

Maryland Disabilities Forum
2014 Gubernatorial Forum

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National Federation of the Blind
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MARC MAURER: We're going to get started in a few minutes, folks. Please take your seats and we'll begin as soon as is practical.

All right. If everybody could take your seats, we're going to get started in just a few minutes.

All right. I want to take a moment to welcome all of you here. My name is Marc Maurer. I am the immediate past president of the National Federation of the Blind, which is the organization that has this as headquarters. It's great to have you with us today. This is being hosted by the Maryland Disabilities Forum. We'll hear from the chairperson in a moment.

One thing I would say is this. We have delayed the beginning of this briefly because some people were a little delayed in coming.

Election Day is the 4th. Make sure that you're not delayed in voting. Gotta have that be done, you know.

The other thing I would say is this: It is said by those who count that there's something over 50 million disabled people in the United States. Many programs are operated in such a way that it is pretended or believed or at least expressed by the actions that are being taken in those programs that there aren't any people with disabilities in our country. This annoys me, and we do our best to change it.

Today we have candidates who have come, and I'm glad they did. We're part of the electorate here, and we want to be represented in all of the programs that exist. The candidates are seeking an important job, one that is dramatically difficult, and yet we want to be a part of the job that is being sought, and that's why we were willing and anxious to have this presentation be housed in our building. It's great to welcome you here. C. David Ward serves as chairperson of the Maryland Disabilities Forum. Here is David Ward.

(Applause.)

C. DAVID WARD: Good afternoon. I have the distinct pleasure to welcome you to the MDS 2014 gubernatorial event. On behalf of the board of directors and our event committee, thank you for coming, and please accept our sincere gratitude for your participation.

Today's event is dedicated to the memory of a dear colleague and advocate of the disability community. Gayle Hafner, a woman whose intelligence and drive could not be contained. A woman whose spirit had no bounds in life. A woman who will continue to be an inspiration to countless people who carry on her legacy.

Maryland citizens with disabilities are more empowered today because of people like Gayle, who never gave up the fight for our civil rights. Gayle, we miss you.

Our assignment today is to have you leave here more knowledgeable and informed about Maryland's gubernatorial candidates, agendas for working with Maryland's cross disability community. With your help, the people you know and those who care for and about people with disabilities can cast their vote on Tuesday, November 4, in an enlightened fashion.

One of the nation's recognized icons in civil rights movement for people with disabilities was the late Justin Dart. If you do not know who he was, I would suggest you Google him, because he and along with numerous savvy advocates left a legacy, a landmark Civil Rights Act known as the Americans with Disabilities Act. If Justin were with us today, he would remind you that we have to make sure that generations to come understand how we got where we are today. That responsibility includes your involvement in politics. Justin said, and I quote, "Get involved in politics as if your life depends on it, because it does."

There's no room for complacency in a cross-disability community when it comes to politics. The consequences can only result in being left off the political agenda. We have all worked too hard for that to happen.

I would like to take a moment to recognize and thank our board of directors, our members, and staff for their dedicated work on behalf of people with disabilities and in making today's forum possible. In particular, our own executive director Robert Hofmann, who is around here someplace.

(Applause.)

And I can tell you a lot of the stress for an event like this laid in the hands of the young lady who has coordinated today's activities by the name of Amanda Lowery.

(Applause.)

Also, I would like to have our board members please raise their hands and be recognized. Thank you for all the work that you've done. The MDF could never take the task on of a gubernatorial event without the support of many volunteers. Thank you for all you do.

Also, with financial resources, we would not be here today. The MDF is truly blessed to have so many incredible sponsors who recognize the significance of a cross-disability community movement and the value for supporting the ongoing work.

Our platinum sponsors today are the National Federation of the Blind. And isn't this one beautiful facility.

Gold sponsors include The Chimes, Inc., The League for People with Disabilities, and Melwood.

Silver sponsors: Center for Social Change, Maryland Works.

Bronze sponsors. Emerge, Inc. Supporting sponsors include the Arc of Central Maryland, Community Behavioral Health Association of Maryland, Governor's Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Maryland Association of Community Services, Maryland Coalition of Families for Children's Mental Health, the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council, the Maryland Disability Law Center, the Mental Health Association of Maryland, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, On Our Own of Maryland, and VSP.

Also, there are numerous smaller individual sponsors that we so much appreciate, and we are grateful for their sponsorship and support for today's event. Please thank me in appreciation for everyone's support.

(Applause.)

It is an honor for me to introduce our moderator for today's event. I am proud to say that he is one of my friends, colleagues, and MDF board member, and the executive director of one of Maryland's newest independent living centers, in Towson, Maryland. You cannot ask for a more dedicated and committed advocate for the cross-disability community. Please join me in welcoming Michael Bullis as your moderator for today.

(Applause.)

MICHAEL BULLIS: Thank you very much. One more round of applause for David and all he does.

(Applause.)

In 1972, although I turned 18 in 1971, I did not view that I was truly an adult until '72 because that's the first year I was able to vote. And it has been a passion of mine ever since to become knowledgeable, as many of you are. I became a political junkie. I love understanding candidates, their issues, their policies, and their politics.

And today we have a great program for you to hear from all three candidates for governor here today. We have democratic candidate lieutenant governor Anthony Brown, we have republican candidate Mr. Larry Hogan, represented by Boyd Rutherford, and we have libertarian candidate Shawn Quinn with us to share their platforms on disability issues.

Before we start, I would like to remind everyone why today's forum and the activities surrounding it are so important. There are over half a million Marylanders with disabilities, and the vast majority are of voting age. That's over 10% of Marylanders. Voter interest in disability issues goes well beyond that 10%, when you consider family members, service providers, advocates, public agencies, board members, medical and other service professionals, and the ever increasing number of seniors with disabilities. The impact of the disability vote has become a huge force in the electoral process.

It is so exciting to be part of such a significant societal change process that within our lifetimes has seen individuals with disabilities move to ever higher levels of community

integration and participation. The bottom line is that we are here. We want our voice to be heard. And we are voting.

Let me turn now to the rules for today's forum very quickly. It is important that the candidates and audience members maintain the attention and respect of each other, that the disability community has shown at past events. This is a forum; it is not a debate. So candidates will not be allowed to direct questions or attacks or barbs at each other or otherwise engage in debate-type banter. Each candidate will have an opportunity to present opening remarks, followed by questions from the moderator and audience, as well as have an opportunity to make a closing statement. There are strict time limits for each of these presentations, and those time limits will be strictly enforced.

Audience members are asked to be equally respectful of all candidates at all times and to refrain from overtly positive or negative or raucous comments in response to candidate statements.

The order to of the presentations was determined by a drawing before today's event. So before we begin the candidates' portion of the program, I want to mention a couple of housekeeping items to you first.

Event registration tables for today's events are outside of the doors. If you haven't registered for today's program, please do so before you leave.

Also, if somehow your voter's registration has lapsed, perhaps this is your first time vote, there are voters' registration tables in the ballroom. And I want to thank the Maryland Disability Law Center for staffing those tables. Please go register and vote. Use the power you have in this democracy to make a difference.

Okay. Let's get to it.

Let me begin the formal portion of today's forum and ask that the libertarian candidate, Mr. Shawn Quinn, join me on the stage.

(Applause.)

SHAWN QUINN: How is everyone doing today?

MICHAEL BULLIS: Please begin by presenting your opening remarks. You have four minutes.

