

JURY SELECTION

We recommend that jury selection be by driver's license listing and/or voter registration. #2001

LABOR STANDARDS

We oppose efforts to change Maryland law to require the payment of overtime wages to farm workers who work less than 60 hours per week. #98 Policy

LAND STEWARDSHIP

Realizing that stewardship of the earth is in the public interest, we support the recognition of agriculture as a proper and environmentally sound use of our land resources.

LAW ENFORCEMENT**Penalties & Confinement**

Due to the rising crime rate among minors and young adults, we propose that penalties such as community service be imposed along with increased fines. Also, inmates of correctional institutions should be required to work to pay for the damage to their victims. We support a program utilizing prison labor in an effort to minimize the tax burden and to further aid in rehabilitation.

While we are concerned with the welfare of individuals who are committed to prison, we also are concerned with the "plush" treatment afforded them while incarcerated. We recommend the down scaling of accommodations afforded by our current prison plans to provide for sanitary living conditions without the amenities afforded the same individuals in society's normal daily living.

We believe there should be harsher penalties for drivers who are convicted for driving while intoxicated or impaired due to drugs or alcohol. We urge mandatory testing for drug use of drivers suspected of driving while "impaired" but who pass the alcohol test. We further urge that the "implied consent" provision that applies to alcohol testing for all Maryland permit holders be extended to include testing for drug use. We believe that motor vehicle laws dealing with drunk drivers or drug impaired drivers should be more strictly enforced. #97

We believe that the State of Maryland should enact legislation providing for a mandatory life sentence without parole, or a death sentence, for violent murder offenses and murder offenses occurring during the illegal transportation and/or distribution of controlled dangerous substances (drugs). #96

We urge the Department of Corrections to return prisoners to their county of origin after the completion of their sentence before their release.

We support legislation that would prevent elected officials from holding office if convicted of a crime or of misconduct in office and from receiving pensions or benefits pertaining to the office that they held.

Judicial Process

We recommend that the defendants be brought to a speedy trial and if convicted, given a sentence sufficient to discourage further crimes. We support consistency in judicial sentencing for all.

We urge the Maryland Legislature to enact legislation that would change the insanity defense of "innocent by reason of insanity" to "guilty, but insane."

Investigation of Crimes

We urge local, county and state law enforcement agencies to communicate between jurisdictions and cooperate with each other when investigating thefts of personal property. #97

We urge more participation in the two-phase program of Operation Identification, and self-help programs to prevent or deter rural crime.

We urge all law enforcement agencies to assist farmers in identifying motorists who damage property so those motorists can be assessed for the damages.

Constitutional Rights

We oppose any legislation that would further restrict the purchase and ownership by law-abiding citizens of firearms, handgun, longarm, autoloader or manual loader. Furthermore, we are opposed to any unreasonable restrictions or taxation of ammunition.

LEAD POISONING PREVENTION PROGRAM

We recommend changes in the Maryland lead paint law to reduce the impact of this law and its regulations on Maryland's rural property owners. #97

LEGAL AID

We believe that Legal Aid should not be supported by public monies.

LIVESTOCK AND POULTRY

When there are known cases of Avian influenza and Exotic New Castle disease in neighboring states, the Department of Agriculture should consider quarantining interstate movement of live fowl. Neighboring states should be encouraged to organize a "disease attack" team to prevent the spread of the disease.

Government officials and inspectors should be required to use stringent biosecurity practices at all times when visiting farms. #2001

We recommend that wild and domestic animals capable of transmitting rabies be monitored. The Departments of Health, Agriculture, and Natural Resources should study methods of adequate control and those departments should create proper procedures to eradicate the disease. We also support the allocation of more funds (to be dedicated) for research for the elimination of rabies.

We support additional basic immunology research to improve the understanding of the Animal and Poultry health with less dependence on vaccines and medicines.

