

Montgomery County 2026 Candidate Questionnaire



Personal Information:

Name

Gabriel Sorrel

What Office Are You Seeking in the 2026 Election?

House of Delegates, District 19

Where Can Voters Learn More About Your Positions Or Contact Your Campaign?

My guiding principles and policy aspirations are detailed on my website: www.mdresist.com. I can also be reached by email at gabriel.sorrel@mdresist.com.



Please Answer the Following Questions- responses will posted in their entirety and will not be edited. There are no word limits but please try to be concise.

(pictured above: One Acre Farm)

Please share 3 sentences that help us to know you better:

I'm an experienced software engineer, a lifelong geek, the father of two wonderful children, and a committed husband of fifteen years. I've lived in Gaithersburg for nearly twenty years, ran for the Democratic Central Committee in 2018, and spent several years as an active member of the LGBTQ Democrats of Montgomery County. I'm running because I passionately believe Dems need to prepare for systemic change in how our government functions and to better communicate how they're protecting Maryland.

When we recently surveyed residents throughout the County, they shared that their top priority was a lack of government transparency - How can Montgomery County ensure transparency in their legislative and land use decision making? How would you grade current public engagement? Do you support re-establishing the Office of the People's Counsel?

I do support the OPC, but I suspect the biggest contributor to feelings of lack of government transparency is the reduction of local journalism and our fragmented news system. I believe we need to not only finance independent, non-profit journalists focus on county and state affairs, we need to build a culture where they

are given as much respect and attention as the national news outlets. As a political candidate, I can attest to this lack of communication running both ways: polling and political outreach is incredibly expensive, so it is difficult for politicians to know what their constituents are feeling or to advertise what they have accomplished. Solving this is going to require building mediums meant to foster civic engagement, not generate advertising revenue.

Do you believe that the way that local government branches (executive, legislative and planning), and state entities currently interact can be improved? If so, what steps would you take to bring better collaboration?

The unfortunate reality is that our election system positions elected officials to compete against their peers and others seeking to participate in party politics, and even when there's every reason to work together there's not an organization to coordinate (or force) action. I believe activist organizations should fill this role by combining their resources to create a pool of volunteers, donators, and information that politicians will want access to and thus will be motivated to collaborate closely with activists. By having this organizing force outside the election cycle its leadership and projects can persist even as the executive and legislative branch membership changes, and with the organization based on issues rather than a party they will be motivated to not just win elections but accomplish real policy objectives.



Source water protection is a priority for County residents. Rural residents are served by wells drawn from a federally designated Sole Source Aquifer. What specific actions will you take to protect groundwater quality and ensure a sustainable supply of drinking water for residents, farms and businesses? And what do you propose with regard to protecting the Potomac River, a drinking water supply for more than 5 Million people in the Washington DC metropolitan area. Given increasing drought conditions, growing data center water consumption, and projections that the Potomac River may not meet future demand, how will you plan for a water-constrained future? What policies or investments would you prioritize during your term?

With the gutting of federal civil agencies I believe Maryland must invest heavily in its our environmental and health organizations, including by hiring as many former federal civil servants as possible so we can benefit from their expertise. We must obviously stop data center development until their consumption can be proven to not hurt our public needs, but more importantly we need to increase detection of and penalties for corporations dumping waste into our waterways. I would also advocate for native landscape restoration near our waterways to cut water use and reduce chemical runoff.

What role can the Ag Reserve play in helping our County address Climate Change? Do you have plans to bolster the county's funds to address climate change, i.e. expanded grant making, review of energy tax structure for high energy consumers such as data centers?

The more we bolster local food production and make it easily accessible to Maryland communities the fewer emissions we will create by importing from other states. At the same we should continue to invest in reducing greenhouse gas byproducts from cattle and invest in soil practices that increase the absorption of carbon. However, I believe the most viable route for Maryland to address climate change is to heavily invest in local solar farms throughout the state. Once we are energy self-sufficient the state can change our contract with the regional electric network so our residential energy rates are not inflated by out of state data center usage.

