



LATINO DEMOCRATIC CLUB
OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Latino Democratic Club 2024 Candidate Questionnaire

Campaign Profile:

Please attach a brief personal bio with your submission*

Candidate Name: Ashwani Jain

Office You Are Seeking: U.S. House of Representatives, Maryland District 6

Candidate Contact Email: jain@jainforcongress.com

Candidate Contact Number: (240) 801-6410

Campaign Website and Social Media Handles (Facebook/Twitter/Instagram):

Website: jainforcongress.com

Facebook: [Jain For Congress](#)

Twitter: [@JainForCongress](#)

Instagram: [@jainforcongress](#)

YouTube: [@JainForCongress](#)

TikTok: [@JainForCongress](#)

Reddit: [r/JainForCongress](#)

Amount Raised (include as of date): \$93,000 (as of 03/22/2024)

Cash on Hand: \$62,000

Other Endorsements: American Youth for Climate Action and Sustainability, Real Action Inc., Forward Maryland, Christopher Vigliotti (Council Member for the City of Brunswick), David Bass (Frederick County Board of Education member), Deborah Carter (immediate past Chair of the Frederick County Democratic Party), Antonio Bowens (immediate past President of the Young Democrats of Frederick County), Thomas Jackson (former Treasurer of the Democratic State Central Committee of Frederick County), Angie Vigliotti (Special Education Activist and candidate for Frederick County Board of Education), Janie Monier (candidate for Frederick

County Board of Education), Chad Wilson (candidate for Frederick County Board of Education), Ed Mooney (LGBTQ+ Activist and The Frederick Center's 2023 Ally of the Year), Ellen McDaniel-Weissler (Allegheny County Moms Demand Action member), Tiffany Rains (Garrett County Activist and Small Business Owner), Ezra Duncan (Garrett County LGBTQ+ Activist), Mia Mason (former U.S. House of Representatives candidate for Maryland's 6th District)

Questionnaire:

Below is a candidate questionnaire produced by the Latino Democratic Club (LDC) of Montgomery County. The LDC will distribute the questionnaire to candidates for office in the 2024 Democratic primary in Montgomery County for the 2024 early vote. Please submit your responses by April 5th, 2024, to ldcendorsements@gmail.com. **Please limit your response to each question to 200 words or less. Your response will be shared on our website unless you explicitly opt-out;** therefore, we encourage you to submit your responses in English and Spanish to make them accessible to all members of our community.

1. Latinx Engagement

- a. Please provide details of your prior involvement or work with the Latinx/Hispanic community in Maryland.

2. Housing

- a. According to a study done by Montgomery County planning, those who identify as Hispanic/Latinx are more likely to pay more than 30% of their income on housing than residents of the County overall. This is most pronounced for Hispanic and Latinx renters, among whom 62% are burdened by housing costs. What would be your solution for affordable and quality housing?

As one of President Obama's White House Liaisons at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, I worked to expand broadband access for those in public housing; extend the Maryland Housing Trust Fund to increase supply of affordable housing; and fund the Veteran Supportive Housing Program to provide veterans with rental assistance, case management and more. I learned firsthand the importance of increasing affordability, availability, and sustainability of housing. In Congress, I will continue to fight for meaningful housing reform, including:

- Creating a new Neighborhood Homes Tax Credit to support construction or renovation of single-family homes in low-income communities. It will spur investment and economic activity in communities that have long suffered from discrimination and disinvestment.
- Expanding the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit to help more working families, seniors, and veterans afford their homes.
- Requiring landlords to provide "Just-Cause" during eviction proceedings so tenants have an opportunity to resolve issues with their lease agreements. If the issues cannot be resolved, landlords should have to provide advanced notice to the tenant if pursuing eviction.

- Encouraging more mixed-use development and smart growth so new housing is built closer to areas of transit and more multi-family housing is available.

3. Mental Health and health

- a. How would you approach the need to both increase access to mental health services among Latino residents and address the shortage of linguistically and culturally competent mental health care professionals? Especially among Latino youth?

Under our current privatized system, healthcare is getting more expensive while quality and access diminish. It is time that we demand the same level of care as the rest of the world's developed democracies. Our current system is not one to be proud of and is certainly not one that is sustainable. While the United States government currently spends over 3.24 Billion dollars yearly on medical care (or 17% of total GDP), adopting Medicare for All will actually decrease the amount of money spent on healthcare in the United States as the government will be able to regulate reasonable costs for prescriptions, procedures, and services thus saving money for the federal budget and paying for itself as a program. According to the Congressional Budget Office, Medicare for All would save the American people and our entire health care system up to \$650 billion each year, while strengthening our economy and reducing costs to Americans. Medicare for All includes comprehensive mental health coverage and mandates that interpretive services be available.

4. Fentanyl

- a. The fentanyl crisis has been devastating our community. In Montgomery County, we have seen it disproportionately affect our Latinx/Hispanic youth. How do you recommend that we address this issue?