SHAWN QUINN: Not a lot of time. So I won't waste it telling you how my parents were great and brought me one values. I won't tell you I was in the Navy serving the country or worked in law enforcement after I retired. Nor will I tell you I worked for the American Red Cross because you can find that information anywhere online.

What I would like to do is share a story. On Monday, I was actually allowed to be on Fox 45 news. I was surprised they invited me because nobody invites me to stuff like that. So I show up, I get up at 3:00 a.m. and I drive from the great south to come to Baltimore. And I'm glad it was dark because when I drive through Baltimore sometimes,

it's really depressing when you see the homeless on the streets and the dilapidated buildings. So it bothers me. So I get there, and of course they're really nice to me and they take me back in the studio and they're like, we're going to mic you. They stick you up on this chair where your feet swing like this. So of course you have to put your feet on these little rails, and then of course me being a little fat man, I looked even fatter!

So she starts asking me questions and I'm sitting there crapping my shorts because this is a nerve wracking thing with cameras everywhere. It's not like here. They have big cameras right in your face. So you're sitting there for 4 minutes wondering what's going to happen to you.

And I think that when you have a disability, that's what you go through every day, wondering what's going to happen to me. Because you're not a community because you want things; you're a community that needs things. And it made me wonder, how do these people do this every day? How can I make a difference for them?

So I'm running for governor. What does that mean to you? It means that if you elect me, my door will be open to you. Any time you need me, it will be open to the citizens for two hours every day without an appointment. It means when you have an issue, you can come talk to me personally and tell me what that issue is. You can't get that from other people in offices. They get in office, they close their door, and they tell you what you want to hear. I'm sure you've been to plenty of things where candidates get up, and I've been to 90 events since January. I go in there, if it's a women's group, I listen to candidates tell them how wonderful women are. The next week they may be in an African-American community telling them the exact same thing.

This is a lie. They're just trying to get a vote. And it bothered me. So I'm running for governor. I promise I will never lie to you. You may not like my answers or get along with me every time, but I will always give you an honest and open answer. That's why I'm running for governor. Today I may not be able to answer all your questions. Disabilities is a tough subject, especially when you weren't blessed by God with a disability. Most people go through their everyday life not even knowing what it's like to be disabled and they could care less because it doesn't affect their everyday life. But I care. And I want you to know you can talk to me and I will do my best to make things happen to you. I'm going to be fair to everybody, though, not just the disabled. So you won't always get all the money you want every time you want it because there's only so much money. Three-quarters of the operating budget goes to transportation and schools, leaving a small piece of pie for everybody else in the state. But if I can take some money away from those two things without hurting them, I would be more than happy to give some of that money to you. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MICHAEL BULLIS: Thank you very much. Now to questions and answers. I'll be asking six questions based on our six principles. And questions submit online prior to today's event as well.

Mr. Quinn will have 90 seconds to answer each question. And the first question deals with community integration. Marylanders with disabilities, regardless of the type of disability, have the same aspirations as anyone else. We want to live, shop, work, attend school, worship, vote, and recreate in an integrated setting in our community. Marylanders with disabilities do not want to be forced into institutional settings including nursing homes and other residences that deny us the opportunity for full community participation.

My question is: If elected governor, what are the top three specific priorities or actions that you would take to advance opportunities for people with all types of disabilities to live and participate in integrated community settings? Please be specific.

SHAWN QUINN: Okay. I did some research before I came here, and Maryland has a department called the state disabilities plan. I did the research because I really had to learn about disabilities. And I found that this department is supposed to follow pretty along the lines of what you want to happen. Does it happen? Probably not because like every bureaucracy, you go in and ask for help and get the run around. I tried to follow some of the links and it just went from one place to another and another, and I had to wonder, when do people just give up and say they're not really going to help me?

So as governor, my first priority, if you come to me and tell me this is happening to you, I will step with both feet on these departments and fix it. Because they work for the governor. That is why this position is so important in Maryland. The governor has power over every department that runs Maryland. All he has to do is step in and speak up.

MICHAEL BULLIS: Very well. Second question deals with housing. People with disabilities need accessible, affordable, and integrated housing throughout Maryland. And there is simply not enough of it. Marylanders with disabilities want to live as independently as possible and want to live in the same diversity of housing types and neighborhoods as everyone else. If elected governor, how would you address the critical shortage of accessible, affordable, and integrated housing for Marylanders with disabilities?

SHAWN QUINN: Unfortunately this is not only a problem for people with disabilities; it's a problem for a lot of people. Students who come here for college, we have homeless all over the streets. You walk down Annapolis and there's homeless people living right in old town. I think we have to find a way to get all housing costs down, and unfortunately, it seems like the government is more interested in spending money on themselves instead of on the people. So the first step is to find out where the money already set aside to go for housing, where it's really going. A lot of departments end up taking 80% to pay high priced employees. So like I said before, I will be more than happy to step in with both feet and make sure the money is going where it should be and if I can find more money to make it better, I will. A lot of these issues come down to

county issues because the county controls the local funding and housing. So I would be happy to help you get them on board anyway I can.

MICHAEL BULLIS: Very well. Marylanders with disabilities are experiencing an unemployment rate many times higher than that of their nondisabled peers. No doubt, progress has been made. But with so many people with disabilities excluded from the workplace, much more needs to be done.

What specific actions will you take as governor to increase employment opportunities for the overall employment rate of Marylanders with disabilities?

SHAWN QUINN: This is a good question because you have state employees and you have private employees. Now, I can sit there and pass laws and tell private companies that they have to hire more disability people, but let's face it, I can't sit in their office when you go in for an interview and see if they're not hiring you because you're disabled or not skilled. I can make sure the governor of the state does give you more opportunities for jobs, and I can promise you, there will be people with disabilities working in my office because I need them there so we have a link together and can work together to fix problems.

MICHAEL BULLIS: Okay. When it comes to providing services for people with disabilities, Maryland's current transportation system is to put it in a couple words woefully inadequate, both in overall capacity and dependability. Especially as it relates to timeliness. For example, if you live in Montgomery County, you would not be able to come to this event today by public transportation. If you're elected governor, how would you address both the shortage and lack of dependable transportation services for Marylanders with disabilities?

SHAWN QUINN: This is easier to deal with than people think. You just have politicians getting in the way. A lot of money goes into the transportation budget. Three-quarters our budget is nothing more than transportation and schools. Now, when this money goes to counties, if they don't use that money to make it easier for handicapped to use transportation, then we're going to have to start cutting programs that handicapped people can't use.

I have a lady working for us in Bowie who has been fighting for a long time to get people on to mass transit because she says it's impossible. She just happens to be disabled. So I'm there for you. All's you gotta do is come tell me and we'll make it happen. I can't see that this is a hard issue if I just kick them in the butt.

MICHAEL BULLIS: Okay. Number five. Accessible and affordable healthcare is important to everyone. For people with disabilities, not having adequate access to healthcare becomes a barrier to independent living. And in some cases, it escalates to becoming a matter of life and death. Even when some coverage is available, the lack of coverage for critical services such as mental health counseling and provision of durable medical equipment creates unnecessary suffering.

If elected governor, how would you address this critical need for adequate, affordable, and accessible healthcare for people with disabilities?

SHAWN QUINN: Unfortunately, we just went through a healthcare change. It came to Maryland so that all people could get affordable healthcare. I don't know about you, but my healthcare costs went up tremendously. And they failed to come up with a plan for people to go on the web and get this care. As governor, I'm not just going to throw money out there and say, fix this, without paying attention to what it's doing. I will make sure the money goes where it is supposed to, providing healthcare for everybody, especially people with handicaps, because like you said, people are dying.

