



NEA Fund for Children and Public Education
Political Action Committee of the
National Education Association

2024 U.S. Senate Candidate Questionnaire

David Trone

Candidate name

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8/11/2023

Candidate signature

Date

*Candidates: Questionnaire information and responses are for INTERNAL USE ONLY. Please clearly indicate your response to each of the questions. Clarifications, explanations and other information may be attached, but please be certain to make reference to the corresponding

question. Please return your completed and signed questionnaire to the Maryland State Education Association, c/o Executive Director Sean Johnson at sejohnson@mseanea.org.

Section A. Opportunity Begins with Great Public Schools for Every Student

Ensuring Every Student Has the Opportunity to Learn

1. Do you support increasing Title I funding with the goal of fully funding it?
 yes no
2. Do you support increasing Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funding?
 yes no
3. Do you support mandatory full funding at the promised 40 percent level for IDEA?
 yes no
4. Do you support federal funding to modernize and improve public school buildings and facilities?
 yes no
5. Do you support steadily increasing federal investment in Community Schools to meet demand and increase expansion of this model?
 yes no
6. Do you support increasing federal investments to help states expand public high-quality prekindergarten programs and to ensure all children have access to full-day kindergarten?
 yes no
7. Do you support increased federal investments in and commitment to; Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian education?
 yes no
8. Do you support increasing funding for high-quality career and technical education programs that help high school and post-secondary students attain credentials, degrees, and skills to secure in-demand jobs and occupations?
 yes no
9. Do you support an honest and holistic education for students, with adequate resources that help them better understand the lives, cultures, and experiences of different people regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender expression, religion, or heritage?
 yes no

Health, Wellness, and Safety

10. Please indicate which of the following you support in regards to Medicaid. (Select all that apply.)

- Increasing funding and federal match for Medicaid
- Converting Medicaid to a block grant
- Instituting per capita caps on Medicaid funding
- None of the above

11. Do you support providing universal healthy school meals for all students, regardless of their families' ability to pay? yes no

12. Do you support ensuring healthy nutrition standards for school meals and snacks, such as the standards outlined in the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act? yes no

13. Do you oppose any cuts or attempts to block grant funding for school meals, other child nutrition programs, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)? yes no

14. Which approaches to preventing gun violence and improvements to safety preparedness in schools do you support? (Select all that apply)

- Universal background checks for guns bought in stores, online, or at gun shows
- Extending the initial background check review period from 3 to 10 days
- Banning assault-style weapons, high-capacity magazines, and bump stocks
- Prohibition on federal funding to purchase firearms and firearms training for educators
- Preserving the Gun-Free School Zones Act
- None of the above

15. Do you support increasing funding for and access to school-based mental health services offered to students by licensed professionals? yes no

16. Do you support legislation to protect students' personally identifiable information and ensure students' data privacy? yes no

Respect for the Profession

17. Which approaches to teacher preparation programs do you support? (Select all that apply)

- Providing incentives for teacher preparation programs to include comprehensive "residencies" serving as clinical practice of at least a year in which experienced teachers provide guidance to teacher candidates and work to develop the skills to be profession-ready upon entering the classroom as the teacher of record
- Providing supports for new teachers, including mentoring by experienced teachers

Providing incentives for teacher preparation programs to recruit and retain teacher candidates, especially from communities of color and other underrepresented groups, including male teachers, to expand diversity in the teaching workforce
 None of the above

18. Which approaches to raising educator salaries, as a means of improving teacher recruitment and retention, do you support? (Select all that apply)

Establishing a national minimum salary for first-year teachers
 Using federal funds for raising teacher salaries
 Federal-state partnerships to raise teacher salaries
 Creating grants to support Local Education Agencies or State Education Agencies in raising teacher salaries
 None of the above

19. Do you support measures that would ensure educators have access to mental health resources?

yes no

20. Do you support federal funding for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which offers valuable professional development and high standards for educators to further their practice? yes no

21. Do you support providing funding that can go toward professional development for education support professionals and specialized instructional support professionals?

