



the
**AFRICAN-AMERICAN
DEMOCRATIC CLUB**
OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Thank you for your interest in being considered for our endorsement. We ask that all candidates return the completed questionnaire to communications@aadcmc.org and vp@aadcmc.org by 11:59pm Sunday March 6th, 2016.

Campaign Profile:

Please attach a brief bio that includes contact information and the following:

- Candidate Name Will Jawando
- Office Being Sought Maryland's 8th Congressional District
- Experience:

I have extensive policy and legislative experience in areas of education, criminal justice and civil rights – having worked on Capitol Hill for House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, and Senators Barack Obama and Sherrod Brown and later in the Obama White House and U.S. Department of Education. While serving on Capitol Hill, I crafted and negotiated legislation to expand early childhood education programs and make college more accessible and affordable. While serving in the White House Office of Public Engagement I worked with advocates and civil rights leaders to ensure equal pay for equal work, protect the right to vote, and make the criminal justice system more fair and just. And as the Director of Government Relations at Discovery Communications, I honed my skills in building coalitions to get things done – coalitions that included both government and non-governmental stakeholders, national and local non-profits and advocacy groups. This included implementation of a program in Montgomery County to bridge digital divides in our communities and encourage more young people to study science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)—gateways to good paying jobs and critical to our country's future economic competitiveness.

I have a broad range of experience that will enable me to work in the legislature to craft sound policy but also work with community and advocacy groups to create the environment for progressive change.

- Campaign Contributions & Cash on Hand: \$450,000 & \$250,000
- Other Endorsements:
The Congressional Black Caucus PAC
Ben Jealous, Former President of the NAACP
Delegate Charles E. Sydnor III of Baltimore County
Councilmember Craig Rice of Montgomery County
Christopher S. Barclay of the Montgomery County School Board

U.S. Representatives Gregory Meeks (NY-05), Robin Kelly (IL-02), Donald Payne, Jr. (NJ-10), Hank Johnson (GA-04), G.K. Butterfield (NC-01), Emanuel Cleaver (MO-05),

Questionnaire:

1. Despite record low unemployment in many sectors of the economy, African Americans continue to have high unemployment rates, especially among African American teens and young adults. Please explain what initiative you would propose to address this economic imbalance.

150,000 jobs were added to the economy in January and the unemployment rate fell to an eight-year low. 242,000 jobs added in February. Maintaining the 4.9%, eight-year low it first hit in January. While the unemployment rate continues to fall nationally, unemployment numbers in the African American community remain nearly twice as high as the national rate. That's a ratio of 2-to-1. African Americans are being left behind. Some data suggests that there might be an approach to Black unemployment that could have a significant impact over the long term: A college degree. As more jobs require college and post-graduate degrees, we must make college more accessible and affordable. I support free tuition at public colleges and universities. I believe this will level the playing field.

2. If elected, what will be your legislative priorities during your first term as a member of Congress?

Reducing Gun Violence and reforming current gun control laws.

When I was 12 years old my best friend's life was cut short by a stray bullet. During that same year, I received a scholarship to a private high school in Washington, D.C. You could not have told me that me and my friend were any different and it was at this moment in my life that I decided to dedicate my life to public service and reducing gun violence. I believe we should strengthen and expand background checks; close dangerous gun show loopholes and crack down on gun traffickers and ban military style assault weapons and high capacity magazines. We also must keep guns out of the hands of terrorists, domestic abusers, and other violent criminals as we work to reduce the NRA's influence in Washington.

Education

As the father of three young daughters with a background in education policy, I am passionate about ensuring students receive a world-class education to prepare them for college, life, and the workforce. I began my career advising members of Congress on education issues and have worked at the White House and Department of Education on educational initiatives. I believe that all students are capable of learning and should be nurtured for success from cradle to career.

Maryland and Montgomery County rightly boast having one of country's best education systems, yet achievement gaps persist between lower income and higher income students, as well as between minority and white children. The state, and Montgomery County in particular, has made progress, but we must keep moving forward.