A quick story. I worked with a man with a child with MS. He got on this list so he could stay home with his child and be the caregiver and the state was going to pay him to stay home. He had to get on a list and wait his turn.

Well, the day after his child died, he was at the top of the list. This was appalling to me. It's got to stop.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. I would like to turn the focus to education for a moment. And in particular, integrated and well supported education services. From a policy perspective, access to integrated education has been the accepted standard for children and young adults with disabilities for many years. Yet too often it is provided in a manner that puts students with disabilities in integrated classrooms without the necessary complement of supports to achieve successful outcomes and learning.

What would you do as governor to ensure both an integrated educational experience and access to needed supports for students with disabilities?

SHAWN QUINN: This is probably the only instance where I agree that the state should control school funding, because by controlling those dollars, they can dictate to school districts where to spend the money. Most of the money right now the counties control what they're going to spend their money on. The state simply gives them the money. But when you control the money, you can control what they do with it.

I'm a firm believer that counties should be in control of their education because local communities know what education they need. But when they fail to do this, you have to have some kind of control over them so that you can change the direction they're going in. So I would use the access I have to the money going to the counties to change this so that people with disabilities can get the same education as everybody else. Actually, I would like to see everybody get a better education, because obviously the education program in Maryland is not up to par. They say we're number 4 in the state. Yet high school kids cannot even get into college. This is a sad, sad thing. One guy came up and told me that his son could not even sign a check because he didn't know how to write cursive. This is ridiculous.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. Now we're going to go to audience questions. We'll try to get to as many questions as possible, but with limited time, we'll only be able to get to a

portion of the ones I have up here. However, following today's debate, the Maryland Disabilities Forum will post questions that we submit to candidates and their responses online so that your question will still get answered. And if you're unable to access them online, we will also be able to -- you can call the office and we'll be able to get you the answers.

So let's begin with the first audience question. If we can find it here.

All right. This was submitted by a couple of different folks. It may be a bit down in the weeds, but we'll see. How would you implement the Workforce Investment Opportunities Act?

SHAWN QUINN: Well, it should already be implemented but obviously if somebody is asking the question, it's not working. So maybe we need to take the whole program and start over. Or maybe we can find ways to take the good parts of the program and start implementing them right away and get rid of the bad parts. But I'm telling you, the biggest problem people have in this state is they do not have access to their government. The government is not listening so they get the run around by bureaucrats, who work for elected officials. Those elected officials are elected by you, so if you allow them to not speak to you and not be informed about what you want, then you are letting them do what they want to do, and it's not helping you.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. I will try and amplify a couple of these questions because I think they need a little more explanation.

Let's try this. This question again comes from a couple different audience members, related to the Supreme Court's homestead decision passed in 1998. Do you embrace the premise of the Olmstead decision for all people with disabilities and to the extent that you do, what is your action plan to actualize that vision?

SHAWN QUINN: Well, I can say yes, but unfortunately I don't really have a vision for that yet. I have to be perfectly honest with you, you know, I was not blessed with a disability, so I do not have all the insight on disability I wish I had.

So I won't lie to you and tell you what you want to hear. I'm going to tell you, it's going to take some work. I will need you to come to me and tell me what you need to make this stuff work for you. Because the programs are supposed to be out there so you get what you need. If you're not getting it, the only thing I can do is open my door and do everything in my power to make it happen. I'm just an everyday guy like you, and I'm willing to do what it takes to make things work so that you get what you need just to live a normal life. I'm not promising you the world; I'm promising you normal. As normal as possible.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. This next question comes from an audience member, Patty Daily. She asks, what is your plan to increase IDEA funding, that is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, funding so that all students with disabilities meet or exceed outcomes.

SHAWN QUINN: Now we're going back to something really controlled by the counties, but the dollars come from the state. So what we do is we go back to the counties, each one individually, and find out what they're doing to help you. And if they're not doing it, then we start controlling the funding so that they do. I'm definitely going to put somebody in my office very attached to the disability community and knows what all the programs are that are available. The only thing I know is the state disability plan. It left me wanting. So I know you're thinking, wow, we're not getting any answers. But you'll get your answers when I get elected and you're in office helping me fix the problems, because I can't fix it if I'm not in office, and I can't fix it without your help. These are your programs and I want you there. I want the government to be your government. I want you to be able to say, I made this change. I'm the most least important person standing in this room right now. If I get elected in November, I'm still the most least important person in this room. You are the people who are important. It's your government, and that's why people want you to vote, so that you get people who will listen to you.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. The fourth question comes from again a couple of different audience members. In light of the fact that Maryland has a high number of deaf constituents, why haven't any of you close captioned your TV ads?

SHAWN QUINN: I'm actually innocent of this because I have no money. I have only down a commercial with Montgomery County that they gave me 4 minutes. If I was doing commercials, I would definitely add closed captions. I'm not guilty of this so I can't tell you I have not done this.

MICHAEL BULLIS: Okay. This question comes from a couple of audience members again. What is your plan to ensure that there is 100% funding for the governor's transitioning youth initiative?

SHAWN QUINN: Well, unfortunately, we have to sit down and do a budget every year. Maryland is not allowed to have a deficit. So at the end of every year when a new budget is submitted, all bills have to be paid. So what happens when we have a legislature spending outside the budget all year? You have to steal that money from somewhere to pay it because the constitution says we cannot have a deficit. So I think I will start out by not allowing the House and Senate to spend outside of the budget. I'm also going to restrict their budget because they have far too much money that they're blowing on themselves. Then we can take that money next year and put it into things like housing, education, access to public transportation for the disabled. There's money to be had; it's just being wasted. I'm going to grab that money and put it to good use.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. Audience question six. This is from a couple different audience members. Do you have anyone on your staff that has a disability?

SHAWN QUINN: Hmm. Well, I have a hearing disability, but I don't think that counts. My staff is really small. I had a campaign manager that had some family problems and had to leave in the middle of the campaign to go to Massachusetts, and my wife picked

up the whole load. She happens to be a CNA and works in a nursing home. So she does a full-time job and then tries to keep me straight. Everybody else on my campaign is strictly a volunteer. We have no money to pay people; it's just people who come forward and say, I want to help you get elected. I take everybody who wants to help. I don't care where they're from. We're probably the only nondiscriminating campaign ever. We don't care who you are, what color you are, how tall you are, how you pray, whether you're disabled. If you have the skills and want to help us, guess what? The door is wide open.

MICHAEL BULLIS: One last question. This question is, what are your plans to expand transportation outside of Baltimore City?

SHAWN QUINN: Well, right now there's a lot of projects already in the pipeline, and it's not like you become governor and the next day you change everything. A lot of these projects take years and years to even get put in the pipeline, and you can't just stop them because the money is just lost at that point. They have the red line going, the purple line. Every time you turn around, there's another line going somewhere. So we really have to sit down and find out what the transportation department is really spending our dollars on, because they seem to be the department that has the biggest problem. They get a lot of money and people are just not happy with the results. We have roads that need to be done, we have buses that people with disabilities can't get on. And yet we'll spend millions to make sure there's a bike path on the side of the highway. I don't understand that. Let's take care of people first and then have extras after that.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. Time has run out for questions, so I would like to move now to Mr. Quinn's closing statements. You have three minutes.