yes no

22. Do you believe that each educator has the right to, within generally accepted professional and content standards, exercise their professional judgment in designing age-appropriate lessons, providing resources, and encouraging discussions that offer an accurate, honest, and high-quality education? yes no

23. Do you support preventing federal government interference or intrusion in higher education, so that educators and faculty can embrace academic freedom and pursue their research without political encroachment? yes no

Accountability for All Public Schools

24. Do you support holding charter schools, including online charter schools and for-profit charters, to the same standards of transparency (i.e. financial, holding public board meetings, and reporting that includes the preservation of historical data) as all public schools? yes no

25. Do you support holding charter schools, including online charter schools and for-profit charters, to the same accountability standards/requirements (i.e. civil rights, employment, health, labor, safety, educator qualifications) as all public schools? yes no

26. Do you support removing the federal barriers that deter states from replacing standardized tests with new innovative types of assessment for federal accountability purposes? yes no

27. Do you support reducing the frequency and number of federally mandated statewide standardized tests in state accountability systems? yes no

28. Do you support expanding flexibility in statewide accountability systems that would allow for the inclusion and weighting of a diverse array of indicators that can provide a more well-rounded picture of school quality (such as teacher retention, access to advanced coursework, access to school counselors and nurses, and access to a personal learning device)? yes no

School Vouchers and Related Privatization Schemes

29. Please indicate whether you support the following: (Select all that apply)

Private school vouchers

Education savings accounts for K-12 students

Tuition tax credits for K-12 students

529 savings plans for K-12 private school tuition or home schooling

None of the above

30. Do you support private school vouchers for any of these specific populations of students? (Select all that apply)

Students from military families

Students who attend Bureau of Indian Education schools

Students who reside in Washington, D.C.

Students with disabilities

Students who have been bullied or harassed

Students who have been placed in foster care

None of the above

Section B: Opportunity Requires an Economy that Works for America's Middle Class

Creating a Fair Economy

31. Do you support a living wage for public-school educators and other public employees that includes increasing the federal minimum wage to at least \$15 per hour by 2030, with future wage determinations based on the increase in the median hourly wage for all employees? yes no

32. Please indicate which changes to the U.S. tax code you support in order to ensure we have the revenue needed to make critical investments in our students and communities. (Select all that apply)

Reducing corporate tax rates

Increasing corporate tax rates

Closing corporate tax loopholes

Reducing high-income individual's tax rate

Increasing high-income individual's tax rate

Repealing the cap on state and local tax (SALT) deductions

No change

Making College More Affordable for Everyone

33. Do you support federal reinvestment in higher education to make college more affordable and shift the cost burden away from students and their families?

yes no

34. Do you support tuition-free community college? yes no

35. Do you support broad-based student loan debt cancellation to invigorate the economy and narrow the racial wealth gap? yes no

36. Do you support legislation allowing federal student loans to be refinanced—like mortgages—when interest rates decline? yes no

37. Do you support legislation allowing all federal student loans to be discharged during bankruptcy? yes no

38. Which of these do you support regarding the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) and Teacher Loan Forgiveness (TLF) programs?

Preserving PSLF and TLF

Improving both PSLF and TLF to ensure borrowers are not denied their benefits due to loopholes and flawed implementation by the U.S. Department of Education
 Neither of these

39. Do you support increasing institutional aid programs under Title III and Title V that provide aid specifically to Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Asian-Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions, and other Minority-Serving Institutions? yes no

40. Please indicate which changes to the Pell Grant award you would support. (Select all that apply)

Expanding the maximum award to keep pace with annual cost of living increases
 Decreasing the maximum Pell Grant award
 No change

41. Please indicate which solutions for simplified student loan repayment plans you support. (Select all that apply)

Waiving additional interest, as long as the borrower continues to make payments
 Making plans available to all borrowers, regardless of the type of federal student loan they hold
 Factoring discretionary income accurately so that it is easier for borrowers to manage and make monthly payments
 Ensuring payments count toward achieving Public Service Loan Forgiveness, regardless of the type of repayment plan
 None of the above