Equal Pay for Equal Work

As a husband to a working wife and the father of three young girls, I am committed to the fight for all Maryland families, especially women and girls. Two out of every three women today are the sole or equal breadwinner in their families, yet they still do not have access to equal pay for equal work or paid time off to take care of a sick child or family member. I believe that pay equity is not just a matter of fairness; achieving equal pay for women would increase wages for thousands of households and bring thousands of families out of poverty. It's also about improving Maryland and the Nation's economic stability and competitiveness. I was proud to help pass the Lilly Ledbetter Act while at the White House and will make bills like the Paycheck Fairness Act a priority in Congress.

3. For several years, the Obama Administration has attempted to change the laws to stop the relocation of American businesses to foreign countries. What is your position on corporate inversion?

According to a US News article published just last month, an estimation of trillions of dollars of U.S. companies' overseas earnings are stashed offshore. Those earnings aren't subject to U.S. corporate taxation as long as the company doesn't try to bring the money back onto U.S. soil. But inversion allows companies to move their base of operations abroad, collect earnings stored overseas and dodge U.S. taxes. Some reports suggest that the US stands to lose about \$20 Billion in revenue due to inversion.

I am strongly opposed to corporate inversion. It drains our economy of much needed revenue and resources and is an example of our unfair tax system.

4. Student debt (currently at 1.4 trillion), exceeds credit card debt in the United States: Do you support free community college? If so, how would you implement it with a Republican controlled Congress and what role would you play as a member of Congress to alleviate student debt and ensure college is affordable?

Yes, I support free tuition at community and state colleges. In this country, 40 million people owe student loan debt. That's more than \$1.2 trillion in outstanding student loans -- an average of \$29,000 per graduate. Graduates could be spending that money on a down payment on a first house or their first car and auto insurance. But too often they're forced to put those things off in order to pay student loans. And it's not just graduates who are feeling the pinch. To help

their children afford the rising cost of a college education, many parents and grandparents also share in the burden of debt.

The cost of college is holding back students and families. I will keep fighting to make progress on this. When I worked on the Senate Education Committee, I was often the youngest and only person of color in the room and I know that my perspective, which was different from that of my colleagues, mattered. While on the committee we lowered student loan interest rates from 8 to 6% and increased Pell Grants to their highest levels ever. This was accomplished through open dialogue, compromise and working across the aisle.

Compromise and being able to reach across the aisle to get things done in Congress is the only way to move the ball forward on this and other important issues. Having worked in both Democrat and Republican majorities I know the best way to get things done in Congress is to build strong coalitions to get things done.

5. What federal initiative(s) would you support or propose to address the disparity in the criminal justice system as it affects African Americans?

We begin with ending mandatory minimum sentences, ending the crack/cocaine sentencing disparity because people of color are disproportionately impacted, and we need to create a national guideline for use of force with our law enforcement.

Investment in Our Youth

In states around the country, legislatures are opting to downsize and close prisons, jails and juvenile detention centers. The results have tremendously relieved strained state budgets. In Maryland, the state is on course to build a new Youth detention center in Baltimore which is another example of the wrong investment. I will work to provide leadership in the House to refocus juvenile and criminal reforms so that state dollars are not committed for generations to locking up youth, especially those of color, and freed up to invest in alternatives that are far less expensive and also far more effective for our children and youth.

More Local Juvenile Justice Control

When an adult commits an offense, sanctions and sentencing can occur at the local or state level depending on the severity of the crime and past criminal history. In Maryland, we have a statewide juvenile services system. This prevents localities like Montgomery County from having sufficient state dollars and local control to provide youth with local resources for restorative justice and other accountability measures. Moreover, Maryland is still besieged by detention centers that independent state monitors find too often abuse or neglect youth, which only propels them further into the justice system. We need state dollars to come back to Montgomery County for community-centered mental health, education, training and accountability strategies that meet the needs of our youth in their home communities.

Expunging Criminal Records

The repercussions of convictions for minor nonviolent acts can have long lasting effects on the lives of offenders. A criminal record can exempt individuals from housing programs, the ability to collect unemployment and public benefits, financial aid to attend college, the right to vote, and jobs. I understand the toll this takes on not only the individual but their family and the economy. I believe that those who pay their debt to society should receive a second chance to begin a new, fulfilling, life and would lead on any initiative to expunge criminal records.