SHAWN QUINN: Okay. As I said, I probably didn't answer all your questions exactly how you want to, and I'm not making you any special promises. I'm only telling you this: If you elect me, my door is open. That's something you don't have in government right now. If you come to me with problems, if there's any way on earth I can make them better, I will do it. I am in this campaign for one reason only: To make Maryland a better place for everybody. I don't promise any special interest anything. I don't owe any special interest anything. I only owe people. If they vote for me, they deserve what they voting for. Open, honest, fair level playing field. That's what I bring to the table. Like I said, I do not have any special interest. You will not see Planned Parenthood saying, oh, you owe us because we gave you \$10,000. I'm not wasting money on commercials. That money could go for homeless people, for people who have no food, for disabled people. Why would you waste it on campaign for office? This is your office in November. All you have to do is stand up and decide what you want. If you want more of the same, there's people out there to give that to you. And so be it. I would be perfectly happy to step aside. But if you want something better, then I am here for you. That's all I can tell you. I am here for you. I'll be more than. Happy to discuss this

more in detail. You can teach me what you need. That's what is important. That you get what you need. Thank you.

MICHAEL BULLIS: Let's thank Mr. Quinn.

(Applause.)

All right. Now we move to our next candidate. He is the democratic gubernatorial candidate. I would like to ask lieutenant governor Anthony Brown to join me on the stage.

(Applause.)

We have a moment to wait here, so we'll stand by.

(Applause.)

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. The floor is open to you for 4 minutes for opening remarks.

ANTHONY BROWN: Thank you for having me this afternoon. I'm so excited to be here at your gubernatorial forum. The Maryland Disabilities Forum. Let me just start by saying thank you for everything that you do as advocates, family members, sharing experiences and passions about how we can improve opportunities and access and funding and enhance partnerships in the work that we do to make sure that we build a better Maryland for more Marylanders.

I think that as Marylanders, we all want the same things for ourselves and our family: Jobs and opportunities made possible by good education, raising our family in a healthy environment, safe environment, in a neighborhood where we can call home and be happy to do that. In our administration, we're going to fight for all of these things for all Marylanders. That starts with our number one priority, which will be to create jobs for more Marylanders by creating the most competitive business climate in the country, nurture growth and development in all of our communities. We're going to support middle class and working families and Maryland's caregivers. We're going to fight for better wages for all Maryland's workers. We're going to fight for better, more accessible schools, and safer neighborhoods. And we're going to stand up for and protect the rights and freedoms that all Marylanders deserve.

To do this, we're going to have to work together. This is a community of strong, dedicated advocates, and Marylanders who aren't afraid to take on tough challenges. In partnership with Marylander with disabilities, we will build a better Maryland for more Marylanders, and I look forward to doing that with you. And I would like to yield the balance of my opening so that we can get right to the questions.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. Thank you.

Okay. We have six questions for you to begin with that are primarily centered around the Maryland Disability Forum's six principles. And then we have some audience questions and we'll see how many of those we get to.

But the first question deals with community integration. Marylanders with disabilities, regardless of the type of disability, have the same aspirations as anyone else. We want to live, shop, work, attend school, worship, vote, and recreate in an integrated setting in our community. Marylanders with disabilities do not want to be forced into institutional settings, including nursing homes and other congregate residences that deny us the opportunity for full community participation.

My question is: If elected governor, what are the top three specific priorities or actions you would take to advance opportunities for people with all types of disabilities to live and participate in an integrated community setting? Please be specific.

ANTHONY BROWN: Sure. Limiting it to three is quite a challenge. I know there are three areas that certainly come to mind, and first and foremost is employment. The other on that list is housing. And of course education. Let me speak briefly, if I may, to employment.

Look, I'm proud of the fact that in Maryland, we will by 2015 become an employment first state. And we have led by example in the state of Maryland as we have done everything we can with the partnerships, using the best technologies, to ensure that all Marylanders, regardless of ability, have an opportunity to seek dignified, meaningful employment. We've done that in partnership with the nonprofit community. In fact, I was very excited just last week, I visited a Baltimore County employer. Maybe you've heard of them. Acadia Windows. They work with the Baltimore ARC. I met a young lady there who is blind. She is involved in some very important work on that production line. And the employer shared with me his trepidation years ago before he hired this young lady. But with an open mind, with the use of technology and a willingness to train, this young lady now is one of the most productive members on that production line. Something that he did not envision six years ago. And some of that with some supports from the state of Maryland in the form of incentives.

I'm sorry. Is that my time? Can someone remind me what the time?

MICHAEL BULLIS: My fault. I should have explained at the beginning. You have 90 seconds to answer each question, and I neglected to tell you that, so I'll give you 30 seconds to finish this up.

ANTHONY BROWN: Thank you. In terms of housing, I laid out an affordable housing plan and the need to create a statewide affordable housing policy. In that plan, we talk about affordable housing for veterans and workforce housing for transitional populations, but a very important component, and I'm very mindful of, is the need for housing for Marylanders with disabilities. And not only the accommodations necessary for that housing, but the number of housing units available. So you will see,

as we increase investments in the rental house and work program, the Maryland affordable trust, that we will have a priority for Marylander was disabilities.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. You'll have time to cover some of these issues as we move through some of our other principal questions.

The second question deals with housing.

(Laughter.)

So people with disabilities need accessible, affordable, and integrated housing throughout Maryland and there's simply not enough of it. Marylanders with disabilities want to live as independently as possible and want to live in the same diversity of housing types and neighborhoods as everyone else. If elected governor, how would you address the critical shortage of accessible, affordable, and integrated housing for Marylander was disabilities?

ANTHONY BROWN: So let me start by saying that every Marylander deserves an opportunity to choose the housing option of their choice. And we know that regardless of who you are and where you live in Maryland, there is a critical shortage of affordable housing, workforce housing, housing for veterans and first responders and teachers, and Marylanders with disabilities. Over the last 8 years, we've increased by about 16,000 units the number of affordable housing units. And the priority that we've had and that I will continue is to work with the private nonprofit affordable housing development community to deliver those units in an integrated, a mixed use format, and not just setting aside affordable housing by itself. Housing that is part of the community and is accessible to metro, it's accessible to employment centers.

As we develop this affordable housing policy, as I mentioned, and we continue to leverage the partnerships with our tax credit programs, the priority of our administration will be preference points for developers that deliver units that are accessible and affordable for Marylanders with disabilities. I've said the same for veterans. I've said the same for the reentry population. Some of our most vulnerable and in-need populations are where I think we get the greatest value with the public dollars that we are investing in housing.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. Thank you.

Marylanders with disabilities are experiencing an unemployment rate several times higher than that of the nondisabled population. No doubt progress has been made over the years, but with so many people with disabilities excluded from the workplace, much more needs to be done. What specific actions would you take as governor to increase employment opportunities and the overall employment rate of Marylanders with disabilities?

ANTHONY BROWN: There are three specific things I would do, because I do believe that every Marylander, regardless of ability, deserves the opportunity to find meaningful,

dignified work, because you know, with the exception, with some exceptions, there's probably no program that can compete with a good family supported job. And having said that, there is going to be the need for some Marylanders where the public sector needs to be there as a backstop, as a support, as an equalizer, as an opportunity granter. And again, I think about the young lady at Acadia Windows made possible by partnerships and incentives by Baltimore County. Three things: A task force to review state practices. I think we need to look at state employment. We hire 50,000 employees, or at least we have 50,000 employees. And to serve as state employees with disabilities to identify unmet needs to make sure we're doing our very best as an employer, the state of Maryland.