Employees' Rights and Benefits

42. Do you believe all public sector employees should have the right to bargain collectively? yes no

43. Do you support due process rights for all education employees? yes no

44. Do you support protecting people from being denied health insurance coverage or being charged more for coverage because of pre-existing medical conditions?

yes no

45. Do you support providing strong paid leave provisions for all American workers?

yes no

46. Do you support modifying the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and offering paid leave protections for low-wage workers who do not meet the 1,250-hour threshold currently

needed for FMLA benefits because their position/job classification restricts the number of hours they work? yes no

47. Do you support maintaining the tax exclusion for employer-sponsored health coverage? yes no

Retirement Security

48. Do you support eliminating or reforming the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision? yes no

49. Do you support raising the Social Security payroll tax cap? yes no

50. Which approaches to Medicare policy and funding do you support? (Select all that apply)

Raising the Medicare eligibility age to 67

Converting Medicare to a voucher system, also referred to as premium support

Means testing Medicare benefits eligibility

Maintaining at least the current level of benefits for recipients

None of the above

51. Do you support the deferral of income tax on contributions to a pension plan? yes no

Section C: Opportunity for All Requires a Democracy that Works for All

Human and Civil Rights

52. Which approaches to improving school climate and discipline practices do you support?

Increasing funding and access to school-based mental health, including the full complement of specialized instructional support staff (i.e. counselors and nurses) and education support professionals (i.e., health and student services staff)

Increasing funding and/or staff support to implement restorative practices in schools

Increasing funding and/or staff to implement trauma-informed services and age-appropriate responses

None of the above

53. Which approaches in police reform do you support to address systemic racism in the justice system?

Prohibiting law enforcement agencies from profiling based on race, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, or other characteristics

Banning physical maneuvers like chokeholds that apply pressure which slows, restricts, or stops blood flow or oxygen to the brain

Mandating dashboard and body cameras for federal law enforcement and requiring state and local law enforcement to use available funds to purchase body cameras

Eliminating the Department of Defense's (DoD) 1033 program which provides excess DoD supplies and equipment to state, county, and local law enforcement, including school-based police agencies and departments

Removing law enforcement involvement from the school discipline process to reduce unwarranted school-based arrests and referrals of students to the criminal system

None of the above

54. Do you support increased funding for the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights so it will have the necessary resources to ensure timely action and enforcement to secure equal education access for all students through extensive data collection, research, investigation, and enforcement of both individual and systemic civil rights complaints and demonstrated problems in our nation's schools?

yes no

55. Do you support amending the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to include a ban on discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and sex in the areas of public accommodation, such as education, employment, housing and public spaces?

yes no

56. Do you support federal legislation that provides a pathway to citizenship for undocumented people, including current DACA recipients, those eligible to apply for DACA, and other immigrant youth?

yes no

57. Do you believe your first and foremost duty is to uphold the U.S. Constitution, and to support future election outcomes that have been certified by proper state authorities, as adjudicated by the courts according to the process set forth by the Constitution and federal law, regardless of whether it benefits you or your party?

yes no

58. Which of the following do you support in an effort to protect voting rights and facilitate greater civic participation? (Select all that apply)

Automatic voter registration

Same-day voter registration

Early voting

Restoration of voting rights for individuals who have completed felony sentences

Restoration of the Voting Rights Act

Prohibition on purges of voter rolls

Ensuring that discriminatory voter ID requirements do not prevent Americans from exercising their right to vote

Enhancing federal support for voting system security and increasing oversight of election vendors

Transparency in funding sources for federal elections

Section D: Short Answer

59. Do you believe the federal government has a role in fostering educational excellence and equal access for all public school students, regardless of race, Zip code, family income, special needs, language, and other factors? yes no

If yes, please provide a short answer describing what you believe that role should be. If no, please provide a short answer describing why you believe the federal government should not play a role in public education.

