

Name: **Patricia Fenati**
Address: Damascus
What office are you seeking?: State Delegate District 14
Where can voters learn more about your positions?: fenati@verizon.net

2 **Someone new to Montgomery County may ask, "What's the Ag Reserve and why is it important?" What's your answer?**

This is a program in Montgomery County to protect farmland. It prohibits development of that land and reserves it for Agriculture.

3 **What are your priorities regarding stewardship of the County's natural resources (water, forests, open spaces) and parkland?**

I live in Damascus and I am a member of Keep Damascus Rural from the early days of its inception. Our efforts to date have not been successful, but we are hoping that we have made an impression and have roused the community to keep the treasure we have of a rural close knit community. Citizens are outraged that after hours of testimony against a development project in our town in front of an obviously deaf Planning Board, the only comment was the project is approved and there was nothing they could do! I would like the planning board to be required to put traffic studies done by citizens on equal footing with traffic studies done by developers and listen to serious concerns expressed by the local citizens.

4 **What is your vision for the future of the County's Agricultural Reserve? Briefly, how would you achieve that vision?**

I very much want to preserve the farming industry in Montgomery County. AS I travel to Damascus from 270 and pass the very dense developments that have blighted the beautiful Clarksburg fields that were once there, I always think of the Movie title' "How Green Was My Valley" I know lots of money was made and there are homes for many there, but how much more farmland will be developed. We have to find a way that allows the farmer to realize the value of his land without having to sell it to developers. The programs called Transfer of Development Rights along with the Rural Zone and Rural Cluster Zone seem like steps in the right direction, but I would want to talk with farmers to understand their needs also.

5 **Can you identify some of the top challenges to the Reserve's local agriculture and what actions you would take, if elected, to address them?**

I think the top challenge is over-development. Undeveloped land is less expensive for new development and now developers seem to want to develop whole towns complete with apartment buildings and shopping centers. This kind of living out in the country brings with it long commutes and time away from home.

6 **What more can be done to support our local farm businesses and rural communities?**

I think we should encourage businesses such as farms where you can pick produce e.g Butler's Orchard or Rock Hill Orchard. And encourage new ideas such as the computerized milking stations at Woodbourne Creamery in Damascus.

I think regulations for safety are important, but the state should not over regulate and put limits on productions such as it has on breweries.

7 How should our County manage its solid waste? What role should incineration, composting and recycling play?

This is a question for which I do not have an answer. There is much science involved with this problem with which I am not familiar at this time. I understand that solid waste can be composted and used a fertilizer but in some cases there is more solid waste than that needed for fertilizer. And there are laws regarding phosphorous which I do not fully understand.

8 How can we expand the role the County's schools play in the support of a healthy local food system and the success of local agriculture? Do you support a rural schools' policy that provides equity for Reserve cluster schools acknowledging the unique nature of schools in region set aside for farmland and open space preservation?

I think all students everywhere in the county should be aware of the very important farming industry in our county. Students in urban areas should have field trips to our farms and pick produce at places such as Butler's Orchard.

I think 4-H programs should be established in all schools.

9 Currently the County is exploring how best to support a strong agricultural economy through agritourism and new farming enterprises such as on farm breweries and wineries. What are your thoughts about how best to advance on farm activities within the context of the master plan?

I am very interested in the new brewery industry and the growth of wineries in our county. There are at least two breweries in District 14 as well as one winery. I would like to see this grow. We have to be careful that the state does not over-regulate these industries out of existence.

10 What are your regional transportation priorities? Do you support M83 and an additional Potomac bridge and outer beltway through the Reserve or adjacent rural zones?

I think M83 is necessary only because of the over development and the intolerable traffic it has created, but I am very concerned that it will destroy one of the beautiful areas of the up county. I would rather see an overpass built at the corner of Rt 27 and 355 and other busy intersections along Rt 355. Have traffic lights along 27 and 355 synchronized to ease traffic.

Perhaps an outer Potomac passing can be done through some kind of tunneling. There are new tunneling methods that are being developed, perhaps this would be feasible in the not too distant future.