



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: Laurie-Anne Sayles

Office You Are Seeking: US. House of Representatives

Candidate Contact Email: [info@saylesforus.com](mailto:info@saylesforus.com)

Candidate Contact Number: 240.292.9754

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

- website: [www.saylesforus.com](http://www.saylesforus.com)
- Facebook: [@saylesforus](https://www.facebook.com/saylesforus)
- Twitter: [@saylesforus](https://twitter.com/saylesforus)
- Instagram: [@saylesforus](https://www.instagram.com/saylesforus)

Amount Raised (include as of date): \$150,000

Cash on Hand: \$27,000

Other Endorsements:

- [Vote Common Good](#) (National Endorsement)
- Current & Former Elected Officials
  - Former Mayor of Poolesville Kerri Cook
  - Valaree Dickerson, Former Commissioner, Town of Poolesville
  - James (Jim) Brown, President, Town of Poolesville
  - Poolesville Commissioner Ed Reed
  - Sarah Paksima, Commissioner, Town of Poolesville
  - Jeffery Eck, Commissioner, Town of Poolesville
  - Martin Radigan, Commissioner, Town of Poolesville

- Jim Gilchrist, Former Maryland State Delegate, D17
- Denise Mitchell, Council Vice President, City of College Park
- John Carroll, Mayor of Galena, President of the Maryland Municipal League
- Yvette Monroe, Former Councilmember, City of Gaithersburg
- Hon. Everett Browning, Former MD State Party Chair
- Hon. Karen Britto, Former MD State Party Chair
- Nancy Floreen, Former Montgomery County Councilmember At-Large
- Sylvia Henderson, Former Council Vice President, City of Gaithersburg
- Luisa Arevalo, Former Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee Member
- William Roberts, President, Association of Black Democrats
- Cindy Dyballa, Councilmember, City of Takoma Park
- Dolly Kildee, Former Councilmember, City of Gaithersburg
- Talisha Searcy, Mayor, City of Takoma Park
- Colin Byrd, Former Mayor of Greenbelt
- Edward Burroughs, Prince George's County Councilmember
- Lou La Monte, Former Mayor of Malibu
- Jenny Sue Dunner, Town of Somerset
- Dr. Judy Docca, Former Montgomery County Public School Board of Education
- Montgomery County Board of Education President Karla Silvestre
- Commissioner Ralph Patterson, Charles County
- Former Delegate Herman Taylor
- Mayor Emmitt Jordan, City of Greenbelt
- Councilwoman Gyna Bivens, Ft. Worth, TX

## 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](mailto: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.
  - i. As the daughter of Jamaican immigrants, I have always supported the Latinx/Hispanic community. As Vice President of the Montgomery County Young Democrats, I advocated for successfully passing the MD DREAM Act. I received the endorsement of the Hispanic Democratic Club of Montgomery

County when I ran for MD State Delegate. When I became President of the Association of Black Democrats, I spearheaded the Annual Clubs of Color meetings and events in partnership with the LDC & CAPAD organizations to ensure the accountability and electability of more candidates of color to our respective communities, including the development of the Annual Legislative Agenda, Legislative Preview, Legislative Briefing, Endorsements, Candidate Forums, Ballot initiatives, etc. As a Gaithersburg City Councilmember, I received LDC's endorsement. I took on another fight with United We Dream to pass the "Resolution of the Mayor and City Council Reaffirming the City's Commitment to Diversity, Inclusion, Freedom and Justice, and Denouncing Anti-Immigrant Speech, Hate Crimes, and Harassment." As a National League of Cities Chair of the Economic Development Committee, I moderated a panel addressing the "Equitable economic recovery in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic on Latino/Hispanic business owners and other business owners of color experiencing disproportionate impacts during the crisis. I was also glad to support the NLC virtual HELO and WIMG joint meeting on "How Local Leaders Can Address the Impact Of Virtual Education On Hispanic Youth" in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month. I also planned and executed the 1st ever Mother's Day of appreciation for the County's Mobile Home Community, predominantly Latino, to ensure they had a joyous Mother's Day, food distribution, vaccinations for the children, etc. Moreover, I was very proud to have the LDC endorsement in my second historic victory and have since ensured total funding of the Latino Health Initiative, a new non-departmental account to support small businesses, which includes over \$1.2 million for Black and Latino-owned companies in Montgomery County.

