



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: **David Trone**

Office You Are Seeking: **U.S. Senate**

Candidate Contact Email: **info@davidtrone.com**

Candidate Contact Number: **301-525-1007**

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

<https://davidtrone.com/es/inicio/>

<https://davidtrone.com/>

<https://twitter.com/davidjtrone>

<https://www.facebook.com/davidjtrone>

<https://www.instagram.com/davidjtrone/>

<https://www.youtube.com/@davidtrone7780>

**Amount Raised (include as of date):** \$427,054 (12/31/2023)

*I do not take funding from PACs or lobbyists and have contributed my own funds to the campaign.*

**Cash on Hand:** \$454,850 (12/31/2023)

**Other Endorsements:** Attached

## 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.

**From the start of this campaign, we have made Maryland's Latino community a priority. We have worked to have an early and visible presence, traveling across the state to hear their concerns, including meeting with the Hispanic Chambers of Commerce, participating in forums, and attending community events during the holidays and celebrations of Hispanic Heritage month.**

**And our campaign is speaking directly to Latino communities – there is a Spanish version of our campaign website; and our campaign has run television, digital, and print ads in Spanish. We have also established a Latino Advisory Board to engage Latino communities, especially younger voters who have historically been left out of the political process. It's essential that our campaign reflects the diversity of our state. Latinos are serving in campaign senior roles and we have a Latino outreach director who is engaging the community on a daily basis.**

**I am proud to have earned the support of community leaders like former Delegate Ana Sol Gutierrez, Delegate David Fraser Hidalgo, and Chairwoman Joseline Peña-Melnyk as well as three Latina Mayors in Maryland. I pledge to work with them and the entire Maryland Latino community to address the issues most important to them and their communities.**

### 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?

**Everyone deserves a safe and affordable place to call home. Housing remains top of mind for communities in Maryland and across the country. We need to increase the supply of affordable housing but also address discriminatory practices in housing markets and ensure that renters are not living in unsafe conditions.**

**As part of the Build Back Better Act, I supported a \$170 billion investment in affordable housing. This bill would have expanded the Housing Choice Voucher program by 30,000 vouchers and funded improvements to deteriorating conditions**

in public housing units. It also included the Unlocking Possibilities Program which would provide \$1.75 billion to states and local governments to incentivize the elimination of restrictive zoning and land uses that have been a barrier to building new affordable housing units. Unfortunately, the Senate dropped these provisions from the final legislation but I will continue to fight to ensure safe and affordable housing.

### **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?

**In 2019, I launched what is now the Bipartisan Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Task Force, bringing together more than 140 Members of Congress from across the country. 26 of our bills became law in the 117th Congress alone. We must invest in expanding mental health infrastructure and resources in Latino communities, prioritizing the recruitment and training of health care professionals who are linguistically and culturally competent to serve Latino populations. In the 2023 funding bill, I supported the Minority Fellowship Program, which is helping grow the number of racial and ethnic minorities in the behavioral health workforce. I also pushed for funding for additional psychologists to address the shortage in providers.**

**While Latino youth experience mental health disorders at similar rates to the general population they are less likely than their peers to receive mental health treatment. We have to address barriers to care including lack of health insurance and language barriers. In the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, I fought for \$3 billion in school based mental health services so that our youth have more access to mental health resources in their communities.**

### **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?

**We lost 110,000 people to overdoses last year. If it wasn't for Narcan, that number would have been 200,000. Like so many in our communities, I understand first hand the devastation opioids can cause a family. I lost my nephew Ian to a fentanyl overdose and I have made it my mission to keep as many families as possible from feeling the pain and loss my family felt.**

**We have seen a rapid increase in overdose deaths related to fentanyl in Latino communities and it's critical that we take urgent action. I passed the State Opioid Response Grant Authorization Act, which will invest \$8.75 billion over the next 5 years in the fight against substance use disorder. As a member of the powerful Appropriations Committee, I have pushed for increased resources to stop fentanyl from coming across our borders, primarily through ports of entry. I was appointed by Speaker Pelosi to co-chair the U.S. Commission on Synthetic Opioid Trafficking and have worked to stop the flow of precursor chemicals from China and to combat southbound weapons trafficking which arms the cartels.**

**But I will not stop there – we have to expand access to culturally competent and linguistically appropriate comprehensive treatment services and make sure that insurance companies aren't skirting their responsibilities by refusing to cover these treatments. We must hold pharmaceutical companies accountable for their role in fueling the opioid crisis.**

## **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?

**All students regardless of race, income level, or zip code should have equal opportunity to achieve their educational potential. My mom was a public school teacher in Prince George's County and I know that schools play a crucial role in leveling the playing field and helping children succeed. I couldn't be more proud to have the support of 75,000 Maryland educators with the endorsement of the MSEA, our state's largest union.**

