

Braddock District Supervisor Candidate: Irma Corado

NAACP Candidate Questionnaire

1. Will you support the renaming Robert E. Lee High School? (For School Board candidates “support” means voting to change the name?)

Yes, I helped do community outreach with SURJ NoVA for the name change of my old high school from JEB Stuart to Justice High. I believe that our schools should be a welcoming place for all students and we as a county and commonwealth should not be commemorating racism and instead building a county that is inclusive of all.

I believe that publicly investing in the exhibition of confederacy names is a distortion of history that continues the dehumanization of enslaved people and their descendants. This not only means in our public school systems but also on our roads and in our public spaces. I refuse to hide behind bureaucracy and will continue to advocate for the removal of confederacy names at both the local and state level.

2. What is your opinion of the current AAP program?

I believe that all students, regardless of their background, should have the best opportunity to succeed. Unfortunately, while seeking to provide a more robust education, Advanced Academic Programs in practice lead to further segregation of our student body. As a student of color with immigrant parents, I was quickly overlooked for honors classes despite my participation in my elementary school's GT pull out program. Had it not been for one teacher who saw potential in my math skills, I would not have been tracked into advanced classes and eventually an advanced diploma. Students of color continue to be represented in these programs at disproportionately low rates, failing to include students representative of the racial and economic diversity of Fairfax County. I am eager to work with the Fairfax County School Board and other stakeholders to address this issue and ensure all our students are able to attain an excellent and rigorous education.

3. Do you support the use of police body worn cameras? (For Supervisor candidates “support” means voting to fund use of body worn cameras for all Fairfax police)

While I fully support efforts to hold police officers who cause harm against community members accountable, I believe there are profound, long-term changes we can seek that will help reduce violence and build community trust. Though efforts to implement body camera use are meant as a tool to bring accountability and transparency to policing, I am concerned about the risk of sustaining the status quo while potentially exacerbating negative impacts on people of color. In many cases having recorded police brutality has not sufficed to hold accountable rogue officers, let alone save lives. In a recently reported case in Virginia, a department went as far as denying body cam footage, risking to further exacerbate distrust between many community members and the police. And as a data analyst, I am always cautious of the ways through which we collect, use, and share data, particularly when it comes to policing measures which can be costly mechanisms of surveillance that will likely disproportionately impact communities of color.

The issue is systemic in the ways we define crime and criminalize communities, in the way police departments are run, and the policies in place for police protection. Rather than focus on measures to capture video evidence of police brutality, I believe our advocacy and our efforts are better used taking a step further and investing in diversion and youth programs that focus on prevention, efforts to decriminalize black and brown bodies, and accountability programs that truly hold rogue law enforcement and systemic policies accountable. As a supervisor, I would work towards further empowering people by strengthening the current civilian review board to be truly independent, transparent, and powerful, protecting the rights for people to observe and record police interactions (with consent of person targeted by police) and I will fight any programs that further criminalize communities.

4. The county has determined a need for new housing to shelter 15,000 new families making less the \$70,000. Because of rising land and construction costs, new units in that price range require some form of public loans or grants. How many of these families should Fairfax County attempt to accommodate and how would you do it? What should happen to those who can find no affordable housing here?

I am committed to ensuring that Fairfax County is a place where people of all backgrounds and incomes can live and thrive. The need for affordable housing for all is a recurrent concern for county residents as my team of volunteers and I do community outreach. People sharing their struggle to make ends meet and living paycheck to paycheck prove the long overdue urgency of this issue. While this has been a problem for many county residents already, the impending arrival of Amazon presents many people with additional challenges in affordability. We need to take urgent, proactive measures to fill the 30,000 affordable home gap in the county, ensure we're preserving the affordable housing that we currently have, and expanding affordable housing options by investing in a sustainable income streams and looking at innovative ways to approach land use to create the 15,000 additional affordable units our residents need. This includes looking at vacant office space to repurpose for mix use and workforce housing and restoring, increasing the Penny on the Tax Rate for Affordable Housing Fund, and looking at ways to rezone areas for affordable housing. I would work with Supervisors of other districts to identify ways to support as many of the 15,000 new families as we can in the most expedient way possible

5. Would you support increasing the power of the civilian review panel?

Yes. As an organizer I have worked to support family members of victims of police brutality in the DMV. I have seen first hand the lack of accountability or follow up that happens when someone is hurt in the hands of the police. Even though incidents of police brutality are investigated by the Independent Police Auditor, the relatively new civilian review panel does not yet have the power necessary to fully address the breadth of discriminatory police practices. As a supervisor I fully support the panels' plea that their comments and recommendations be given serious consideration and that a process be developed to review their comments and recommendations for further implementation.

6. What do you believe county should do to address the overcrowding in schools?

Along with affordable housing, the county should prioritize investing in schools beyond the much-needed funding proposed under the Capital Improvement Plan. The fact that there are currently 800 trailers being used in our schools is unacceptable for one of the richest counties in the country. The county must provide the school system with the necessary resources and staff. As Supervisor I will work with education stakeholders, including school board members, parents and students to determine new approaches to address overcrowding issues, including reviews of schools boundaries, identifying ways to reduce student to teacher ratio and providing additional community support services for students, parents, and staff.

7. Many jurisdictions have stopped prosecuting possession of marijuana, do you believe Fairfax County should adopt a similar policy?