While those who distribute drugs in our communities should certainly be punished, I'd like to see simple possession of scheduled drugs to be decriminalized and for the personal use of hard drugs and opioids to be treated as a health issue, not a criminal issue. Instead of criminally penalizing people for personal drug use, we should make medical treatment available to assist them in reintegrating into society and our economy rather than paying to house them in jail indefinitely. Establishing a system of Medicare for All in the United States will lower costs, increase accessibility, and address the rising mental health and drug addiction crisis in my District. Pharmaceutical companies are partially responsible for the drug crisis, so they should also be held accountable. We must also enhance drug screening at ports of entry.

5. Education

- a. Hispanic/Latinx students are the fastest-growing ethnic group in MCPS, with 34% of the student population. The graduation gap of Latinx students has been exacerbated since the COVID-19 pandemic. How would you address the truancy rate in the Latino community and close achievement gaps?

For starters, I would increase funding and appropriation for ESL (English as a Second Language) programs. ESL students are the fastest-growing student population in U.S. schools. As a result, I believe we must award more NPD (National Professional Development Program) grants to support this program. This will also allow ESL students to more equitably

pursue higher education, compete for higher-paying jobs, and more fully participate in the national economy. Additionally, broadband access needs to be increased nationally, especially to ensure that students have equal access to educational programs. I support Senator Mark Warner's "Broadband Grant Tax Treatment Act" which prevents taxation on federal broadband grants. Grants awarded for broadband deployment are currently factored into a company's income and are subject to taxation which limits further development.

6. Crime

a. Studies show that crime is one of the most pressing issues for Latinx /Hispanic voters.

How will you work to both improve public safety, as crime is rising in our communities, and make the criminal justice system in Montgomery County more equitable?

Raising the minimum wage will finally change the concept of being OK with people living paycheck to paycheck - reducing poverty and crime, and improving local communities and home values. Moreover, President Biden signed an Executive Order in 2021 to end DOJ Private Prison contracts, but it does not affect ICE contracts (since ICE is part of DHS, not DOJ). It also does not prohibit for-profit firms from signing contracts with local counties. We need to stop warehousing people, and instead, focus on reforming them. 26 states still have contracts with private companies to run (and profit off of) prisons. There's a clear incentive to keep prisons full, and it's the wrong mentality to have. Our goal should be to lower crime rates and improve recidivism rates. We want fewer people to commit crimes, fewer people to re-offend, and less of our budget to go towards maintaining jails, prisons, and inmate care. The for-profit/private model goes directly against those interests. They can be replaced with local rehab centers for low-level, non-violent offenders (they should get the treatment and rehab they need to re-enter society), and have the federal Bureau of Prisons and State Correctional Service agencies run the prisons.

7. Business and economic prosperity

a. Small businesses are the engine of economic growth and are critical to the financial health of the Latinx/Hispanic community. What would you do to strengthen and create Latino-owned small businesses?

As the son of immigrants and minority small business owners, I understand that protecting worker rights is essential to the success of business and our economy. When workers are respected, invested in, and consulted about hours and wages and other key conditions of the workplace, the free enterprise system becomes more humane and efficient, and society prospers. Promoting worker rights is not simply the proper thing to do, it is sound fiscal and economic policy. I understand the value small businesses bring and the challenges they face. I understand there's a false notion that what's good for business must be bad for the employee and vice-versa. Each can benefit. That's why - by 2030 - we should increase the minimum wage to \$26. One of the biggest challenges for businesses is finding and retaining good workers. In recent years, about 50 million workers quit their jobs in search of better pay. Now, many businesses are struggling to stay open and provide services to their customers. But when employees are taken care of - through higher wages - it's proven that businesses benefit from higher productivity, lower staff turnover, and fewer costs related to hiring and training new employees.

8. Immigration

- a. What programs or legislation do you think would best support our immigration residents who do not have access to federal funding in Montgomery County?

I was the first candidate in the race to release an [Immigrant Rights agenda](#), which includes:

- Creating a straightforward pathway to citizenship
- Expediting work permits
- Ending the use of private prisons to house immigrants
- Ending programs like 287(g) that erode community trust, encourage racial profiling, and do nothing to solve actual problems associated with immigration and immigrant rights
- Reforming ICE so it has more accountability, including:
 - o Ending ERO that treats immigrants like terrorists. Deportations should be limited the Department of Justice's jurisdiction, and we have an obligation to uphold humanitarian law.
 - o Involving the U.S. Marshalls, rather than ICE agents, in any instances of violence
- Increasing funding appropriations for ESL programs
- Protecting and preserving DACA
- Expanding Temporary Protected Status for people immigrating from unsafe conditions

In Montgomery County in particular, I will advocate in Congress for Community Project Funding to build up programs like the Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center, Refugee Youth Programming and Transitional Cash Assistance, Legal Immigration Services, and English Language Training for undocumented immigrants, refugees, and asylees, among others.

9. Asylum

- a. Do you support a comprehensive immigration reform that better supports and protects those who have been displaced by war and seek asylum? If elected, what would your priorities be to change our current system?

Yes. As mentioned above, I will work tirelessly to get more funding for programs that support asylum seekers and refugees. I believe we must prioritize expanding and lengthening temporary protected status, and we must end the horrors imposed by ICE and local 287(g) programs. We have to end internment of asylum seekers and refugees and instead provide the resources, safety, security, and dignity they deserve.