

# **Annapolis Pride 2021 City of Annapolis Primary Election Candidate Questionnaire**

**Candidate: ROSS ARNETT, WARD 8 (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.

*As a City Council member I supported the approval of the Annapolis Pride Parade. I support the inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community in all aspects of the City. As we formulate legislation, the Council must be continually aware of need to listen to and include the voices of all citizens.*

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.

*The high level of serious emotional and mental distress among LGBTQ+ youth is alarming and must be considered an emergency. I am a founding co-sponsor of the Office of Community Services in Annapolis, which is a City agency that connects the community to a wide variety of social and health care services provided by county, state, and private organizations. Suicide counseling is one of the services provided by the County's Crisis Intervention Team. We can no longer ignore the consequences of*

***disenfranchising our LGBTQ+ youth. They are our future, and we must provide a safe and stable environment in which they can flourish.***

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 harrassment 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.

***I recently discussed this topic with an elected school board member, and we agreed on the importance of respecting gender identification and the need to accommodate name and pronoun preferences as well as allowing students to use the facilities that correspond with their gender identity. I fully support bathroom bills that require reasonable and respectful accommodations. I am outraged by the egregious reactions of some citizens to bathroom policies that are intended to create an inclusive and supportive 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 am a liberal democrat and an elected government official. I have always supported policies that advocate for the welfare and inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community in all aspects of City life. More specifically, as chairman of the City Council Finance Committee I have always fought to maintain full funding for our Community Grant program that allows the City to provide funding for a wide array of advocacy and support groups in the community. Our dollars form the basis for matching grants that allow organizations to leverage much larger amounts of funding.***

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.

***Throughout my long career in Public Health Policy at the Federal level, I was aware of the health disparities that LGBTQ+ people face in the health care delivery system. I was a Center Director at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. I directed a team of researchers to develop mechanisms to provide more equitable delivery of health care services to underserved and discriminated against populations.***

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

***I am currently working on legislation with a colleague on the City Council to adapt and strengthen the recently passed Maryland Police Reform Legislation to update City Council code that governs the police department. Throughout this reform legislation there are requirements for training for sensitivity and awareness of the unique needs of the LGBTQ+ community.***



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](http://AnnapolisPride.org). Contact Annapolis Pride at [info@annapolispride.org](mailto:info@annapolispride.org) or by mail, PO Box 4822, Annapolis, MD 21403.

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