studies to enrich the lives and facilitate the advancement of each student

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: Enriching the experiences of the underachievers, breeching the languages barriers, educating the whole child, closing the achievement gap, providing state of the art technology and up-to-date textbooks and smaller classes should help enable higher achievement. Teacher's salaries will need to be kept competitive to retain and recruit good candidates.

Janet Siddiqui

Age: 46

www.janetsiddiqui.com

BIOGRAPHY: Current Board of Education member, Pediatrician at Johns Hopkins 13yrs., Georgetown University Medical Center, Eastern Virginia Medical School, M.D., Children in Ho. Co. schools, PTA member, HCPSS Anti-bullying Task force , HCPSS Citizens Advisory Committee. Ho. Co. Dept. of Citizen Services, Community Services Grant review committee. Patuxent River Commission, 22 yr resident.

WANT TO ACCOMPLISH: Maintain and improve academic excellence. Find ways to address individual needs of each child. Equitable compensation and professional development for teachers; Facilities improvements, technology and wellness initiatives; Engaging parents and the community to work together to close the achievement gap, and prepare students for the future.

ADVOCATE FOR FUNDS FOR SCHOOL MAINTENANCE: We should prioritize the needs, and work with state and county officials, and community leaders to continue to advocate for the resources required for the school system. In a fiscally responsible way, identify funding sources to address the educational program needs, while maintaining safety and health standards for all children.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO REPORTS: Efforts should continue to maintain transparency and provide easy access and availability of information to the public through the web site or office, while protecting information that is confidential such as personnel and student information.

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY OPPORTUNITIES: An energy audit at each school should be considered to determine effective and economical changes that can be put in place. As we renovate schools, we should try to incorporate energy efficient ideas. We should continue to encourage students, schools, and the community to learn and practice Green initiatives.

CHILD OBESITY: I recognize the importance of this issue and initiated discussions to find ways to incorporate healthier options for the students. We should find creative ways to introduce more physical activity during and after school. We should engage parents and the community, and team with county government for resources and ideas.

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS: It's important that children be able to analyze and apply information that they have learned. There should be crossover in problem solving, life skills and abilities in math, sciences, languages, and arts. From student achievement and excellence in these areas will generate pride and recognition for the students and teachers.

LOW PERFORMANCE: While the school system continues to make strides in these areas, each student needs to achieve academic success. Good principal leadership in the schools, working with community and school leaders, engaging parents, setting high standards and using proven effective methods and programs will help to continue to close those gaps.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: Setting higher standards for educators, staff and children and challenging them to strive for excellence. Retain and attract highly qualified teachers and focus on the needs of each individual student. Use of the latest technology, programs, innovative methods, along with leadership within the system will guide us into the future.

Di Zou

Glenwood, Age 19

www.zouforboe.net

BIOGRAPHY: 19 year old graduate of Glenelg High School Class of 2006; Sophomore at the University of Maryland College Park; Pursuing a degree in Mathematics and Economics; 9 year resident of Howard County; In the Howard County Public School System for 8 years; Eight year old brother at Bushy Park Elementary School

WANT TO ACCOMPLISH: Reform county level standardized testing; Work with the state to reform state mandated standardized testing; Reintroduce vocational education system; Use my knowledge of technology to make sure the school system has a efficient technological base; Make sure the school system has a smart and thoughtful plan towards school construction and renovation

ADVOCATE FOR FUNDS FOR SCHOOL MAINTENANCE: I would make sure the funds are allocated properly and thoughtfully, make the oldest schools the priority for construction and renovation, make sure that schools would not degrade like Mt. Hebron High School, make sure costs and construction make sense. Marriott's Ridge High School cost \$34 million to build, yet cost \$50 million to renovate Mt. Hebron.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO REPORTS: I fully support the right for the public to access all school department reports, contracts, and budget documents. The only information I would restrict access to the public would be private information and health records. Everything else I would allow the public to have access to.

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY OPPORTUNITIES: One idea get rid of styrofoam and switch to plastic or paper in school cafeterias. Increase in computer and technology use for assignments which would reduce the amount of paper waste in schools, promoting recycling in the classroom. Encourage energy efficient windows and doors in school construction and renovation.

CHILD OBESITY: At the elementary and middle school levels, we cannot cut activities like gym and recess for kids. We must start educating children about the health effects and dangers of obesity earlier in life. After school sports activities for children introduced at the middle and elementary school level.

