

Section 1: Candidate Information

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- Full Name (Required) Sydney Harrison
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- District running for (Required) County Council, At-Large
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Section 2: Questionnaire

How will you ensure that Prince George's County government leads by example in hiring, retaining, and promoting employees with disabilities, and what accountability measures will you implement?

I will work with my Council colleagues and the county executive to ensure policy and procedures are in place to ensure meaningful hiring, retention, and promotion of individuals with disabilities. I will also work with the Council's Government Operations Committee to ensure the Office of Human Relation Management is effectively overseeing the process of supporting individuals with disabilities. Additionally, I will work to ensure appropriate management oversight, as well as policy checks and balances are in place.

What comprehensive employment initiatives will you champion to create meaningful career opportunities for county residents with disabilities?

I will commit to work with and engage the County Executive to incorporate a meaningful hiring, retention, and promotion program that provide individuals with disabilities real opportunities to learn and grow. I will use relationships with Melwood, The Arc, and Prince George's Provider Council to better understand the community needs, while benchmarking the best practices of successful programs from other jurisdictions.

What comprehensive, county-wide accessible transportation solutions will you develop beyond existing paratransit services?

Safe and reliable transportation is an important piece in assuring individuals with disabilities are able to travel independently to work, appointments, and personal errands. The County's Bus system and MetroAccess currently provide crucial transportation services. I will work with Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and the Department of Public Works and Transportation to develop expanded service hours and coverage areas. This will give individuals with disabilities greater opportunities to pursue employment and handle personal needs beyond the existing limited hours of operation.

How will you ensure that all new transit infrastructure exceeds ADA minimum standards and truly provides accessible, reliable public transportation?

I will work with the Disability Rights Maryland, Maryland State Highway Administration, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC), and the Department of Public Works and Transportation are actively engaged in assuring existing and new transit plans and infrastructure exceeds Federal ADA minimum standards. I am currently working with MNCPPC to rewrite the outdated transit plans with an eye on making certain ADA minimum standards are exceeded.

What specific actions will you take to increase the supply of affordable, accessible, and integrated housing options throughout Prince George's County?

As the current Council District 9 representative, over the past two years, I have worked the MNCPPC to rewrite the outdated Subregion 5 & 6 master plans. Included in the updated plans, I have championed creating affordable housing units, through updating the existing zoning to allow for more townhomes, micro housing, and accessory dwelling units. These affordable housing options will allow for expanded housing options and opportunities for individuals with disabilities, as well as low-income residents. My approach to develop more affordable housing parallels Governor Wes Moore's Housing Growth and Affordability Agenda, which focuses on helping the region correct the looming shortage of 590,000 homes by year 2045.

During my term, I have supported multiple affordable housing applications and projects across the County. In Council District 9, I supported the newly constructed affordable housing apartments and age restricted community, in Clinton. I also supported two senior/age restricted independent living project and a missing middle townhouse project, in Brandywine and Clinton. These projects are already occupied and providing affordable residential accommodations for families.

What policy changes will you advocate to improve healthcare access including provider training and accessible medical facilities?

I will advocate for policy changes to expand the availability of telehealth services, increase medical services and access in underserved communities, improve preventative care services, require greater accessibility in medical facilities, and institute provider education as it relates to health equity and the true needs of the community.

How will you expand integrated, trauma-informed mental health services specifically designed for children and adults with disabilities?

To expand integrated trauma-informed mental health assistance, federal, state, local, and non-profit partnerships must be formed to develop a board array of support services (housing, therapy, education, socialization, crisis management, and medication assistance). Community-based support networks will play a key role in supporting both youth and adults with disabilities. Increased targeted funding and service provider training will also play an important role in providing the necessary support foundation for individuals in-need of mental health services.

How will you ensure that first responders receive regular training on interacting with and supporting people with diverse disabilities?

I will engage the police and fire departments' leadership to identify the need for increased situational based awareness training to help first responders' interactions with individuals with disabilities. I believe it is important we encourage elected officials participate in ride-a-longs with first responders, so that elected officials can better understand the needs of individuals with the disabilities, as well as the challenges faced by first responders. This measure will help elected officials prioritize funding decisions and to identify more programs to assist individuals with disabilities.

How will you ensure adequate funding and accessibility of programs that help older adults maintain independence when they acquire disabilities?

I will work with our federal, state, and local officials to advocate for increased funding and resources to help older adults with disabilities maintain their independence. I will work with the County's and State's social services agencies to ensure older individuals with disabilities have access to key support programs and services, that assist them in maintaining their independence and healthy lifestyle.

What will be your top three legislative priorities to advance disability rights and full inclusion in our county? (Please list and briefly describe your top three priorities.)

My legislative priorities to advance disability rights will be as follows:

1. Legislation to increase the availability of affordable housing. This is necessary to help improve individuals' quality of life, while helping to maintain their independence.
2. Legislation to ensure a bias free environment in hiring, retention, and promotions for individuals with disabilities. This will help with person growth, sense of self-worth, as well as maintaining independence and the ability to financially support oneself.
3. Increase medical, crisis, and therapeutic support services. This will help individuals with disabilities deal with traumatic situations and mental health challenges.

Consent & Submission

Consent checkbox (required)

I consent to my responses being shared publicly in full.



Campaign Website or Contact Information:

www.Vote4SydneyHarrison.com