Yes, I believe that Fairfax County should stop prosecuting possession of marijuana and other drugs. Black people are more than 3 times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than white people in Fairfax, and this has been a growing trend as laws in nearby DC decriminalized marijuana. This leads to stark racial disparities in the county's systems of incarceration and is an issue that must be challenged. As a supervisor, I will push to decriminalize marijuana by including this goal as a county legislative priority and encourage our commonwealth's attorney to avoid charging these cases.

8. Many jurisdictions are ending the use of cash bail, what is your position on this issue?

Recognizing the harmful legacy of cash bail from its roots in slavery and Jim Crow, I am fully in favor of ending cash bail and supportive of preventing any pre-trial detention. Cash bail disproportionately criminalizes low-income communities and communities of color, which are more often than not, communities that are already over policed and I believe ending cash bail is a key step toward ending mass incarceration. While I oppose cash bail, the issue of how to phase out cash bail is an incredibly important one. If we do not correctly and strategically phase out the cash bail system we can unintentionally replace it with another system that could lead to unjustly incarcerating even more people in pretrial detention, causing the opposite intended effect. As a supervisor, I am willing to advocate for the end of cash bail by flexing my influence as an advocate, while at the same time engaging in a regional conversation around the impact mass incarceration, pretrial detention, risk assessments, and surveillance have on Black and brown communities.

9. Do you believe that Amazon moving to the area will have a negative impact on Fairfax County? If so, please explain what should be done. If not, please explain.

I believe we need to be proactive to mitigate any potential negative impact Amazon's move to Northern Virginia may have on our county and work to find benefits we can leverage for the public. In order to make sure this is the case, I believe county officials need to commit to robust community discussion about how to navigate this updated economic landscape in a way that

won't leave people behind and continue to defer our urgent housing needs. Many Braddock District residents I've spoken to during my campaign has expressed frustration with the lack of Fairfax County addressing this change more seriously. Affordable housing has long been an issue in Fairfax County as evidenced by the 31,000 units gap we currently have and a report by New Virginia Majority referenced estimates that 33% of Amazon employees will reside in Fairfax County, yet there is uncertainty around what this means for residents currently residing in the county. I am also aware of the social impact corporations like Amazon can have on our residents, particularly workers. Unfortunately, Amazon has a long track record of taking advantage of its workforce and I believe that Fairfax County needs to seriously consider the impact Amazon's arrival will have on county residents from housing, to their rights as workers, to our education system. As with other large companies coming to the region over the years, I want to ensure the benefit does not only come to some, but to support all especially in black communities and communities of color around the county.

10. What is the most important policy the County can promote or adopt to live up to the One Fairfax resolution?

I believe that Fairfax County residents of all backgrounds are deserving of true equity and inclusion. This includes working to ensure equitable justice for all county residents by ending the county's voluntary collaboration with ICE.. As a formerly undocumented person and a member of a mixed status family I understand the urgent and real needs our migrant community members, including Latinx, Asian, Black, and indigenous people, have daily. I am committed to bringing a new, inclusive way of decision-making to the county board to ensure all voices and experiences are take into account.

1 in 3 Fairfax County residents is an immigrant, yet the One Fairfax resolution does not include immigration status as a "lens" for the way in which we run our county programs. Currently over 12,000 non-citizens in our county are in deportation proceedings and yet the Board of Supervisors refuses to address the need for protection for our immigrant neighbors from ICE. If we were truly committed to building a One Fairfax we would not only amend the policy to include immigration status, but we would adopt Fairfax for All's Ordinance to Protect Equal Justice for All that aims to end all voluntary collaboration with ICE at the county level. Beyond that, I want to give the One Fairfax Policy life by adding concrete steps or guidelines to match the urgency that the residents of Fairfax County deserve. As supervisor I would also make board meetings and public meetings more accessible to workers and non-English speakers by providing updated times for engagement and improving accessibility through language justice.

11. When the Housing and Community Development office opened its housing choice voucher waiting list this winter, 12,000 people applied and 2,000 were chosen by lottery to be on a wait list of about 2 years. What should be done to assist the other 10,000 very low-income people who applied to the list?

It is unacceptable to have 10,000 very low-income people uncertain about their housing. Fairfax County needs to take solid steps to address the need for affordable housing, including restoring and expanding the Penny for Affordable Housing fund, working on private-public partnerships to prioritize affordable housing, and advocating for additional state and federal funding in Richmond and DC. I would also be interested in finding creative solutions to affordable housing including re-zoning options to diversify our neighborhoods and public education campaigns to provide residents with additional information on housing options.

12. A new survey shows there are 9,500 market rate housing units affordable to families making less than \$70K in Fairfax County. As land values rise driving rents up and many of these older units are turned into townhouses, we are in danger of losing affordable housing. The county policy is that there should be “no net loss, if possible” of affordable housing. What does “if possible” mean to you? To the county?

Affordable housing is an issue of urgency for many of our county residents, which many times has a real impact on people’s lives, and as such it should also be a matter of absolute urgency for county officials. The “if possible” in that statement is extremely concerning to me because it gives room for county officials to again defer this public need while continuing to be unwilling to make this a priority. I also worry that this a potential “loss” in affordable housing could be due to redevelopment under the guise of “revitalization” which would more likely than not, mean displacement of existing community members. We need to drop the “if possible” and focus on making sure that we not only are addressing the 30,000 unit gap but preparing aggressively for future of affordable housing.