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS: I would support incentives for rewarding teachers. Besides incentives for teaching critical thinking skills in the classroom, I would allow teachers who teach critical thinking well to pick the classes they want to teach.

LOW PERFORMANCE: I would encourage teachers to work individually with students that are under-performing. I would also encourage more teachers to work with a class that is under-performing. I would also explore the use of alternative teaching methods with under-performing students.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: Introduction of charter schools in Howard County. The school system needs to provide the best education for our students, not the best schooling. We need competition among schools so parents may choose the best education for their children. Make sure the students, family, community, and teachers stay interested in education.

STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Question 1 - Constitutional Amendment

(Chapter 513, Acts of 2007)

Early Voting; Polling Places; Absentee Ballots

Authorizes the General Assembly to enact legislation to allow qualified voters to vote at polling places inside or outside of their election districts or wards and to vote up to two weeks before an election. This amendment also authorizes the General Assembly to enact legislation to allow absentee voting by qualified voters who choose to vote by absentee ballot, in addition to voters who are absent at the time of the election or who are unable to vote personally.

(Amends Article I, §§1 and 3 of the Maryland Constitution)

- For the Constitutional Amendment
- Against the Constitutional Amendment

Origin of this Ballot Question – Legislation that would allow early voting and “no-excuse” absentee voting was passed by the General Assembly in 2006, but a court decision found the legislation to be in conflict with the Maryland Constitution. Therefore, in the 2007 session, the General Assembly passed SB 1 - Elective Franchise - Early Voting and Polling Places which amends the Maryland Constitution to allow the General Assembly to pass legislation that will establish early voting sites and allow voters to vote by absentee ballot without having to give a reason. All Constitutional Amendments must be passed by a majority of voters statewide.

Present Practice – Article I, Section 1 of the Maryland Constitution states that a voter “shall be entitled to vote in the ward or election district in which he resides.” As currently interpreted, this means that a voter cannot vote at an early voting location outside the voter’s election district and that a provisional ballot cast by a voter outside his or her election district cannot be counted. Article XV, Section 7 of the Maryland Constitution designates the “Tuesday after the first Monday of November” as the date of the general election. This has been interpreted by the Court of Appeals to mean that early voting is not permissible. Absentee ballots are only for use by voters who are absent at the time of an election or who are unable to vote in person at the assigned voting precinct. The absentee ballot application requires a voter to affirm this fact.

Proposed Change – If the amendment passes, the General Assembly may enact laws to establish early voting sites. Early voting would allow registered voters to vote, in person, up to two weeks before a state-wide primary or general election at polling places outside of their normal district or precinct. Early voting sites can accommodate voters from multiple precincts or even from the entire state. However, passing this amendment only allows the General Assembly to establish an early voting process. The details of how many early voting sites will be established and how the locations for them will be determined will come in future legislation. Passage of this amendment will also allow the General Assembly to pass legislation that enables any qualified voter to vote by absentee ballot if they choose to do so. The enabling legislation could remove the requirement to sign a statement telling why the voter wants to vote by absentee ballot.

Pros: Allows for in-person voting by voters who, due to work hours, long commutes or other reasons, are unable to vote during the limited hours on Election Day. Early voting should ease long lines and lengthy wait times at precincts on Election Day and should ease the workload of precinct workers. This measure also increases the likelihood that a voter’s provisional ballot will be counted by allowing a provisional ballot cast outside the voter’s election district to be counted for eligible races.

Cons: There will be increased costs associated with providing polling locations prior to Election Day. Voters who vote during early voting may not have access to late campaign information on which to base their election decisions. By encouraging more voters to use absentee ballots or early voting sites, some of the community interaction that takes place at precinct based polling places may diminish.

Question 2 - Constitutional Amendment

(Chapter 5, Acts of 2007 Special Session)

Authorizing Video Lottery Terminals (Slot Machines) to Fund Education

Authorizes the State to issue up to five video lottery licenses for the primary purpose of raising revenue for education of children in public schools, prekindergarten through grade 12, public school construction and improvements, and construction of capital projects at community colleges and higher education institutions. No more than a total number of 15,000 video lottery terminals may be authorized in the State, and only one license may be issued for each specified location in Anne Arundel, Cecil, Worcester, and Allegany Counties, and Baltimore City. Any additional forms or expansion of commercial gaming in Maryland is prohibited, unless approved by a voter referendum.