Certainly supporting accessible mass transit that connects to jobs. I think we've done a little bit better in our paratransit or mobility operations, but I know we have a lot of work to do and I look forward to working with the community to make sure we can do that connecting more Marylanders to jobs.

And three is to fight disability discrimination in both public and private employment.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. When it comes to providing services for people with disabilities, Maryland's current transportation system is woefully inadequate. Both in overall capacity and dependability. Especially as it relates to timeliness.

For example, if you were to live in Montgomery County, you would not be able to come to this event by public transportation.

If you're elected governor, how would you address both the shortage and lack of dependability in transportation services for Marylander was disabilities?

ANTHONY BROWN: Let me first state that we have a transportation challenge in Maryland. It's not unique in Maryland. To deliver a transportation infrastructure that meets the needs of all Marylanders. In order to do that, you need a balanced transportation system, a balance between roads and tunnels and bridges and mass transportation.

As a lieutenant governor and now as a candidate for governor, I wholeheartedly support the investments from the transportation trust fund that go into public transit. In fact, we have is a goal in Maryland to double ridership on mass transit. Projects like the purple line in the national capital region. The red line in the Baltimore region. Increasing MARC ridership. That's why we have now weekend service. We have more runs between the District of Columbia and Baltimore City.

So the first sort of priority or prerequisite to increasing transit opportunities to Marylanders with disabilities is you have to support mass transit to begin with. And I think that you will see that there is a fundamental difference between those of us who are running. I support public transit. I think it's a great investment. And as we expand those opportunities, to make sure that those opportunities are available to all Marylanders regardless of ability.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. The next question moves to the issue of healthcare. Accessible and affordable healthcare is important to everyone. For people with disabilities, not having adequate access to healthcare becomes a barrier to independent living and in some cases escalates to being a matter of life and death.

Even when some coverage is available, the lack of coverage for many critical services such as mental health counseling and durable medical equipment increases unnecessary suffering.

If elected governor, how would you address this critical need for adequate, affordable, and accessible healthcare for people with disabilities?

ANTHONY BROWN: Let me start by saying that I spent most of my life in public service here in Maryland, fighting to expand access to affordable quality healthcare. Why? As a child growing up, I was raised in a home where I saw my father every day, he's a doctor, treating people, seeing patients in some of the poorest neighborhoods, hospitals, and communities near where I grew up. And many of our neighbors relied on the generosity of providers like my dad who did the hospital rounds and the house calls, and I vowed that no Marylander should have to rely on the generosity of a provider to get quality service.

So over the last several years I've had the opportunity to lead the effort to expand access to affordable quality healthcare to almost half a million Marylanders. As you know, I've led the effort on the Affordable Care Act that's gotten a lot of attention over the last few months. But one of the things I'm really proud of, when you look at the essential health benefit plan under the Affordable Care Act on the health benefits exchange, we did everything we can to successfully ensure that there's mental health parity. That's the law in Maryland. Mental health parity and essential health benefits. We've done things like exceeding our goal by 25%.

So as your governor, I'm going to protect those investments whether through the expansion of Medicaid, whether it's ensuring that our essential health benefits plan continues to provide coverage for mental health services, or whether it's our investments for example we've increased our --

MICHAEL BULLIS: I'm going to have to cut you off.

ANTHONY BROWN: There's so much to cover in such a little period of time.

MICHAEL BULLIS: 90 seconds isn't long.

I would like to turn the question to education. From a policy perspective, access to integrated education has become the accepted standard for children and young adults with disabilities. Yet, too often it is provided in a manner that puts students with disabilities in integrated classrooms but without the necessary complement of supports to achieve successful learning.

What would do you as governor to ensure both an integrated educational experience and access to needed supports for students with disabilities?

ANTHONY BROWN: Sure. Let me start off by saying I believe every Maryland child deserves access to a world class education, regardless of where your family is from, where they live, and your ability. I believe that education is the best ladder to success. It's been proven for centuries in this country. That's why I supported expanding pre-K education to all Maryland 4-year-olds, which will provide an outstanding opportunity for students of all abilities to be able to learn early, to get that running start so they can be as successful as possible, whether their destiny is college readiness or career readiness.

We've done a number of things in Maryland, I believe. But there's certainly more to be done. Specifically this is what I would do. I would ensure that learning materials in classrooms are integrated and accessible and using the best technologies to do that. I would recruit and retain educators, therapists, sign language interpreters who support students in the classroom. I would work with local boards of education to support behavioral management training for educators, keeping students in school and learning. And certainly I would do what we can do, and I believe we have expanded resources with expanded gaming, to increase after school and summer activities for all students, including our students with disabilities.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. Thank you.

Now we move to audience questions. As I explained to our last person, I'm going to modify this last question a little bit because it's a little too deep in the weeds, I think. This question asks: How will you implement the workforce investment opportunity act passed by Congress this summer?

ANTHONY BROWN: That's simple. I'm going to work with the community, the advocates, the workforce developers, each and every one of you, so that we can make sure that we take that law, the resources we have available, the best technologies and the best thinking that we have, to make sure that we are adequately training and preparing our workforce, including Marylanders with disabilities. It's all about partnerships. We'll rely I think a great deal on our nonprofit community that has a tremendous experience in the community, demonstrating Marylanders with be disabilities to, connecting them to more jobs, like the ARC of Baltimore and similar organizations around the state.

MICHAEL BULLIS: Do you -- well, let's see here. Do you embrace the promise of the Olmstead decision made by the Supreme Court for all people with disabilities, and to the extent that you do, what is your action plan to actualize that vision for Maryland?

ANTHONY BROWN: I most certainly do, and I think that we should develop systems where we are not giving preference or priorities to large institutional providers, but instead, to be able to push services or bring services, however you want to view it, into

the community. When you look at the services that we provide across a variety of populations, whether it's Marylanders with disabilities, whether it's seniors, whether it's juveniles in our care, or I should say young people in our care, the department of juvenile services, whether it's our children in foster care, we are always better served and do a better service when that service is delivered as close to home as possible. In the home when possible, in the community is preferable, and large institutional providers only when absolutely warranted. I think you provide a lower intensity, often a lower cost, and more effective service, which gives you the opportunity to serve more and more Marylanders who are in need. So I will be looking forward to fully embracing, implementing the Olmstead decision and the principles that it incorporates as we deliver more and more services to Marylanders with disabilities.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. Thank you.

This question comes from Patty Daily. What is your plan to increase the individuals with disabilities education act funding for Maryland public schools so that all students with disabilities meet or exceed outcomes?

ANTHONY BROWN: Well, I think one of the things that we should do is make sure that, again, where possible, and it's more possible than not, we're ensuring that our students with disabilities are receiving education and support services in our schools, in our classrooms. And just as we do with all of our students, particularly now that we are embracing the common core standards and the core curriculum, to make sure that we've got an effective manner in which to evaluate student performance, and that should be for all students, and to hold educators accountable for that performance. I do believe that educators overall evaluation should be based in part on the progress or the performance of students, and that's all of the students that the educator is teaching. So those are some of the things I would do to ensure that we're adequately implementing that.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. This next question is, in light of the fact that Maryland has a high number of deaf constituents, why haven't any of you closed captioned your TV ads? Cost is no longer prohibitive.

ANTHONY BROWN: We have made progress -- I'll get to your question. We have made progress in state government. Not nearly where we need to be. But we are making our state government websites more accessible and doing that in partnership with the community.

