

# [***Thiru Vignarajah accused of selling his endorsement, leaves Baltimore mayoral race***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BXX-0KP1-JBSS-S1JH-00000-00&context=1516831)

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BALTIMORE, Maryland ([*WJZ*](https://www.cbsnews.com/baltimore/news/thiru-vignarajah-dropping-out-of-baltimore-city-mayoral-race-endorses-sheila-dixon/)) -- Former city and state prosecutor Thiru Vignarajah says he is dropping out of the Baltimore City mayoral race and will be endorsing former mayor Sheila Dixon.

However, a senior official in current Mayor Brandon Scott's campaign accused Vignarajah of selling his endorsement in exchange for a high-level position in the city.

"Thiru's endorsement was for sale and Sheila Dixon was more than happy to buy it. We'd expect nothing less from Sheila Dixon, who has already proven time and again her personal interests outweigh all others," said Nicholas Machado, Scott's campaign manager.

Vignarajah, who entered the race late and used public funding, would not say whether he was promised any position in exchange for endorsing Dixon.

However, Dixon calls Scott's accusations a "false narrative."

"Mayor Scott has responded to today's endorsement news by pushing a false narrative regarding commitments I have allegedly made to Mr. Vignarajah," Dixon said. "While we had conversations about issues facing the city and his desire to support my team in addressing them, I can say unequivocally that no promises were made regarding future employment with my administration.

"I have a reputation of being a strong manager that brings smart people with different perspectives to the table. I appreciate Mr. Vignarajah's support today and I look forward to working with him towards a better Baltimore."

Vignarajah's endorsement came just a day after he appeared in WJZ's mayoral debate, along with Mayor Scott, Dixon and businessman Bob Wallace.

"I'll be very candid. I shared with Sheila my ideas and my shared vision for the city," Vignarajah said. "I told her the same thing that I told Brandon Scott four years ago, which is I want to be helpful. Let me know how I can be helpful. The only deal that we made is to commit to seeing Baltimore become the city that we know it can be. And I've got a good job."

Vignarajah declined to comment on whether that public funding could or would be used to help the Dixon campaign.

Dixon embraced Vignarajah's supporters after the announcement.

"I am humbled and honored to have your support," Dixon said. "You have been a powerful advocate for those who have been overlooked or left behind. You have shined the light on many critical issues that too many of those and power have chosen to ignore."

WJZ learned from a senior Scott campaign official that last week, Vignarajah approached Mayor Scott and said he would endorse him if named police commissioner or city schools' CEO.

That source said that on Wednesday morning, Mayor Scott told Vignarajah he would not do that and he should stay in the race.

Hours later, Vignarajah endorsed Dixon.

"One failed corrupt politician endorsing another failed corrupt politician is a prime example of the broken, corrupt ***politics*** of the past," the Scott campaign said in its statement.

Vignarajah would not comment on the allegations.

"Out of respect for a long-standing policy of mine, I don't talk about conversations with principles unless we are here together to talk about it," he said.

Now, one-time rivals Vignarajah and Dixon have banded together just one day before early voting is set to start, hoping the surprise political move will oust Scott from City Hall.

"I love running. I get joy out of it, but there is something bigger at stake. The future of our city is at stake, and Brandon Scott imperils that future," Vignarajah said.

Vignarajah, a high-profile attorney, unsuccessfully ran for mayor in 2020, and state's attorney in 2018 and 2022.

He bolstered his campaign in March, raising more money than his rivals, and jumping into the Baltimore Inner Harbor to demonstrate his commitment to environmental policy reform.

With crime and public safety remaining a top issue in this election, Dixon has pointed to her previous bid in the mayor's seat.

In a sit down with WJZ in September 2023, she said "I know that I can do it again." Dixon said her administration would thrive in transparency and accountability.

To take the mayor's seat, Dixon will have to gain voters trust. In January 2010, she was forced to leave office after a misdemeanor conviction for using gift cards intended for the needy. An incident she said was a mistake that she learned from.

The primary election will be on Tuesday, May 14. Early voting starts on Thursday, May 2. You can learn more about the elections by visiting WJZ's voter guide.

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By Web staff

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