## 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?
  - i. As a former tenant of an affordable housing community, I am committed to addressing the shortage of affordable housing. In July 2022, I passed my first piece of legislation, the "Opening Pathways for Economic Necessity" (O.P.E.N.) Zoning Text Amendment, also known as ZTA 23-02. This law expedites the approval process for developers seeking to build affordable housing and incentivizes housing development within 15 minutes of public transportation. Additionally, I successfully negotiated the passage of Bill 15-23, also known as Rent Stabilization. This law caps rent increases to the lesser of the local annual Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) plus three percent or a maximum of six percent of the base rent. This provides renters and landlords with more predictability regarding rent increases. I am committed to building upon my work locally and nationwide as a congresswoman. I plan to secure funding for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to

increase the supply of affordable housing and invest in down payment assistance programs to help people achieve homeownership. I will also promote financial literacy to ensure homeowners can sustainably maintain their investments.

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?

i. I'm the daughter of public servants, and spent over 15 years building a career in public health as a senior project manager for some of the nation's top federal health research agencies before becoming an elected official. Currently, I serve on the Health & Human Services Committee and lead efforts to eliminate disparities in public health. I advocate for increasing access to mental health services for Latino residents and addressing the shortage of linguistically and culturally competent mental health care professionals and resources, especially for Latino youth. If elected to Congress, I will prioritize funding for programs that specifically target mental health services for Latino residents and initiatives that train and support culturally competent mental health care professionals. The need for bilingual and bicultural mental health providers is critical in addressing the needs of the Latino community, especially among youth who may face unique challenges related to acculturation and identity. Moreover, I will invest in education and training programs to bridge the mental health care access gap and incentivize providers to work in underserved communities. I will use my position as an elected official to advocate for increased mental health care access and ensure that all individuals receive the support they need.

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?

i. I am committed to addressing the pressing issue of the fentanyl crisis that is affecting the Latinx/Hispanic youth in Montgomery County. As a Health & Human Services Committee member, I am taking proactive steps to allocate resources to Identity. This organization will lead culturally competent intervention programs for Latinx/Hispanic individuals who are struggling with drug addiction. As a Public Health professional, I believe culturally sensitive prevention and treatment programs can significantly make a difference. When elected to Congress, I will work towards allocating more resources to these programs. I will also enhance law enforcement efforts to combat fentanyl trafficking, and I will strive to improve access to mental health services for those impacted by addiction. I am committed to building upon existing collaborations with local community organizations and leaders to tailor solutions to the specific needs of this population."

## 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?
  - i. As a member of the Council's Health and Human Services Committee, I am committed to advocating for vulnerable children and their families. To achieve this, I have pushed for increased funding for various services, including school health nurses, technology modernization for telehealth, Linkages to Learning, and school-based health and wellness centers. These services will improve these children's health outcomes and overall performance in school, home, and community. In Congress, I will prioritize closing achievement gaps and addressing the truancy rate in the Latino community. I believe allocating funding for programs that provide academic support, mentorship, and resources tailored to Latinx students' needs is the way to go. These resources will help the local school system implement a culturally relevant curriculum, increase access to technology and internet resources for remote learning, and expand mental health services to support Latino students in Montgomery County Public Schools. We must also support initiatives such as community schools that promote and ensure parental involvement and engagement in their children's education. Such initiatives create a positive and constructive learning environment that benefits students and the community.

