



AIM County Council Candidate Questionnaire

Responses from Ana Sol Gutierrez candidate for District 1

Affordable Housing

How would you work with AIM to increase the Housing Initiative Fund to \$100M by the year 2022?
I would be happy to assist AIM in applying and obtaining housing grants from both State and County sources. Many of the many state housing grant program are underutilized and undersubscribed by Montgomery County agencies and non-profits. If elected, I hope to bring to Montgomery County our FAIR share of State dollars! I would also make sure that County housing funds are available to support the important work that AIM does in this critical area.

How would you work with AIM to put 200 units of affordable housing on public land, in the development pipeline each year?

As a strong advocate for increasing the availability of affordable housing, I would place a very high priority on pushing for MoCo's housing policy reforms which address the critical scarcity of quality, affordable housing in the County. We must develop strategies and policies that comprehensively address all affordable housing issues including County-wide planning and development decisions, investments and incentive funding, revised MPDU guidelines, etc. I also have serious concerns regarding the possible loss of affordable family rental units that are currently available, especially along the planned route for the Purple Line. Due to high densities allowed by approved plans, we could see replacement of large, family-sized affordable rental units with higher-priced efficiency and one-bedroom units that are no longer available to low-income families. I would propose a policy of "No Net Loss" of existing affordable units to protect, as a minimum, our current affordable stock.

Equity in Schools

How will you work with AIM to expand the Excel Beyond the Bell Elementary program to four additional Title I elementary schools each year so that the program serves 2,400 students by the year 2022?

On the Council, I'll make full funding of educational programs, including high quality after-school programs, my TOP priority. I'll bring together my experience gained as a State legislator, especially regarding state education funding, as well as experience & knowledge gained serving on the Board of Education for eight years. As a legislator, I followed the Kirwan Commission, and on how education spending formula changes could impact or benefit MCPS. Ours is the largest district with the largest fastest growing student population in MD. However, because current state formulas are wealth-based, poverty in Montgomery is invisible. I'll continue to advocate loudly & strongly for our growing number of families in poverty. Unique needs of all low-income students, ELLs, and special education students must be seriously considered in recommending future allocation of education funds. Kirwan's recommendations must address the needs of every poor child, no matter where she lives in Maryland.

Protecting Immigrants and Refugees



Many Montgomery County families are living in fear of one or more parent being separated from their children because of deportation. How will you work with AIM to include funding for deportation defense and family preparedness in the county budget, as well as work with AIM to find private funding for these efforts?

Immigrant's are my daily work. I will be happy to work with AIM to protect immigrants.

I sponsored of the SAFE Act (Supporting All Families Everywhere, aka TRUST Act) to communicate clearly to our immigrant communities that local law enforcement will not engage in federal immigration actions nor violate their civil rights, thus making Maryland a “sanctuary” state similar to California. Last year's MD Trust Act was approved by the House of Delegates but killed by the Senate. I was very disappointed by our County Executive's decision to not support the measure. If elected, I will propose that the Council formally adopt similar “Sanctuary” protections for the undocumented communities living in the County. I'll propose the creation of a County-sponsored legal defense fund for immigrants who are detained or under deportation orders, by working with AIM and pro- immigrant civil rights groups in the County, who are calling for MoCo to participate in Vera Institute's matching grant program.

Will you commit to work with AIM and Montgomery County landlords to house refugees in Montgomery County?

Yes. I will gladly work with AIM to ensure that refugees can be housed in Montgomery County. I am committed to open our arms and our doors to refugees seeking opportunities for a better life. I have extensive experience working with unaccompanied minors from El Salvador (my native country), Honduras, and Guatemala. They are too often fleeing violence, poverty, civil war, and/or persecution. The United States must once again become a nation that values and welcomes refugees. We can start by making Montgomery County a safer, more welcoming county.

Transportation

Will you work with AIM to protect good transportation jobs from privatization?

Yes. I have opposed all proposals to privatize County and school system jobs. I do not support privatization! While on the School Board, I successfully fought of a County Council effort to privatize school bus transportation, by allowing our MCPS transportation employees to offer a better proposal at a lower cost than privatization.

More recently I supported the County's Retail and Wholesale Division efforts against privatization. They provide good jobs with good benefits to many hard-working county employees. The approximately \$30 million in revenue that this Division brings to the County is important as a substantial input to our annual operating budget. These revenues also provide a reliable funding stream to sustain the issuance of capital bonds that are important for the County's school construction and other capital budget projects. Why would I ever support proposals to give away money or profits to fill the pockets of private businesses?

How will you hold WMATA accountable to prevent cutting bus service in the county, particularly to low-income areas?

As an elected official, I will continue to monitor and provide oversight for WMATA's services to the County. With the recent approval of an annual \$167million funding commitment to WMATA by the MD General Assembly and the State, I certainly would not expect nor would I accept any further cuts to local bus services!



Democracy with Accountability

Do you commit to meeting with AIM within a month of taking office, and on a quarterly basis subsequently?

Yes. I would indeed commit to meeting with AIM on a regular basis. I believe in transparency and collaboration in government.