

**Homewood Friends Meeting
3107 N. Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218**

March 9, 2016

Dear Baltimore City Mayoral Candidate:

Thank you for placing your name in nomination for Mayor of Baltimore. We look forward to learning of your vision and plans for our city.

Below please find questions that emerged from a gathering of 200 people who attended Congressman Elijah Cummings' talk on the "two Baltimores" at Homewood Friends Meeting on January 31, 2016. Homewood Friends Meeting (Quakers), together with Stony Run Friends Meeting, and the Central Maryland Ecumenical Council called this meeting. We were deeply moved by the talk and by the wide participation from across the city. Throughout our history, the Religious Society of Friends — Quakers — have worked to foster both peace and social justice. Those gathered on January 31st remain deeply concerned about "zip codes of hopelessness" and the profound inequities in the City's policies concerning policing, education, and living-wage employment.

We are posing the same questions to each candidate for Baltimore Mayor and invite you to reply in writing. We will share all answers we receive with our memberships.

Peace and Justice in All our Streets and Neighborhoods

The City's budget for police is 18 times that for city recreation centers and far outstrips spending on public education. Law-abiding residents and parents of neighborhoods like Sandtown-Winchester want and deserve police services, yet not at the price of excessive and negative police interaction with their children.

1. How do you envision changing policies in the city so that we no longer have quasi-militarized zones of excessive policing?
2. What will you do to re-balance the City's expenditures between policing and investing in our young people, in public schooling, and in community amenities that build strong citizens?
3. What will you do in your first term to reduce disparities in the conditions of neighborhoods and residents, for peace with justice, should you be elected Mayor?

Education

Baltimore City schools compare poorly with those in the surrounding counties, with which the city competes for residents and a tax base. Good schools provide security, respect, and expectations of success for each individual student. They equip children with knowledge, capacity, hope, and expectation. Features of such schools include adequate buildings, current books, substantial digital access, higher teacher-to-student ratios, significant family involvement, playing fields, enrichment programs, arts and music programs, and college planning.

4. What steps will you take to make Baltimore city schools equal the quality of the counties' public schools?

5. While we have some wonderful after-school programs, there are spaces for only half of the children they are meant to serve. What will you do to assure that these great programs are available for all children who qualify?

6. What will you do to challenge corporations and foundations to invest in Baltimore's children, and to target that investment where it is most needed?

Jobs & Opportunities

7. What specifically will you do to expand employment, with a particular focus on hiring from neighborhoods where underemployment is most severe, and where the greatest number of people lack living-wage jobs?

8. In awarding city contracts, subsidies, and support, how will you strengthen local hiring policies and practices to maximize the employment potential of the development projects and businesses that receive such city contracts, subsidies, and supports? Would you set hiring targets for disadvantaged residents which increase each year until they comprise a majority of local hires – as cities like New Orleans and San Francisco have done?

9. Several Mayoral candidates have proposed to boost jobs through tax incentives, or business-development programs, yet tie these pledges to “healthy neighborhoods,” to downtown, or to anchor institutions. Do you have any plans for comparable investments *within* struggling parts of Baltimore, for example the West Side? Would you support a “people’s Tax Increment Financing” program – using public taxes to aid private investments that address residents’ needs -- to establish enterprise hubs, or development zones to provide housing, retail and recreation that serve low and moderate wealth households? If not, then what would you do to put disinvested areas of Baltimore on a par with the downtown and harbor on the City’s development agenda?

10. What programs will you propose to rebuild infrastructure and provide employment and job-training to underemployed city residents?

Transportation

11. What is your vision for improving access to clean and efficient public transportation, particularly in light of the de-funded plan for the Red Line?

Health Equity

12. As home to some of the world’s leading health institutions, Baltimore nonetheless faces serious public-health challenges and deep disparities in homicide, infant death, lead poisoning, and STD rates. What specifically will you do as Mayor in each of these important areas?

We thank you for your attention and answers to these questions.

Sincerely,

Homewood Friends Meeting (Quakers)
Committee on Peace and Social Justice

Cc: Congressman Elijah Cummings