

Hunter Mill District Supervisor Candidate: Laurie Dodd

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, absolutely.

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

I am concerned that unacceptable and disproportionate opportunity gaps exist among children who might otherwise excel in Advanced Academic Programs at Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS). As outlined by the Fairfax County Council of Parent-Teacher Associations (FCCPTA) in November 2018, 3-year baseline figures show the following participation rates in AAP:

All: 20%. Asian: 32%. Black: 10%. Hispanic: 7%. White: 23%.

Economically Disadvantaged: 4%. English Language Learners: 1%.

Students with Disabilities: 6%.

Under the joint One Fairfax Equity Policy of FCPS and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (FCBOS), these opportunity gaps should be eliminated I support the engagement of all stakeholder, including the Minority Student Achievement Oversight Committee and other groups named in the FCCPTA Resolution in Support of an Updated and Equitable AAP in FCPS, in developing a plan to expand access to AAP services to elementary school children, regardless of race, ethnicity, affluence, disability, educational level of parent(s) or guardian(s), spoken language at home, or school.

Equity demands that all students have access to AAP services, and where gaps are found, action must be taken to narrow and eliminate the gaps.

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)

Yes.

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 support preserving and increasing affordable housing to meet the needs identified by the county. To do so, an additional penny should be added to the real estate tax, and every effort should be made to secure additional funding through proffers from developers, the Housing Trust Fund, and efficiencies in other budgetary areas. Efforts should be made to convert

existing buildings in the county to create affordable housing, and zoning modifications should be made where necessary to allow additional housing in low-density areas of the county. I will not accept the proposition that we cannot find a way to provide sufficient affordable housing in our prosperous county.

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

Yes. I agree with concerns expressed by Supervisor Cathy Hudgins when the Police Civilian Review Panel (PCRP) was created in December 2016. The PCRP does not have the authority to conduct independent investigations, take sworn testimony, or compel officers named in complaints to appear and take part in public hearings with the complainant. The PCRP can review completed police internal administrative investigations of civilian complaints concerning allegations of abuse of authority and serious misconduct; however, they cannot review complaints regarding use of force. While the PCRP allows some citizen engagement in review of police actions and policies, it falls far short of the engagement that I would support.

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

Overall, some schools in FCPS are overcrowded while others are under enrolled. I believe it is time to examine the possibility of re-drawing school boundaries so that all students can be accommodated with as little need for capital expenditures as possible. We know that designing and building new schools takes time and money. Many of our existing schools are aging and need significant renovation, and we must work to eliminate trailer classrooms in FCPS. To meet these capital demands, expanded use of school bonds should be considered. Our students deserve to have safe classrooms that are not overcrowded, with teaching staff that is well paid and well trained. FCBOS must work with FCPS to meet these needs, whatever it takes.

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

Yes. Fairfax County, like other parts of the US, has too many people incarcerated on charges of possession of marijuana, and people of color are incarcerated disproportionately. Low level non-violent offenses like these should not saddle people with a criminal record and lifetime collateral consequences, for offense that do not present a serious danger to the community. I support allowing the Commonwealth's Attorney to exercise prosecutorial discretion to dismiss or find other ways of handling such charges, until our state laws are amended.

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

I oppose cash bail. Those who present a danger to the community are not eligible for bail, so no safety issue is involved. There are effective ways of getting people to appear at their scheduled court hearings without using cash bail. Ending cash bail also undercuts a predatory bail bonds system that makes money by exploiting poor people. This is the smart, cost-effective, and humane thing to do. Cash bail undercuts one of the most critical pillars of our criminal justice system: the idea that rich and poor should get the same access to justice.

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.

Fairfax County has not offered any tax incentives or other financial considerations to encourage Amazon to move to northern Virginia. However, many Amazon employees are bound to live in Fairfax County, requiring county expenditures for public services, roads, education, and more. Yet Fairfax County will not directly benefit from commercial taxes paid by Amazon. Because the attractions of prosperous Fairfax County must have played some role in Amazon's relocation decision, and because the corporation will undoubtedly benefit from all that the county has to offer, every effort must be made to encourage Amazon to support county schools, roads, and infrastructure.

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

Preserving and increasing affordable housing in Fairfax County is the most important step the County can take towards fulfilling the vision of One Fairfax. Housing patterns have resulted in de facto segregation of our schools and communities. We must achieve equity in FCPS so it is no longer true that schools are better in one zip code than another. Providing additional support for affordable housing throughout the county is essential.

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?

As mentioned earlier, I support preserving and increasing affordable housing to meet the needs identified by the county. To do so, an additional penny should be added to the real estate tax, and every effort should be made to secure additional funding through proffers from developers, the Housing Trust Fund, and efficiencies in other budgetary areas. Efforts should be made to convert existing buildings in the county to create affordable housing, and zoning modifications should be made where necessary to allow additional housing in low-density areas of the county. I will not accept the proposition that we cannot find a way to provide sufficient affordable housing in our prosperous county.

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 comes in many forms and at many levels of affordability. Even families with incomes approaching \$70,000 can have difficulty finding affordable housing. Development of additional workforce housing must be encouraged, and developers need to proffer an acceptable number of affordable units in order for their plans to be approved.