## 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?
  - i. Residents have the right to live in safe and vibrant communities, so I strongly supported and secured compensation increases for our hard-working police officers. I also advocated for a \$20,000 signing bonus for new officers to tackle the national issue of officer shortage. To prevent violence among young people, I strongly advocated for funding the Youth Harm Reduction Initiative. Moreover, I supported the late-night safety plan bill and the camera grant initiative to deter violent criminals. I also voted for the Drone as the First Responder Pilot Program to respond promptly to a 911 call, ensuring that it balances residents' privacy while utilizing new technology to tackle our officer shortage. If elected to Congress, I will continue working to improve public safety and make the criminal justice system in Montgomery County more equitable. I will invest in community policing programs, address the root causes of crime, and promote police accountability and transparency. Additionally, I will advocate for reforms that address racial disparities in the criminal justice system, such as bail reform, sentencing reform, and alternatives to incarceration, to create a more equitable system for Latinx/Hispanic individuals and other marginalized communities.

## 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?
  - i. As a member of the newly created Montgomery County Economic Development Committee, I prioritized efforts toward revitalizing our economy. I supported a \$3.2 million budget for the County's incubators and economic partnerships, with over \$1.2 million allocated for Black and Latino-owned businesses. I also approved \$11.1 million for the Bethesda, Silver Spring, and Wheaton Urban Districts and supported the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation with an almost \$6 million appropriation. Furthermore, I voted in favor of \$734,843 in additional funding for the guaranteed income pilot program and a special appropriation of \$1.5 million for the Office of Grants Management's grant programs. In Congress, I will continue to work towards strengthening Latino-owned small businesses by providing access to capital through grants, loans, and other financial assistance programs tailored to the needs of Latinx entrepreneurs. Supporting mentorship programs, business development training, and resources to help navigate regulatory requirements can also be beneficial. I will also advocate for policies that promote diversity in government contracting, increase access to federal contracts for minority-owned businesses, and reduce barriers to entry for small business owners from underrepresented communities. These efforts will help foster the growth of Latino-owned businesses.

## 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. As the daughter of Jamaican immigrants searching for the American Dream, I believe in fulfilling that dream for others who have so much to offer this country. Immigrants have contributed significantly to our society, and here in Maryland, they play a vital role in our local economy and cultural and political life. We must reform our immigration system at the federal level to allow for greater participation of immigrants in our communities. To support immigrant residents in Montgomery County who do not have access to federal funding, I will propose a compassionate, bipartisan, and comprehensive immigration reform in Congress. My reform proposal will include resources that create a clear pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, improvements to the legal immigration system to reduce backlogs, measures to address the root causes of migration, enhanced border security, and policies to protect the rights of immigrants and refugees. Moreover, I will reintroduce bipartisan legislation like the Emergency National Security Supplemental Appropriations Act, which expands access to state and local resources, such as healthcare, education, and social services, regardless of immigration status. Programs that provide legal assistance, language access services, and community outreach initiatives tailored to immigrant populations can be beneficial.

## 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?
  - i. The United States has a pressing problem with a backlog of asylum claims that is only increasing. As a constructive approach, we should work towards a comprehensive immigration reform policy that better supports and protects those displaced by war and ensures a fair and timely adjudication of asylum claims while also addressing the root causes of displacement. Unfortunately, the average asylum claim takes more than four years to process, which limits the opportunities for immigrants seeking a better life in the US. To overcome this in Congress, I would suggest implementing policies that provide support for refugees and asylum seekers and creating pathways to legal status for undocumented immigrants. In addition, investing in humanitarian aid, improving detention conditions, and promoting policies that uphold human rights and dignity for all individuals seeking refuge in the United States should be a priority, helping to build a more welcoming and inclusive society that values diversity and human compassion. With these constructive policy changes, we can ensure that immigrants are not left in limbo for years but can integrate and contribute to our country as full-fledged members of society.

Brief Bio ([full bio on website](#)):

Laurie-Anne Sayles is a candidate for Congress who believes that it's time for the government to work for everyone. With a career in public health and community service, Laurie-Anne has been a trailblazer in many ways, including being the first Black woman elected to the Gaithersburg City Council and At-Large to the Montgomery County Council. She has a S.M.A.R.T. agenda that focuses on strengthening public education, affordable housing, sustainable food production, economic revitalization, and tackling climate change. Laurie-Anne has already done a lot of good work in her role as a member of the Montgomery County Council, fighting for equal rights, a higher minimum wage, and a cleaner environment. If elected to Congress, Laurie-Anne will continue fighting for a government that works for everyone.