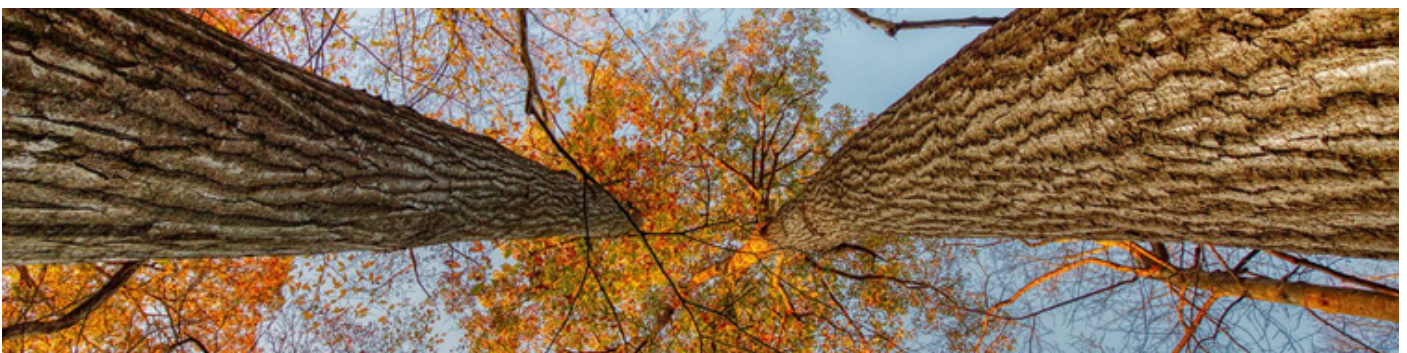


Do you support the long planned closure of the trash incinerator in Dickerson? Please provide some details as to why or why not. (pictured above: Shepherd's hey Farm)

I believe it is better to close the trash incinerator sooner than later if only because it is unacceptable to emit dangerous chemicals into our air, as the Dickerson incinerator has been noted doing. While combating climate change should be our top priority, we simply cannot poison our residents and environment to achieve green house gas reductions. I would prefer to transfer trash to landfills with greater methane collection systems.

Should Montgomery County host hyperscale Data Centers? If so, what zoning standards and regulations should be established? Have we gathered all the necessary information to make an informed decision at this time?

I support a statewide moratorium on local data centers, but do believe we will need updated zoning in the future to account for their environmental impact and the increased noise pollution. Regardless, we're in an AI bubble and a large number of future data center projects have been delayed or cancelled already, so I do not think we should do anything to encourage more projects. Most importantly, the impact on residential energy rates from existing data centers is unacceptable, and until rates return to normal we must fight expansion both in Maryland and beyond.



Forests are a key tool for climate protection and protecting public health. How would forest protection and control of non-native plant species factor into your administration's goals? (Picture above - Wib Middleton)

I'm proud that Maryland already has many initiatives to plant trees and more importantly actually study their carbon benefits. I believe we should continue to focus on forest management and wetland restoration in the Eastern Shore, and as I said above, should encourage property owners to adopt native landscapes to help with water management and conservation.

Where do you stand on synthetic turf playing fields for school and community use?

I strongly oppose synthetic turfs if only because they are constructed with PFAs and other toxic chemicals that I believe need to be removed from our environment. We should return to natural grass fields managed by electric motors.



Challenges to current and future farmers are increasing. The average age of County producers is 59. The cost of leasing farm acreage (60% of farms are leasing) is skyrocketing while a diverse new crop of farmers struggle to afford farmland. Have you got any plans for how the County can help keep the industry healthy and promote expansion– with an understanding that resilience depends on local food and fiber production? (Pictured above: Afrithrive Farm)

I believe we must discourage rent-seeking behavior in all land usage; that means ensuring farmland is owned by active farmers, not investors or those seeking a passive income without actually contributing to our community's economy. I believe the state should encourage the creation and expansion of community land trusts to move land away from speculative real estate markets and ensure it is serving the public. I also believe the state needs to develop a thorough understanding of the supply chains farmers rely on so it can identify market consolidation or other sources of price increases.