In terms of my campaign, I think cost is a factor. Yeah. Cost is a factor on that. And the resources available to my campaign aren't nearly the resources available in government, in state government, and that's why I think we've been able to make progress in state government. I can assure you that my failure, if you will, to communicate with certain communities will not be indicative of how wide and deep and far we communicate we are accessible to the populations that we serve.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. What is your plan to ensure that there is 100% funding for the governor's transitioning youth initiative?

ANTHONY BROWN: Let me use this as an opportunity to set the table on this budget. And rest assured that I will not use the budget as an excuse for underfunding a program. But keep in mind that we continue to look at a slow economy, with budget growth that is not keeping up with all of our funding formulas. So we will, this next legislative session, as we have had to do in the last 8 legislative sessions, be making difficult decisions about programs that we fund. I don't think there's a single program in state government over the last 8 years that hasn't either been flat funded or seen a reduction in funding. Some would like to point to that and say, a-ha! It's not a priority for that administration!

But I think most of us recognize that during this recession and protracted recovery that all programs have either been level funded or flat funded. I can assure you that working with the community, as we are seeing revenues return to normal levels, and we can make increased investments in important programs, that those programs will include those that support Marylanders with disabilities.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. This next question comes from an audience member, don't see a résumé here, but the question is, do you have anyone on your staff that has a disability?

ANTHONY BROWN: My extended staff? I'm a lieutenant governor. I preside over 50,000 state government employees. Yes.

(Laughter.)

I do have a very diverse staff in the office of the lieutenant governor. And while I don't that I know of have a staff member with a developmental or intellectual disability, I can tell you I have a very diverse staff made up of men and women, and over the course of the last 8 years, from the Latino community, the Asian-American community, the African-American community, the LGBT community, and it's been a very diverse community. But in my staff of 8 or 9 in the office of lieutenant governor, I don't know that I have had over the last 8 years an employee, a member, with a developmental or intellectual disability.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. Another question. What are your plans to expand transportation outside of Baltimore City?

ANTHONY BROWN: Red line is a big piece of that. Big piece of that. Look, Baltimore City is one of the major metropolitan areas, regions, cities, in the country. It's the least connected from a public transit standpoint. I don't suggest that the red line is the silver bullet and that that will solve all of our connectivity challenges, but it's certainly a big part of it. Connecting neighborhoods within Baltimore City as well as Baltimore City to Baltimore County. So that's certainly going to be a big piece of it.

But also when I talk about public transit and mass transit, we continue to see the need for increased bus service. The number of lines, the frequency of lines, and as we deliver more and bring on more lines, more bus runs, we need to ensure we're doing it accessible to all Marylanders.

Let me say this, and it may go more than the 30 seconds I have left. And it goes more to leadership style. There are a lot of issues that Marylanders face and Marylanders with disabilities are no different. We all have educational issues, transportation, housing, and employment. In the Brown-Ullman administration, I will look to and empower my secretary of disabilities -- let me have more time.

MICHAEL BULLIS: You have three minutes coming up with your closing statement.

ANTHONY BROWN: I was going to make a profound announcement here.

(Laughter.)

MICHAEL BULLIS: I'll extend that opportunity now to just continue into your closing statement. Does that work?

ANTHONY BROWN: Thank you.

And empower the secretary of disability not just to be in the office and talking about how we're administering specific programs or services for Marylanders with disabilities. I need my disability secretary and/or his or her designee to be at the table when I'm talking to my transportation secretary, my housing secretary, my education secretary. This is a coordinating agency that needs to be empowered to look across government to find the challenges and the opportunities to provide greater and more effective services and supports to Marylanders with disabilities. And that's my pledge.

Look, I know many of us in this room can remember a time not so long ago when people with disabilities faced discrimination each and every day of their lives, a time when treatment meant segregation and economic marginalization, a time when lack of accommodations kept too many Marylanders from taking public transportation, getting around our neighborhoods or being hired for a job that they were qualified for.

Today I do believe we live in a better and more fair society. Maryland is a great place to live and work. We're a great state because we believe and we continue to believe in a set of simple shared values, that all Marylanders deserve dignity and respect, that every Marylander is a productive member of our community, and every Marylander deserves to be able to be educated and live and work here. My commitment to you is that we will do that in partnership, using the resources we have available, using the best technologies and talent at our disposal so that we can build a better Maryland for more Marylanders regardless of where your family is from, where your family lives, and what ability you have to make a contribution to the greatness that is Maryland.

Thanks for giving me an opportunity to come by this afternoon. I really appreciate be it.

(Applause.)

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. Let me remind you, if there are other questions that you've submitted, those questions will be submitted to the candidates and they will have a week or two to respond and we will post them on the Maryland Disabilities Forum's website. So please know that even though I'm only asking 7 of the audience questions, we will get to all of them in time.

All right. It's now time to hear from Mr. Boyd Rutherford, who is representing the republican gubernatorial candidate Larry Hogan. Please join me on the stage.

(Applause.)

BOYD RUTHERFORD: On behalf of Larry Hogan, I am Boyd Rutherford, and I thank you for inviting us today and giving me the opportunity to address the forum.

MICHAEL BULLIS: Before you go, I got in trouble last time because I didn't explain the rules. So you have up to 4 minutes for an opening statement. And then we will be asking a series of questions, which you have 90 seconds to respond to.

So now, my apology for interrupting you. Go ahead.

BOYD RUTHERFORD: No apology necessary. I just stated who I was.

As many of you may know, our campaign is primarily focused on jobs and opportunities for Marylanders. We are in a situation where we need job growth, we need greater opportunities for all Marylanders. We're a state that is in a crossroads. We have an unemployment rate currently that is higher than the national average, which virtually never happens in this state because of so many federal and state workers that we have. We're number three in terms of foreclosures in the state. Any of the folks who may live in Baltimore City have seen how many vacant houses we have there. And I'll talk a little bit about that later.

This election is really based on the economy and improving the job situation for all Marylanders. And that's what Larry Hogan and I are looking to do.

Over the past 7 and a half years, we've experienced a number of tax increases, 40 to be exact, that have taken on average \$400 a month out of the average family's paycheck. So it's not just your take home pay that has been affected. The very core of our society has been weakened, which includes the families. You can't have a vibrant economy without a good wonderful education system. In many ways, Maryland has a wonderful education system. Some counties are very good. But we also have some struggling schools out there.

One of the things that is often touted that makes Maryland high ranked as far as education is concerned is national testing. However, the state has been criticized by the Department of Education, U.S. Department of Education, because we've excluded more English learning students as well as students with disabilities from the state

assessment test. And while other states are addressing that deficiency, Maryland has been moving in the wrong direction.

Now, that is something Larry and I, Larry Hogan and I, feel is unacceptable. And we're not going to allow that to continue where you can cherry pick what students are going to take the test and which students will not take those tests. The percentage is extremely high, and we're not going to allow that to continue.

The Developmental Disabilities Administration has been sanctioned in audits where they have not been providing funding the way they should have been, in the tune of \$25 million in the recent audit, as well as Medicaid funding not provided as well. Those are things that we would look to address immediately, particularly where the legislative audits have found these deficiencies.

Now, I was just recently talking to a mother of a teenaged child who has disabilities, and she pointed out concerns about the education system. And so that's something that we're going to listen to not only you, the organizations, but the individuals who raise these concerns with us. And I want to very quickly close my opening statement by pointing out that I know Chris Cox, the first secretary of the department of disabilities. We worked together in terms of trying to ensure that there was access to jobs, facilities, transportation, and the like for all Marylanders and particularly those with disabilities. Thank you.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. Now we have six questions that are primarily focused around the six principles of the Maryland Disabilities Forum. The first question deals with community integration. Marylander with disabilities, regardless of type of disability, have the same aspirations as anyone else. We want to live, shop, work, attend school, worship, vote, and rec create in an integrated setting in our community. Marylanders with disabilities do not want to be forced into institutional settings, including nursing homes and other congregate residences that deny us the opportunity for full community participation.