(Enacts new Article XIX of the Maryland Constitution)

- For the Constitutional Amendment
- Against the Constitutional Amendment

Origin of this Ballot Question – For several years, efforts to enact legislation that would authorize Video Lottery Terminals (slot machines) as a way to raise revenue for state expenditures failed in the legislature. The governor proposed, and legislators agreed, that the decision of whether to significantly expand gambling in Maryland should be decided by the voters. The Maryland Constitution allows only two ways for citizens to vote on laws. The first is to gather enough signatures on a petition to place a law that has been passed by the General Assembly on the ballot for voter approval. The second is to place a constitutional amendment, approved by three-fifths of the legislators, before the voters in a General Election. In the 2007 Special Session, the Maryland General Assembly passed HB 4, which would add a new article to the Maryland Constitution to authorize video lottery terminal gaming (slot machines) in Maryland. A majority of voters, *statewide*, must vote in favor of the amendment for it to go into effect.

Present Practice – Currently, the annotated code of Maryland prohibits video lottery terminal (slot machine) gambling except certain fraternal, religious or war veterans' organizations in a few counties may operate no more than five individual slot machines, and the revenue from them must be used for the charitable purposes of those organizations. Public education is currently funded through Maryland's General Fund. State funding for primary and secondary education is about \$5.35 billion for this fiscal year. The three main sources of revenue for the General Fund are income tax, retail sales tax and the State Lottery. School construction may be funded by the General Fund but is primarily funded by borrowing through the issuance of State bonds.

Proposed Change – If the amendment passes, Maryland may operate up to 15,000 video lottery terminals in five locations: Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Allegany, Cecil and Worcester Counties. No more than one gambling facility would be allowed in each of the authorized jurisdictions. Another bill related to gambling, SB 3, was also passed during the 2007 Special Session. It will go into effect contingent on the passage of this constitutional amendment. As defined by SB 3, 33% of proceeds from video terminal gambling would go to the licensed operators, 9.5% to the horse racing industry; and approximately 48.5% to education. The remainder would be used for lottery expenses, local impact grants and administrative costs. Included in the latter is money to fight gambling addiction. The amendment also states that no additional video lottery terminals shall be authorized without another approval by voters.

Pros: In 2007, the Department of Legislative Services estimated 2010 state revenues will increase by approximately \$86 million from video gaming receipts and by as much as \$565 million by 2013. This additional revenue could reduce tax increases that would otherwise be necessary to fund projected education expenses. Maryland residents who gamble in West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Delaware may choose to spend their gambling dollars here instead of taking them out of state. New jobs will be created in construction and the gambling industry. Jobs in the horse racing industry may be saved. Unlike taxation, gambling is a recreational choice and not a mandate.

Cons: In order to generate enough revenue to reach the projected increases to state funding, gamblers in Maryland would have to lose over \$1 billion per year. To generate this level of revenue, the state will have to urge its citizens to frequent slots parlors. Gambling, like other addictions, frequently leads to social (and government) costs associated with lost productivity, increased crime, broken families and even suicide. Disposable income that currently generates sales tax revenue could be spent on gambling resulting in a loss to the General Fund. The referendum would put a specific revenue source, gambling, in the state Constitution. A constitution should be clear, concise and confined to fundamentals of the structure of government.

VOTING INFORMATION
To Accompany the On-Line
2008 GENERAL ELECTION VOTERS' GUIDES

General Election: Tuesday, November 4, 2008

Polls open - 7 am to 8 pm

Voter Registration Deadline: Tuesday, October 14, 2008

[Find Your Local Board of Elections](#) – From the Maryland State Board of Elections Website.

[Legislative and Congressional District Maps](#) – From the Maryland Department of Planning Website.

[Absentee Ballot](#) Application Deadline: Tuesday, October 28, 2008

[Emergency Absentee Ballot](#) Procedure:

[Provisional Ballot](#) Procedure:

[The Electoral College](#): An explanation.

THE VOTERS' GUIDE and THE LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that works to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in public policy debate and governmental decision-making. The League has a long tradition of publishing the verbatim responses of candidates to questions important to voters. The League offers this Voters' Guide to assist citizens in their decision-making process as they prepare for the general election. **The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate.**

The candidates' answers in the Guide appear as submitted. If answers exceeded the word limit, an ellipsis indicates words were cut from the end of the statement. No write-in candidates will appear on the ballot but the list of filed write-ins will be available at each polling place.

In most areas of Maryland, the Local Leagues have been able to have Voters' Guides printed for distribution. For those voters who need On-Line access, this version has been prepared.

The League thanks all candidates who submitted answers to its questionnaires.

