



GSSCC Candidate Questionnaire
Montgomery County Council – At-Large

Name: Steve Solomon
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Elected Office You are Seeking: Montgomery County Council
Legislative District: At Large
Number of Years Lived in that District: 42
Party Affiliation: Democratic
Relevant Non-governmental Professional Experience/Positions Held: _____

I have worked in radio my entire career. For 17 years, I have been a producer/host in sports talk radio. I also volunteer with a dog rescue/adoption group finding homes for dogs.

- GSSCC believes that a thriving business community brings prosperity for all of our citizens by increasing the number of good private sector jobs and expanding the tax base to support necessary public services.
 - Please list all the initiatives/legislation you have supported/or would support to foster the growth of existing businesses and encourage new business creation

The Energy tax has hurt many businesses. It keeps businesses from succeeding, and drives companies out of our county.

- Please describe your plan for increasing the tax base – rather than tax rates – in the County

Privating the liquor business in Montgomery County.

Growth of police force and establishment of a gang unit - to bring safety to the communitiy.

- What is your plan for making Montgomery County more attractive to businesses looking to expand or relocate (i.e. increased tax incentives, subsidies, streamlining the development approval process)?

I have always believed that telecommuting incentives are needed. Not only would it attract tech companies with a large telecommuting workforce, but it would also reduce our traffic congestion.

I would also work to eliminate the \$15/hour minimum wage. This hurts businesses who already struggle to stay afloat. Many would have to layoff employees to keep the same

payroll going. Also, any employee that makes \$16 or \$17 an hour, can now never expect a raise. Why would a business come to Montgomery County, if it can set up next door in PG County with no \$15 minimum wage?

- Montgomery County leaders have continued to approve increases in the County's operating budget that require spending at levels exceeding private sector growth. GSSCC believes the County government needs to do a better job of living within its means. This is even more important given the recent announcement of a \$120 million revenue shortfall for the current fiscal year.
 - Did you or would you have supported the 2016 property tax increase? No
 - Did you or would you have supported the 2016 recordation tax increase? No
 - Did you or would you have supported the eventual phase out of the County's exorbitant energy tax? Yes
 - Other than raising taxes, what ideas do you have for creating an economy that will meet the growing needs of county residents? We need to keep Montgomery County attractive to businesses - the best schools, the best transportation, embrace high tech industries, more bike lanes.
 - Would you support consolidation of some County Government functions in order to reduce costs? If so, please describe which programs or services you would recommend be consolidated, reduced, or eliminated. Yes - reduction in the Department of Education hierarchy - less administrators, more teacher
- Other comments:
- In recent years, our members have faced an increasing number of federal, state, and expanded local regulations that directly impact their ability to remain viable.
 - Did you or would you have supported the additional increase to the Montgomery County minimum wage to \$15 by 2020? No
 - Did you or would you have supported mandatory sick leave, even for part-time employees? No
 - Do you support an employer's right to hire and schedule its employees according to its individual needs? Do you support legislation that dictates minimum work hours or scheduling requirements? Yes
 - What policy ideas do you have to enhance the success of our member job-creators?

The council needs to listen to its business members - they didnt, and raised the minimum wage anyway.

- Other comments:
- Prior to considering any legislation, the County Council seeks a Fiscal Impact Statement to determine the impact of that legislation on the County's budget.

- Would you support a law that requires the same kind of analysis to determine the fiscal economic impact on businesses and non-profits, prior to consideration and enactment of any new law or regulation? Yes
- Would you require that this analysis include interviews and discussions with actual business owners? Yes
- Why or why not?

Why would they make any legislation without a full understanding of the fiscal impact? That would seem irresponsible. Of course they should have input from actual business owners.

- Many of our small- and medium-sized business members feel that the policies adopted most recently by County government reflect a lack of appreciation for the contributions they make to our community. Please describe your understanding of the difference between the challenges faced by large multinational companies and small locally owned/operated businesses. Provide three specific examples of how you will support small businesses and ensure opportunities for them to grow and expand.

Yes, I understand there are different challenges faced by the large companies and small locally owned businesses - taxes, insurance, operating costs.

1. Montgomery County has many wonderful resources for small businesses - I would encourage more SBA loans to attract small businesses to our county, and keep the current small businesses afloat.
 2. The process of licenses, forms, and permits is too complex - cut out the red tape
 3. Eliminate the \$15 minimum wage which will be disasterous for small business.
- The Silver Spring Central Business District was envisioned to become a smart-growth live/work/play community. However, in recent years, Silver Spring has evolved into a primarily residential neighborhood (bedroom community), with virtually no commercial office development in the past 10 years. Local retailers and restaurants are feeling the brunt of having fewer and fewer customers during office hours. What will you do to address this and help bring more businesses back to Silver Spring?

We will have a huge building become vacant soon - we need to attract businesses to the Discovery Building - a great location.

- The Route 29 Corridor in Eastern Montgomery County has suffered from a lack of commercial and other development for many years. Traffic congestion has increased, and most of it is through traffic to the Beltway or downtown D.C. Few, if any new employment opportunities have been created to provide jobs that would take these cars off the road. What are you going to do to ensure economic development that brings new businesses to Silver Spring including downtown and the East County/Rt. 29 Corridor?

If you've ever been in downtown Silver Spring on a weekend, you'll see full parking garages and a ton of foot traffic. The residential population and visitors are there, we need businesses that can capitalize on that - stores, shops, etc.

- The Chamber supports a balanced approach to transportation policies that take into account the needs of our member businesses, their employees, their customers, and their vendors. That balance must accommodate those who use public transit, drive on our roads, travel by bicycle and on foot, and need sufficient parking options at their destination.
 - Please describe your approach to finding the right balance of transit, roads, parking, and other transportation options.

We can't have a situation like we faced in the past to the Silver Spring transit center. Sinking millions of extra dollars to fix problems.

- How will you assure the future success of the Metro?

The new Purple Line will alleviate a lot of Red Line traffic.

- What will you do to address the needs and concerns of businesses that expect to be harmed financially during the construction of The Purple Line?

Business loans at low interest should be available to those you need it, to upgrade or survive during this long period of construction.

- What is your vision for the future of greater Silver Spring and Montgomery County over the next 5 years?

As someone who grew up in Four Corners and spent a lot of time in downtown Silver Spring, the growth that I've seen in the 30 or 40 years since I was a kid, is tremendous. We need to maintain this growth with business, not residential.

- If elected, how will you measure your success at the end of your term?

If elected, I want to leave Montgomery County a better place than when I started.

I want people to be able to afford to live and work in this county, and to still feel that we have the best schools around. I want to do the little things to help people - growth in streetlights, sidewalks, parks, libraries, police and fire/rescue