Reduction of Prison Construction Funds

I am committed to working on continuous movement towards community based alternatives. Rather than spending money to build or reconstruct more prisons, there should be a strong focus on preventing incarceration. In 2009, a Task Force on Prisoner Reentry was established. I intend to concentrate on strengthening this task force and create an additional task force on community based alternatives. Community-based outreach programs, including mental health, drug treatment, education and job training have been found to be more effective at reducing incarceration rates than traditional penalties. Will believes that Maryland can also see drops in crime and recidivism by instituting programs like drug courts, mental health courts, and community courts, which link offenders to social services and community restitution. Will also plans to work with the Montgomery Juvenile Justice Commission to evaluate and make suggestions on how to better utilize community-based alternatives.

Ban The Box

Baltimore and Montgomery County have passed “Ban The Box” legislation that prohibits employers from seeking applicants to disclose criminal backgrounds on certain job applications. Such mandates have proved to be unnecessarily restrictive for those trying their hardest to be productive residents in their communities and caregivers for their families. We need such measures nationally and statewide to support those who earnestly want to be productive tax paying residents.

Restoration of Voting Rights for Ex-Offenders

The right to vote is a fundamental principle granted to all U.S. citizens. Will believes that this right should not be taken away from an individual because of their criminal history.

Approximately six million Americans are restricted from voting, most of whom are no longer in prison. The reentry process for a formerly incarcerated individual is riddled with obstacles: they often cannot afford a home; they cannot feed their families; they cannot find employment; they cannot receive the benefits of social services; and they cannot serve on a jury, or hold public office. Their isolation only jeopardizes their ability to reintegrate into society and stay out of jail.

It is critical for ex-offenders to feel as though they are part of the community. Participating in elections is an essential way for former convicts to have their voices heard. We’ve made strides in Maryland on this issue but more work needs to be done to ensure that all Americans retain their right to vote.

6. The Supreme Court is poised to decide *Fisher v. University of Texas*. Please explain your position on the role of affirmative action in higher education. What role should race play in college and postgraduate admission decisions?

Diversity matters. It matters in the boardroom, in elections, and in the classroom. Affirmative action attempts to correct our country's original sin, slavery. Affirmative action adds a level of equity to our higher education system. Affirmative action increases diversity and studies have shown that students learn better when classrooms are more diverse.

When I worked on the Senate Education Committee, I was the only person in the room. When I talked about the importance of Pell Grants and Head Start and their role in education, the room listened because of my unique lived experience. We need to ensure our college campuses are diverse.

7. In December 2014, the Department of Justice announced new rules regarding racial profiling. Please explain whether you support or oppose those rules and provide a rationale for your position.

I would work with my colleagues in Congress to seriously consider and implement aspects of the End Racial Profiling Act. The End Racial Profiling Act comprehensively addresses the insidious practice of racial profiling by law enforcement on five levels: first, it clearly defines the racially discriminatory practice of racial profiling by law enforcement at all levels; second, it creates a federal prohibition against racial profiling; thirdly, it mandates data collection so we can fully assess the true extent of the problem; fourth, it provides funding for the retraining of law enforcement officials on how to discontinue and prevent the use of racial profiling; and fifth, it holds law enforcement agencies that continue to use racial profiling accountable.

I would also seek to include implicit bias training as a required component of training in police departments across the country. A reduction in the influence of implicit bias is crucial to strengthening relationships between police and minority communities.

8. The Affordable Care Act promised competitive and quality healthcare plans for all Americans. What started as a solution to the millions of uninsured Americans has now become a financial burden for millions due to high out-of-pocket costs. If elected, what would you do to lower out-of-pocket costs including deductibles and make "affordable health care" a reality?

We must first protect the progress we've made with Obamacare. I was proud to help coordinate advocacy groups pushing for the passage for the Affordable Care Act (ACA) while working in White House but we must do more to expand coverage, lower out of pocket costs and make premiums more affordable. I would advocate for improvements that would provide more relief for people on the exchanges, and give tax credits to families to help offset costs. I

would also work to allow all families, regardless of immigration status, the ability to buy into the ACA exchanges.