Everyone deserves the right to a quality public education. As we're seeing today, some states are becoming more and more unsupportive of public education, supporting expansion of private school vouchers, charter schools with little or no oversight and rolling back standards for homeschooling.

A quality education shouldn't depend on the state you live in, or your property values, and the federal government has a responsibility to fill in the gaps when state and local governments refuse.

60. What is your personal background or experience with public schools?

As the son of a teacher, I have always fought to increase support for students & teachers — working to close the achievement gap and ensuring that all Maryland students have the resources they need to thrive.

With my experience on the Education and Labor Committee and the Appropriations Committee, I have successfully pushed expansion of broadband access, Pell grants, and school-based mental health programs.

I am most proud to lead the TRUE EQUITY Act, legislation to match the recommendations of Maryland's Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (Kirwan Commission), and provide a stronger federal partnership to ensure equity and eliminate achievement gaps. On the Appropriations Committee, I have pushed for additional resources to our education system, and championed critical investments in education, and to ensure that money flows to communities and classrooms most in need. In fact, the Fiscal Year 2023 omnibus spending bill appropriated an additional \$2.4 billion for K-12 education, above the previous year.

In the Senate, I will continue to advocate for early childhood education; high-quality, diverse, and well-resourced teachers and leaders; and fully funding the needs of all our children.

61. If elected/re-elected, how will you work consistently with NEA and the state affiliate for accountability and relationship-building?

Frequent communication and collaboration form the foundation of all of my work — and there is no more important work than preparing our children for their future.

To that end, I am committed to working hand in hand with NEA and MSEA as we work to ensure that our educators and students are best positioned to succeed. I will advocate side by side at the state and federal level to ensure that our teachers have the resources they need, highlight the importance of educators' input on policy making, and ensure that our teachers always have a seat at the table. During my time in Congress, I have held roundtables with teachers, and those conversations directly resulted in legislation I introduced — including a resolution to address teacher and educator mental health coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Supporting and working with our teachers, as I have practiced since I had the honor of being elected to Congress, means my staff and I are always available to help and to advocate for our students and our teachers. It means always picking up the phone, showing up at an event or a picket line, and putting our money where our mouth is when it comes to federal legislation. It means listening, so that the people with the expertise and lived experience in education inform my work.

I look forward to continuing to build our relationship, learning from you, and serving as your champion in the U.S. Senate.

62. What would your criteria be for considering confirmation of the president's nominee for Secretary of Education? What stakeholders would you consult and what knowledge, experience, and expertise would you look for?

Any Secretary of Education must have experience in public education and oppose all efforts to undermine it. They must support our students and our teachers, and explicitly support the importance of collective bargaining for our educators and education professionals.

I would also consult NEA and the Maryland teacher's unions and only confirm someone with a pro-union record.

I would support a candidate that reflects our shared goals of diversity and equity in leadership positions.

I would oppose any nominee who is in favor of voucher programs or removing accountability and transparency measures for charter schools.

63. What criteria would you use to decide whether or not to support nominees to federal courts and to the Supreme Court of the United States?

- a. Who or what types of stakeholders will you rely upon to inform your decision and what information about potential nominees will be most important to you?
- b. With regard to selection criteria for a Supreme Court justice, what qualifications, knowledge, viewpoints, and experiences do you consider essential for this position?

The federal court system, and especially the Supreme Court, is at a vital crossroads — between disastrous rulings on voting rights, the Janus decision, climate change, abortion, LGBTQI+ issues, and affirmative action — courts have rolled back decades of precedent and eroded public trust.

These decisions come as the Supreme Court is embroiled in a series of scandals, revealing that Justices Thomas and Alito accepted lavish trips from GOP mega-donors.

Judicial nominees must be qualified, with a detailed understanding of the law, they must have the wisdom to apply the Constitution to the challenges of our time, and they must understand the importance their decisions make in the lives of everyday Maryland families.

Most crucially, any nominee I support must understand that the courts have a responsibility to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed to all people, not just the privileged few.

Strength of character, a record of accomplishment, and extraordinary legal acumen are important traits for any judicial nominee — however we must also look outside the traditional pool of candidates. We must actively seek out those with different backgrounds, life experiences, and perspectives.