My question is, if elected governor, what are the top three actions you would take to advance opportunities for people with all types of disabilities to live and participate in integrated community settings? Please be specific.

BOYD RUTHERFORD: Well, as best as we can, we'll look at whatever regulations, particularly on the state level, that may serve as barriers to individuals with disabilities and housing options. And that may include building codes, on a state level, working with the local jurisdictions with regard to how they handle such situations.

There's often a concern with regard to group homes and group homes being clustered in just one or more communities. And so we would want to, again, work with the local officials and planning and zoning to make sure that it's not -- you're not just first of all clustering people in one community, but like you said, allowing people to purchase or

rent in diverse communities that are integrated into the community and not necessarily segregated.

Beyond that, I think that there's certain things we can do with developers as far as tax policies are concerned that they can set aside units for individuals with disabilities, and that may go to the affordability question as well, that they can set aside these units which we do in certain cases for those in poverty or near the poverty line.

MICHAEL BULLIS: The second question deals with housing. People with disabilities need accessible, affordable, and integrated housing throughout Maryland, and there is simply not enough of it. Marylanders with disabilities want to live as independently as possible and want to live in the same diversity of housing types and neighborhoods as everyone else.

If elected governor, how would you address the critical shortage of needed accessible, affordable, and integrated housing for Marylanders with disabilities?

BOYD RUTHERFORD: I think as I mentioned before, I think we can work with developers in our tax code to provide incentives for developers of new projects or redevelopment to provide housing assistance designated for individuals with disabilities.

The second area and something to think about, I mentioned for those who may be in Baltimore City or in some other locales that have a high vacancy rate, one of the things we talked about, Larry Hogan and I have talked about, and we've talked about it with the community, is pilot programs to try to get some of this housing stock back into productive use. And through working with both the Department of Housing and Community Development on the state level and local Baltimore City, Department of Housing and Community Development, I think there's some pilot programs that we can do that go back to what once they did, the dollar housing, that can be provided, but then the financing can be done in a way that the loan is based on the repaired value of the property, and do that in a way that ensures that disabled personnel can have access to that housing as well.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. Marylanders with disabilities are experiencing unemployment rate that is many times higher than that of nondisabled people. No doubt, progress has been made over the years, but with so many people with disabilities excluded from the workplace, much more needs to be done. What specific actions would you take as governor to increase employment opportunities and the overall employment rate of Marylanders with disabilities?

BOYD RUTHERFORD: Well, I think one of the first things we can do is we can look at state employment in terms of how we go about recruiting and hiring individuals for state jobs. I wouldn't mind seeing and looking to explore whether we can set goals in terms of our employment, when we're hiring and goals for the agencies with regard to hiring people with disabilities. I think that is first and an immediate step that can be taken.

Again, I believe there currently are some tax incentives that may be out there with regard to hiring individuals with disabilities. We can look at that in terms of the federal side of it, but also possibly including that on the state side, that encourages individuals or encourages businesses to look to hire individuals with disabilities.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. Next we're going to move to transportation. When it comes to providing services for people with disabilities, Maryland's current transportation system is woefully inadequate. Both in overall capacity and dependability. Especially as it relates to timeliness.

For example, if you live in Montgomery County, you would not be able to come to this event today by public transportation.

If you're elected governor, how would you address both the shortage and lack of dependability in transportation services for Marylanders with disabilities?

BOYD RUTHERFORD: You give a very good example in terms of Montgomery County to Baltimore. I would imagine if you could get access to the metro or to a bus that takes you downtown to Union Station, then you take a MARC train up here, so about a 4 hour one way trip. You're right. It is difficult and woefully inadequate. There was mention, and we talked about it in the state generally, the red line. I am not a fan of the red line. I'll be the first or second to say that. I would prefer to see a rapid bus transit, because I believe that you have the ability to be flexible with that rather than fixed rail. But at the same time, I think there are some things that we could do with the transit and coordinating with let's say the Washington metropolitan metro as well as MTA which is primarily in Baltimore City, but also the local transit operations. Howard County has Howard County transit. And I think there's a need for better coordination between these different transportation entities. And particularly I would like to see the rapid bus and possibly van service that is flexible enough that it could be individualized to get individuals to and fro. Thank you.

MICHAEL BULLIS: Now we move to healthcare. Accessible and affordable healthcare is important to everyone. For people with disabilities not having adequate access to healthcare becomes a barrier to independent living, and in some cases escalates into becoming a matter of life and death. Even when some coverage is available, the lack of coverage for critical services such as mental health counseling and durable medical equipment creates unnecessary suffering. How would you address this critical need for adequate and affordable accessible healthcare for people with disabilities?

BOYD RUTHERFORD: One of the issues we have to see in how we continue to implement the Affordable Care Act to see how that affects the actual cost of the delivery of healthcare for all Marylanders, not just individuals with disabilities. And we need to make sure that it is available, that healthcare is available, to everyone. And part of the implementation, as was mentioned before, has not gone very well. We need to make sure that individuals have opportunities and they have choice in terms of their providers.

One of the things we have to look at closely is Medicaid funding and how that affects the state, because it is a state project. And a lot of the funding there has been decreased over the years and puts particular strain on providers and in many cases providers start to pull out of the system. So we would have to explore that further. I would rely on your community, this community, to help us through that process. I am not going to have the answers to every question that comes up. But we need to -- I'm willing to sit down and listen to the concerns and come up with creative ways to address those issues.

MICHAEL BULLIS: Very well.

Now we would like to turn the focus to education. And in particular, integrated and well supported educational services. From a policy perspective, access to integrated education has been the accepted standard for children and young adults with disabilities for a very long time. Yet too often it is provided in a manner that puts students with disabilities in integrated classrooms without the necessary complement of supports to achieve successful learning. What will you do to ensure both an integrated educational experience and access to needed supports for students with disabilities?

BOYD RUTHERFORD: Well, we need to make sure that all students have access to quality education. As you all know, education is largely handled at the local level, county and city level. But each jurisdiction comes to the state asking for money, asking for support for their education needs, both in terms of the school construction but as well as just support for K-12 education.

We can ask and use the budget to encourage, to push, to carrot and stick approach to getting them to address the issues that are of a particular concern. I had three children go through K-12, and I know in some cases the attempts at integration of students in all the classes have not worked very well. In many cases, those students that are being put into the general class are not getting the assistance that they could use, particularly from a technology standpoint, to be able to really function in a competitive way in those classrooms. So that is, again, something that we want to work with the community, the parents in particular, to understand all of the issues involved. And like I said, a parent just this week contacted me with regard to some concerns about the educational system and how the school in her area was not really addressing her child's needs.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. Now we go to audience questions. This first question has to do with the workforce investment opportunity act passed by Congress this summer. How would you implement WIOA in Maryland?

BOYD RUTHERFORD: Again, working with all the stakeholders the one thing I would like to really explore in terms of best practices, I had the opportunity and the pleasure and honor of working at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. I was an assistant secretary for administration there. And one of the programs that Ag this is a center called the target center, which had technology and used technology to assist those who have disabilities meet their job functions. And I would like to take a closer look at the

target center, who reported to me at that time, and look at some of the technologies that they were bringing to support the federal workers there at USDA who had various disabilities and providing that technology. They tested the technology, they brought individuals in to work with the technology, and where we needed to accommodate someone, to make sure that technology was pushed into the workplace.