**Last year in Maryland, the graduation rate for Latino students was 22% lower than their white peers and about half of the students who dropped out of school last year were Latino students. These students have struggled the most to make up for learning losses from the pandemic and we need to do everything we can to reverse these losses and prepare them for the future. I supported the American Rescue Plan, which was the largest one-time investment in our schools. In Maryland, schools used this funding to expand summer learning, make sure students had nutritious meals, and expand mental health services.**

**As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I helped secure the largest increase in Title 1 funding in a decade and more than \$1 billion in annual funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, which enables extended-day programming and afterschool programming. And I will push for more funding for multilingual language learners (MLL) and restorative justice practices in schools that can help address underlying issues contributing to truancy and ensure students are supported and valued and do not become part of the school to prison pipeline**

**I authored the True Equity Act of 2023, which would create \$1.4 billion in matching federal grants for programs like the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and am fighting for a Four for Four program where college students who commit to serving four years as an educator or support staff in a public school will receive a cost-free college education. The program will create special incentives for teachers who choose to work and live in underserved communities to address critical staff shortages.**

## **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?

**Everybody has to feel safe in their community. I believe we can improve public safety while reforming our criminal justice system to be more equitable.**

**I support community-oriented policing practices that prioritize building trust and collaboration between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve. This includes policies that emphasize de-escalation and non-violent conflict resolution. I co-led the Law Enforcement De-Escalation Training Act, which provides \$124 million to better equip law enforcement officers to respond to mental and behavioral health crises and connect people with the right resources and services to address their needs. This bill was signed into law.**

**We need to invest in programs that address the root causes of crime. This means increasing wages and economic opportunities and investing in afterschool programs and wrap-around services to improve educational outcomes.**

**I am committed to reforming our racist criminal justice system. As a leader of the new Second Chance Task Force, I have worked to promote policies that will improve reentry outcomes for returning citizens – working to implement the First Step Act, clear eligible criminal records, and ‘ban the box’ on job applications.**

**Before coming to Congress, I founded the Trone Center for Justice and Equality at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). The Trone Center focuses on the problems in the U.S. criminal justice system, including the treatment of prisoners and the policies of over-incarceration that have led the United States to imprison more people than any other country in the world.**

## **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 am fully committed to supporting the growth and success of Latino-owned small businesses, recognizing their pivotal role in driving Maryland’s economy and essential contributions to their communities.**

**Latinos have launched the most small businesses of any group and are starting businesses at more than twice the rate of the general population. To strengthen and create more of these businesses, I support increased access to capital through targeted small business loan programs. I also support ensuring equitable access to government contracts and procurement opportunities for Latino-owned businesses.**

**Last year, the federal government awarded \$765 billion in contracts. However, much of this federal contract work has been out of reach for our smaller businesses and startups. There has been a steep decline in new small businesses entering the federal procurement marketplace – and we need to change that. Federal contracts must be equitably distributed, which means investing in technical assistance for small businesses, streamlining certification for small and Latino-own businesses, and holding the federal government accountable when we don’t meet our small business contracting goals.**

**I am committed to making sure that Latinos in Maryland can build generational wealth for their families and have pathways to home ownership and educational opportunities.**

## **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?

**In Maryland and across the country, too many Latinos don't have access to affordable health care. Health care is a basic human right. Families shouldn't have to worry that a medical emergency will bankrupt them or force them to choose between essential treatments and other basic needs.**

**I support Maryland's efforts to obtain a federal waiver in order to let undocumented persons access the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange. I also support changing the eligibility requirements for Medicaid to allow more immigrants to access affordable health care.**

**We have a moral and economic obligation to provide a pathway to citizenship for people who have been contributing to their communities for years and prioritize keeping families together. We need to expand legal pathways to citizenship – especially for DACA recipients, TPS holders, student visa holders, and undocumented immigrants.**

## **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?

**Immigration reform and improving pathways to citizenship remain top of mind for many Latino communities across the country and in Maryland. Immigration reform is a reflection of our nation's values. We should be doing everything we can to increase the diversity that makes our nation great and support those who have been displaced by war and violence. That starts with modernizing our immigration court systems so that immigrants are not left in limbo for a decade, unable to apply for work permits, and straining resources, especially as businesses have openings they desperately want to fill.**

**I co-sponsored the U.S. Citizenship Act, which would provide a pathway to citizenship, expand the number of visas, and address underlying causes of migration. In 2021, I voted for the American Dream and Promise Act and the Farm Workforce Modernization Act. It is far past time that we pass comprehensive immigration reform that helps our workers, families, and the economy.**

**I am leading efforts to provide a pathway for unjustly deported immigrants to return home, including for DACA recipients who lost their status due to protracted litigation around the program and those deported for expressing their first amendment rights to protest injustices in the immigration system.**

**And I will always fight back against harmful policies and rhetoric targeting immigrants. In my own District, I have fought for years to end the harmful**

**immigration enforcement agreement known as 287(g) policy in Frederick County, and have pushed the Biden Administration to end this nationwide. As a U.S. Senator, I will continue to work to protect the safety and dignity of immigrant families.**