It is my responsibility to make sure that all voices are heard in the halls of the Congress. So while I will always consult colleagues, legal experts, and those who interacted with the nominee in their professional life, I also will make sure to solicit feedback from stakeholders on the opposing side of the nominee and those whose issues stand to come before that nominee, upon their confirmation.

Judicial confirmations are one of most important tasks granted to the Senate, and the most far-reaching in its impact on Maryland. Given that importance, I am committed to engaging with a broad spectrum of stakeholders — focusing on those who are too-often ignored during the nomination process.

In particular, given the importance of the courts to ensuring our children receive a quality education, I look forward to discussing potential nominees with NEA & MSEA, and ensuring their views are carried forward during any confirmation debate.

It is important to me that a Supreme Court Justice understands the systemic issues facing historically disadvantaged groups and has the record to back it up. Any Supreme Court Justice should understand the unfairness in our current judicial system and be unafraid to set new precedents.

64. What would your criteria be for considering presidential cabinet nominees in general, and what would your process be for vetting nominees' qualifications, expertise, and position on issues?

Any cabinet nominee must be an expert in their field with extensive experience. Their record and work history must show that they value diverse viewpoints and inclusion.

As with court nominees, we must look outside traditional sources of candidates, and ensure that nominees understand the challenges faced by Maryland families.

We will have a robust vetting process, starting with a thorough review of materials supplied by the Administration, but supplemented with independent research into the nominees' record.

This will include interviewing supporters and, where appropriate, those who are opposed to the nominee. We will proactively seek out independent verification of nominees' fitness for the position and rely on trusted stakeholders who understand the position and share our values to offer their evaluations.

We will meet cabinet nominees one on one, give them a chance to make their case and address their concerns and, if necessary, conduct multiple interviews to ensure that a given candidate is the best person to serve the needs of our state and our nation.

Additional Background on Rep. Trone's Record Of Supporting Teachers & Students

David has always stood alongside educators and working people, especially as they face unprecedented challenges. He's incredibly proud to have a 100% rating from the AFL-CIO, an A rating from the NEA, and has been a teacher-recommended candidate throughout each of his campaigns for the 6th District.

The son of a public school teacher, David Trone learned the value of education from a very young age. While completing his graduate studies at the Wharton School of Business on student loans, David built a business from the ground up, starting with one small store and growing it to become a nationwide retailer with over 12,000 employees in 28 states.

His commitment to education isn't just reflected in his record in Congress. David has made his commitment to education central to his business success, investing in his team members by

offering them free college tuition and GED programs and empowering them to build a better future for themselves.

A past member of the House Education and Workforce Committee and a current member of the Appropriations Committee, David has been a champion for educators and students throughout his time in Congress. Earlier this year, he introduced the TRUE EQUITY Act, which will fund an additional \$1.4 billion in federal grants for states and local communities to improve education systems. On the Appropriations Committee, he's fought for billions in funding for schools and early childhood education as well as historic investments in Title I grants and special education programs.

David has been especially focused on youth mental health, championing the funding included in the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, signed into law last year, to include \$3 billion for expanding school counselors, social workers, and psychologists; training school-based mental health service providers; training teachers and educators on mental health awareness; promoting safe school environments; and more. As co-founder and co-chair of the Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder Task Force, David fights every day in Congress to tackle the mental health crisis - including the Task Force passing 26 bills into law last Congress - and knows that ensuring resources for our children remains the top priority and our best hope for ending this crisis.

David is also a champion of criminal justice reform, working with the ACLU to found the Trone Center for Justice & Equality prior to joining Congress and launching the Second Chance Task Force during his third term in the House of Representatives. He is addressing the root causes for the School to Prison pipeline and especially its impact on communities of color. He was proud to have passed into law the Expanding Educational Opportunities for Justice-Impacted Communities Act in his first term, to provide Pell Grants to incarcerated individuals - ensuring that those individuals seeking an education are given a true second chance.