So I would want to look at what the federal government has done on that side, what other states may have done, as well as talk to parents and other stakeholders with regard to what those needs are to fully implement that initiative.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. Next question comes from a couple of different audience members: Do you embrace the Olmstead decision passed by the Supreme Court for all people with disabilities, and to the extent that you do, what is your action plan to actualize that vision?

BOYD RUTHERFORD: Well, we need to do a good job and better job in terms of integrating individuals in the community and not just trying to institutionalize. And in a meeting that I had I believe it was last week, may have been the week before -- when you're on campaign, all the dates start running together. I met with a group in Montgomery County, and one of the things that they presented was there's a need for, I guess it's a -- there's a gap between when someone comes out of an institution and they're going to be placed back in the community, there may need to be some transitional housing, I'll call it, or transition area where it's not such a shock for individuals put back into the community but they need some period of time in between. And so I would want to look at how we could do that as part of this implementation. Again, working with families and various stakeholders with regard to how we can fully address this particular issue.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. This next question comes from Patty Daily. What is your plan to increase the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act funding for Maryland public schools so that all students with disabilities meet or exceed outcomes?

BOYD RUTHERFORD: Well, as you all know, we are in a tough budget situation right now. Despite all of the tax increases over the last several years, we still have what is called a structural deficit. The economy has not been recovering, so the tax receipts, according to the comptroller, are not what the projections were. So it's very difficult to assure 100% funding of anything.

However, what we can do, and as mentioned before, there still will be funding for the localities and for education, and we can encourage as well as mandate that the localities put priorities in areas of particular need. And where you have gaps in the educational structure. But it's very difficult for me to sit here now and promise 100% funding on anything, particularly in the first year. We have to get the economy moving so our tax receipts come in and so that we'll have the money to do it. Otherwise we're just digging a bigger hole than what we're already in.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. Next question. In light of the fact that Maryland has a high number of deaf constituents, why haven't you closed captioned your TV ads? Cost is no longer prohibitive.

BOYD RUTHERFORD: That is a very good question, and I'm going to take it back to the campaign. I don't know why we haven't done that. I am not directly involved in the ad process, but that is something that I will take back to the campaign and say, from this point forward, we should be able to do that. I'll go with what you said, that cost should not be an issue here, and so we should be able to do that.

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. What is your plan to ensure that there is 100% funding for the governor's transitioning youth initiative?

BOYD RUTHERFORD: That is not something I can promise. Look, I am not a career politician. I have never run for office before. I look at myself as an operations person. I was going to say this in my closing statements, but what governor to be Larry Hogan and I discussed in terms of the role for the lieutenant governor is that he will serve as a chief executive officer and I will be the chief operating officer. I will make sure that the trains run on time, that the wheels of government work as they're supposed to. My experience in both state, department of general services, general services being the support agency for the other agencies to carry out their mission, was to make sure that they have equipment and services and facilities that they needed to meet their mission. When I was at the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Agriculture is actually larger than the state of Maryland. It has over \$90 billion budget, over 100,000 employees, Foreign Service workers, in every state and territory, and I was responsible for facilities and personnel for those folks and making sure that they had the resources and services they needed to get things done. And that's what I am going to do when I am lieutenant governor in the Hogan-Rutherford administration. I probably didn't directly answer the question. I'm sorry about that.

MICHAEL BULLIS: Do you have anyone on your staff who has a disability?

BOYD RUTHERFORD: When you say staff, I imagine you're talking about the campaign staff. I don't know. We don't track that. And we have people in county operations that I have not met. So I really can't answer that question.

MICHAEL BULLIS: Okay.

BOYD RUTHERFORD: I don't know.

MICHAEL BULLIS: Okay. Now, this question again comes from a couple of different audience members so there's no name here. What are your plans to expand transportation outside of Baltimore City?

BOYD RUTHERFORD: Again, we'll have to work with the local jurisdictions. Baltimore city with the MTA is a state transportation system. And that has a long history that the state runs the transportation in the city of Baltimore. It doesn't do that in any other

jurisdiction. The other jurisdictions tend to have locally run operations. Washington has the metro. There are different regional transportation systems. I think what's really needed is more integration between the locals. I mentioned Howard County transit. The local transportation systems as well as integrating it into MTA and the Washington area and so forth.

Again, I would like to see more rapid bus. I would like to see van service as part of that, to be able to address some of the individual needs. Paratransit is a step in that direction, but I think there are some things we can do to expand it.

We spend a lot of money in transportation. The state takes in a lot of money for transportation. The transportation trust fund is what is used for that purpose. Or it's there for that purpose. The problem is, over the last several years, this was mentioned, everything was cut and there were several billion dollars taken out of that fund. And we have to restore that so we can deliver the services that you need.

MICHAEL BULLIS: Okay. We have completed the questions for Mr. Rutherford. Now, sir, you have up to 3 minutes for your closing statement.

BOYD RUTHERFORD: Okay. I mentioned part of it. And that is, I am not a career politician. I am not going to make promises that I can't keep. Politicians often will come up and tell you what they're going to spend money or on what they're going to do and all these things that they find important and everything is important but nothing gets done.

I tell people all the time, if you want to have something done differently, you have to vote for different people. And what we're going to bring, Larry and I, to the table is we're willing to listen to you, listen to the constituents, listen to individuals, seek out the individuals who are working at the grassroots level on the ground that are dealing with these issues on a day-to-day basis.

I have a particular concern with regard to it mental health issues. I believe there is a stigma out there that needs to be addressed, and it can apply to the greater disabilities community as well. There's a stigma there. There's not enough attention being paid to many of these issues. So as was mentioned to me recently, one in five people will be affected by mental health issues directly or indirectly, and that's something we are going to work on, to address how to get care for adult family members, helping families get care for their adult siblings, children, whatever the case may be, with regard to disabilities. And that is something that we're going to work on, work with some of the federal folks as well, because there are barriers in federal law to some of this as well.

I would like to say that on behalf of Larry Hogan, our campaign, we want your vote. We want you to take a close look at us. We believe we can bring something new to government. I am willing to sit down and talk with you separately in terms of what my experience was at Maryland department of general services. What I found as far as inefficiencies in a lot of departments. I mentioned to you the fact that we're in a tight budget situation, and we seem to always be in a tight budget situation. But part of that

is a lot of money is wasted in these departments. Not just departments that serve your community directly, but many of the departments that serve indirectly as well. There's duplication. And when that is done, when that money is wasted, it means less money available to take care of those important issues that we're talking about today.

So thank you. I appreciate this time. And please continue to enjoy the forum.

(Applause.)

MICHAEL BULLIS: All right. Let's thank Mr. Rutherford.

(Applause.)

All right. Thank you so much.

So we've heard from all three candidates. I want to remind you, please don't forget to vote on November 4. Is it the fourth? Yep. And I want to thank each of you in the audience for attending today's forum. It is your personal attention to the issues, your active involvement in advocacy and in voting that creates the real impact on improving the lives of Marylanders with disabilities. Please remember to vote. It is, again, Tuesday, November 4. Don't forget.

This concludes today's forum. Thank you all very much for what you have done. Please enjoy the rest of your day.

(Applause.)

(Forum ended at 2:55 p.m.)