

Annapolis Pride 2021 City of Annapolis Primary Election Candidate Questionnaire

Mayoral Candidate: GAVIN BUCKLEY (D)

(See candidate responses in bold, blue, italic font)

1. Please let us know if you have ever volunteered with or supported any LGBTQ+ organizations, such as Annapolis Pride, PFLAG, or the Human Rights Campaign. Feel free to include events in which you participated. Please include all groups you feel are pertinent including LGBTQ+ Equity actions or advocacy that you have taken in other non-LGBTQ+ organizations or Boards. If no previous volunteer or advocacy experience with or for LGBTQ+ Community, please explain why not and how you now understand the importance of such advocacy.

I want Annapolis to be known as a city where everyone can express themselves and feel valued regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation. As Mayor I've established strong relationships with advocacy groups including Annapolis Pride and PFLAG. In particular I worked with Annapolis Pride to declare June LGBTQ+ Pride Month -- long overdue recognition for our LGBTQ+ community.

Government has a responsibility to recognize and protect the rights of every individual and their value in society. The Mayor's Office now maintains direct liaison to our LGBTQ+ community and their advocacy groups, as does the Annapolis Police Department, to ensure representation and inclusion in City decision making. These and other positive changes implemented over the past four years have been recognized by the Human Rights Campaign with an upgraded Municipal Equality Index Score for Annapolis -- from 65% in 2017, to 84% in 2020.

2. [The Trevor Project National Survey on LGBTQ+ Youth Mental Health 2021](#) surveyed nearly 35,000 LGBTQ youth ages 13-24 across the United States. Among the key findings of the survey:
 - **42% of LGBTQ youth** seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, including **more than half of transgender and nonbinary youth**.
 - **12% of white youth** attempted suicide compared to **31% of Native/Indigenous youth, 21% of Black youth, 21% of multiracial youth, 18% of Latinx youth, and 12% of Asian/Pacific Islander youth**.

Please discuss your feelings about the data above and how you would help support LGBTQ+ youth and specifically Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), and transgender nonbinary youth. Have you advocated for or endorsed legislation and actions on the state or local level to keep LGBTQ+ youth safe? Explain if you have not

and what you intend to do in the future to improve the mental health of LGBTQ+ youth in Annapolis.

All young people deserve to feel loved and secure, and be supported to reach their potential. For anyone to suffer mental health problems through discrimination and not feeling accepted for who they are, is a tragedy. Young people who experience more than one form of discrimination are especially vulnerable and need multiple levels of support.

As Mayor, I've worked to increase liaison programs and services to Black, Hispanic and LGBTQ+ residents. Last year we introduced a new social worker position to support local families and help them access health care, mental illness support, suicide prevention and other services that address isolation. We also work in close partnership with Anne Arundel County to provide adjunct health and education services, including mental health services, particularly for our underserved communities.

I'm committed to increasing diversity in City workforce and leadership, as well as in community events and programs that celebrate diversity. Young people need to see people who look like them in leadership roles and know they can play a valued role in their community and be part of decision-making. They also need to see and hear leaders celebrate their contribution and affirm their worth. That's why I'll keep using my voice as Mayor to make sure all our youth know they are valued and loved by our community.

3. On June 16, 2021 the Anne Arundel County Public School Board passed the [Safe and Inclusive Environments for LGBTQ+ Students](#), a comprehensive policy that prohibits discrimination and harassment based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. The policy states support for the right of any student to be addressed by a name and pronoun that correspond to the student's gender identity. Additionally, the policy supports the right of any student to use school facilities that correspond with gender identity in which the student identifies.

Please discuss the importance of the adoption of policies in schools that respect student gender identification, including consideration of reasonable and respectful accommodation in regard to facilities. Please provide your feelings regarding "Bathroom Bills" that have been proposed around the country.

The City does not directly control school and education policies but we have an important partnering role with the County and a leadership role in our community.

As Mayor, and as a parent whose children attend local high school, I fully support the Safe and Inclusive Environments for LGBTQ+ Students policy because I want LGBTQ+ students to feel safe and their rights to be respected -- including the right to be addressed by their gender identity and access facilities accordingly. It's why we ensured the new

Truxtun Park Pool has two gender neutral shower-restroom facilities, in addition to two gendered locker rooms.

The Safe and Inclusive Environments policy also promotes training for teachers and school staff so they can fully support LGBTQ+ students. That's vital to the wellbeing of our LGBTQ+ students and to providing a supportive environment throughout the school community.

4. How have you advocated for the LGBTQ+ community and supported inclusion for the LGBTQ+ community in the past (i.e. have you spoken out publicly for policies at your place of business, testified before government bodies, adopted written policies for your employees, marched for equal rights, etc.)? Please be specific.

I have always spoken out for greater inclusion for the LGBTQ+ (and all marginalized) communities. A desire for a more inclusive City is a key driver for me. At times, our public debate is so bitter and divided it almost seems like we've lost our humanity. We need a reset. Here in our local community, where we live and work as neighbors, we have a unique opportunity to do that.

As Mayor I know I can play a valuable role as a leader and decision maker and help bring about real change. That's why I was proud to inaugurate Pride Month, march in the Pride Parade and demonstrate for equal rights at the Womens' March and Black Lives Matter events, among others. I'm also proud of the many concrete changes we've been able to deliver, such as non-discrimination laws for City employment.

5. It has been well documented that LGBTQ+ people face health disparities linked to societal stigma, discrimination, and lack of access to quality health care. How have you advocated to reduce LGBTQ+ health disparities? Explain if you have not and what you intend to do in the future to improve the health of LGBTQ+ people in Annapolis.

Embedding anti-discrimination policies and language into City operations is one of the key things we've done to address disparities that impact health for City employees.

Changes include:

- ***introducing non-discrimination laws for City employment and transgender-inclusive health care benefits for City employees***
- ***building anti-discrimination language into housing and employment laws specifying, "genetic information, sexual orientation, or gender identity"***
- ***migrating all single-occupancy facilities in the City to all-gender***
- ***ensuring new community infrastructure, such as the new pool at Truxtun Park, includes gender-neutral facilities.***

To address health disparities across the community, I intend to keep working with the County and our City liaison teams to make sure all Annapolis residents can access the services they need. If we can do this in the broader context of a community that accepts and celebrates difference, we'll go a long way to reduce stigma and improve health outcomes - and all outcomes - for our LGBTQ+ community.

6. What is your position on police reform and do you support police training and education on issues of concern to the LGBTQ+ community?

We are very fortunate to have a City police force that strives to be inclusive, aware and educated on LGBTQ+ issues. They have a very effective LGBTQ+ liaison officer and show their support for LGBTQ+ residents through public events and inclusive policing. Under Police Chief Jackson they have implemented a model of policing and safety that embeds community needs and concerns into policy and practice.

That doesn't mean we can't do more. Training, education and listening need to be an ongoing, permanent part of policing and improving our services to our LGBTQ+ community and all residents who may experience discrimination and marginalization.



Annapolis Pride invited all candidates in the upcoming City of Annapolis elections to participate in our first candidate questionnaire to educate voters impartially and on a nonpartisan basis. We encouraged all candidates to participate regardless of party affiliation. Candidate questionnaire responses are distributed for purely informational purposes.

Annapolis Pride is a volunteer, grassroots non profit organization that advocates for the LGBTQ+ community all year long and hosts the annual Annapolis Pride Parade and Festival held in June. Learn more at AnnapolisPride.org. Contact Annapolis Pride at info@annapolispride.org or by mail, PO Box 4822, Annapolis, MD 21403.