

Root Out Corruption: Thiru’s Plan to Restore Trust in City Hall

Baltimore has seen a state senator, a city aide, multiple police officers, two police commissioners, and now two Mayors charged and convicted of public corruption. When former Mayor Catherine Pugh recently pled guilty, we learned that the latest public corruption prosecution in Baltimore was not the result of an accounting error or negligent oversight — it was a calculated and deliberate conspiracy driven by the City’s career politicians seeking money and power rather than striving to serve the public. Enough is enough. This must end, and it must end now.

Thiru’s plan to root out corruption attacks three intertwined evils: career politicians seeking to get rich and stay in office rather than serve the public; a culture of nepotism where politicians appoint family and friends—and the family and friends of their allies; and a pay-to-play system where lobbyists and big money enable the rich to buy off politicians and buy their way into office.

Baltimore deserves better. Along with releasing his anti-corruption plan, Thiru has committed to a series of pledges and called on all other mayoral candidates to do the same. The people of Baltimore need to be reassured that those who seek to lead them are aware of the lack of faith in City Hall and are prepared to make the commitments needed to restore trust in local government. Highlights of the plan include:

* A charter amendment requiring candidates for city office and any appointee requiring confirmation by the City Council (e.g., the police commissioner) to release 5 years of tax returns. Thiru is still the only mayoral candidate in Baltimore history to release five years of full tax returns.
* A mandate that city elected officials obtain an ethics opinion before accepting any new source of supplemental income over $10,000 and promptly disclose that income to the public.
* A prohibition preventing elected officials from serving as lobbyists for 3 years after their term ends.
* A rule against appointing a family member or employee of an elected official to a vacant elected office.
* A condition that elected officials publicly disclose the existence of a family or business relationship whenever making a personnel recommendation for a position in city government.
* A criminal ban on campaign contributions by registered lobbyists and on any company soliciting donations from its vendors for more than an aggregate amount of $6,000.
* A requirement that any outside loans to a campaign after the final reporting deadline just before a primary or general election be disclosed to the public within 12 hours.

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