VOTER REGISTRATION STATUS and POLLING LOCATION

[Check with your Local Board of Elections](#) to verify your registration status and polling location. The registration deadline is Tuesday, October 14.

COME PREPARED TO VOTE

1. Read your **sample ballot** from Board of Elections mailed the last week of October.
2. Note your polling place location on the front; polling locations change!
3. Use this *Voters' Guide* to become informed on candidates and issues.
4. Mark your candidate selections and ballot question decisions **ahead of time**.
5. Bring your completed sample ballot with you on November 4 to vote confidently and reduce waiting times. Shorter lines are expected from 10 am to 2 pm.

DON'T PANIC IF THERE'S A PROBLEM

1. Check the signs for directions and/or ask the poll workers for assistance.
2. Depending on your jurisdiction, language assistance may be available.
3. If your name is not on the precinct register, you may be directed to another polling place or given the option of a **Provisional Ballot**. Provisional ballots are verified following the election for voter registration accuracy. Votes of verified registrants are included in the final election tally.

POLLING PLACE RESTRICTIONS

No cell phone, pagers, cameras or computers may be used by voters in the polling place.
Up to two children, 13 or under, may accompany a voter into the voting booth.

LONG WORK HOURS? KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

On Election Day, polls are open from 7 am to 8 pm. State Law requires Maryland-based employers to release you with pay for up to two hours **only if** you do not have two continuous hours off during the time the polls are open.

ABSENTEE BALLOT

1. Apply in writing for an absentee ballot if you “will be absent or unable to vote in person in the election.” Applications are available from your local Board of Elections upon request in writing, by telephone, or in person.
2. Return completed application form by 4:30 pm October 28 to the Board of Elections by mail or in person.
3. Absentee ballots are usually mailed approximately three weeks before an election.
4. Return completed absentee ballots by mail, postmarked no later than Election Day, Nov. 4 or in person at the Board of Elections by 8 pm on Election Day.

EMERGENCY ABSENTEE BALLOT

If the need arises from October 29 through Election Day, request an Emergency Absentee Ballot. Apply in person at the Board of Elections:

1. Complete Late Application for Absentee Ballot,
2. Receive an absentee ballot and
3. Vote on the spot or return to the Board yourself by 8 pm on Election Day.

If unable to complete this process in person (e.g. hospitalization)

1. You or someone acting for you must obtain a Late Application for Absentee Ballot.
2. Complete the Designation of Agent section on the Late Application.
3. Your agent then obtains an absentee ballot from the Board of Elections on your behalf, brings it to you to vote, and returns it prior to 8 pm on Election Day.

The Electoral College

The selection of the President and Vice President of the United States is more complicated than simply counting up the number of votes that each candidate receives on Election Day. When the United States Constitution was written, the country’s founders created an institution call the “Electoral College”. Part of the goal of establishing such an institution was to give power to the less populous states and to insure that candidates for President and Vice President had sufficient distribution of support from all areas of the nation to govern.

Each state is allocated one elector for every representative that they have in Congress. In Maryland, we have two Senators and eight members of the House of Representatives so we have 10 electors in the Electoral College. The smallest states have two senators and one member in the House so they have only 3 electors. Even though the District of Columbia has no members in Congress they were given the right to have electors following the ratification of the 23rd Amendment in 1961. California, the most populous state, has 55 electors. No member of Congress may be an elector.

In the beginning, the Electoral College had considerable power in making an independent choice among the candidates for President and Vice President. At one time, their names appeared on the ballot during a Presidential election. Now, only the names of the candidates appear. However, voters are actually casting ballots for electors who are pledged to the ticket they just voted for. The candidate with the highest number of votes in each state will be represented by electors who will all cast their vote for the winning candidate. The exceptions to this “winner take all” practice are the states of Maine and Nebraska. In those states, the winner of the statewide vote gets 2 electoral votes (equal to the number of senators from the state) and the candidate with the highest popular vote in each Congressional District receives the one electoral vote that is allocated for that district.

On the Monday after the second Wednesday in December, all of the electors chosen as a result of the General Election in November meet in their respective state capitals to cast two ballots – one for President and one for Vice President. The Electoral College includes 538 electors (one for every member in Congress plus 3 from the District of Columbia). In order to be elected, the candidates must receive 270 electoral votes. If no candidate for President receives that many votes, the House of Representatives picks the winner from the top three vote getters. Each state receives only one vote, regardless of its size. The Senate chooses the Vice President if no candidate receives 270 votes. Senators cast their votes as individuals, not as states.