We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture, office of Animal Health to appoint a regional task force to investigate the problem and develop solutions for dead farm animal disposal. #2000

We oppose any moratorium on poultry house construction. #97

Any regulations that are developed to regulate livestock, poultry or aquaculture needs to be based on proven research and documented scientific data with careful consideration of the economic impact and must not create regional competitive disadvantages. #97

We oppose co-permitting of the integrators and the livestock and poultry growers. #2000

LOCAL PROJECTS - STATE FUNDING

We support state funding for needed county agricultural centers. #2000

MOSQUITO CONTROL

We recognize the value of mosquito control to the state's citizens. We support the appropriation of the funds required to adequately support and expand the program as necessary, including the purchase of needed equipment. #96

NONTIDAL WETLANDS

We support the reasonable protection of the national Nontidal wetlands. We oppose a strict preservationist ideology that does not take into consideration the value of wetlands in relationship to proposed actions.

We oppose the present definition of Nontidal wetlands as set forth in the 1989 "Federal Manual for Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands." This definition would designate many acres of marginal wetlands that possess minimal wetlands values. It would also include many acres of cropland that has been farmed historically.

We support the revision of the "Federal Manual for Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands" to exclude: (1) cropland that was farmed prior to the enactment of any laws dealing with the regulation (2) areas with woody or natural vegetation that are not ponded for more than fifteen consecutive days during some part of the growing season.

This definition should also be used for any existing or proposed state legislation. It is imperative that the Army Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service review the definition of Nontidal wetlands and evaluate its implications on agriculture. Furthermore, it is our belief that all three of the criteria should exist before land is considered a wetland and we hope the manual will be amended accordingly.

We support the designation of the Natural Resource Conservation Service as the lead agency for the development of uniform wetlands delineation across all governmental agencies.

Agriculture needs to be exempt from mitigation for agricultural activities where the farmer has, and is carrying on good agricultural practices.

We recommend that when wetlands are identified, property owners must be notified and an appeal or review process be developed.

The denial of a permit to alter wetlands, by either federal or state government, should be deemed "the taking of private property" and the landowner should be "justly compensated."

The state should not be more stringent than the federal regulations concerning agriculture in its relationship to Nontidal wetlands.

We recommend that public agencies be held completely responsible for wetlands that they create due to water drainage and/or the re-routing of water as a result of construction of public facilities such as roads, schools, storm water management ponds, parking lots, etc. Cost of litigation to protect the landowner should be borne by the public agency involved.

We urge local control of regulations and permits limiting the use of wetlands. #96

With all the aforementioned problems, the precise definition of Nontidal wetlands has not been spelled out; maps delineating the boundaries of Nontidal wetlands have not been made available; and the economic impact on agriculture and forest land has not been addressed. We recommend that Maryland wetland mitigation legislation be reviewed by the General Assembly for waste and ineffectiveness.

NOTICE OF SECURITY INTEREST - BUYER OF FARM PRODUCTS

Currently a buyer of farm products does not have sufficient notice of outstanding liens to protect him from claims of unknown lien holders against the products he purchased.

Certain lenders (particularly Farmer's Home Administration) have gone back several years and collected a second time from the buyer. Therefore, we urge the state to enact legislation to eliminate the farm products exemption under the uniform commercial code. We urge all segments of the agricultural industry, including producers, buyers and lenders, to work together on this issue.

NOXIOUS WEEDS**Noxious Weed List**

We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to have phragmites, asiatic tearthumb, kudzu, and multi-flora rose placed on the noxious weed list. #99

Compliance on Government-Owned Land

We insist that local, county, state, and federal governments abide by the noxious weed control laws on lands owned or controlled by them. #2000

Enforcement

We urge the Maryland Department of Agriculture to enforce the law pertaining to the control of noxious weeds with court action when necessary. We urge county governments, county weed control committees and other agricultural organizations to cooperate with MDA's efforts to maintain a viable noxious weed control program.

We recommend that county weed control committees, along with county coordinators make every possible effort to cooperate with farmers and/or land owners in good faith, who are making any reasonable effort to control noxious weeds in crop and non crop land. Furthermore, it must be accepted by the enforcement personnel that 100% control of noxious weeds in crop or non crop land is not realistically achievable by any or all of the control methods outlined by the Maryland Noxious Weed Law, which are as follows: "mowing, spraying and cultivation." We would emphasize that all persons be treated equally under the noxious weed law; but would urge that consideration be given for geographical differences throughout the state that may prohibit certain control practices from being successfully implemented on a given parcel of land.