THE BANNER

Baltimore County Council District 4

Banner Staff

5/18/2026 9:40 a.m. EDT

(The Banner)

What's the job: The legislative branch of Maryland's county governments. Responsible for introducing and voting on legislation, approving county spending and providing oversight of county operations. Elected to a four-year term.

Jump to a candidate

Candidates are listed in order of appearance on the ballot

Karson B. Kamenetz (D) | Gary Schuman (R)

Democratic

Name: Karson B. Kamenetz

Karson B. Kamenetz. (Committee for Karson Kamenetz)

Age: 25

Personal: Baltimore County has been my family's home for generations.

Education: Bachelor's degree, government and politics, University of Maryland, College Park; Juris Doctor candidate, University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law.

Experience: Parliamentarian, Baltimore County Democratic State Central Committee; director, Swing Left Baltimore; legislative staff, Chair of the Baltimore County House Delegation.

Questionnaire

Q: What is the number one issue in your district, and how do you plan to address it?

A: The number one issue in District 4 is public safety, because very little that is possible without it. If families don't feel comfortable letting their children play outside, if dangerous driving is making daily life more stressful, and if first responders do not have the resources they need to keep us safe, then quality of life suffers.

My first budget would make that clear. I will cut county funding for low-utilization programs like the Towson Loop and redirect those dollars into things residents actually feel on a regular basis: more mobile speed cameras, more neighborhood traffic calming, and targeted upgrades to lighting, sidewalk, and crosswalks along Reisterstown and Liberty Roads. I support funding the county's contractual take-home car obligation for officers, because Baltimore County cannot ignore a substantial officer shortage and expect residents to feel safe anyways. At the same time, you will see me shift capital funding priorities toward an inside-the-beltway recreation center and expand

Community Schools partnerships in underinvested neighborhoods, because we don't deserve to act surprised when our young people turn toward negative influences when there aren't many positive influences around them. I will be tough on crime, absolutely, but even tougher on what leads to it.

Q: What policies would you pursue to address rising costs of living and affordability concerns in Baltimore County?

A: We love this place, but for the first time in over a century, Baltimore County is losing residents. This budget reality means nobody can honestly promise broad tax cuts or new spending without being forthright about the tradeoffs. My affordability agenda is focused on lowering major costs and expanding the tax-base over time to strengthen services and give relief to those struggling most.

First, I'll target property-tax relief for those under the most pressure: seniors on fixed-incomes, long-time residents being priced out, and first-time homebuyers. I support cutting or restructuring lower-value spending to ensure county dollars go to core services and basic needs before "nice to haves." Second, I'll lower housing costs by expanding supply in the right places. That means redevelopment and restoration of our blighted corridors where infrastructure already exists, transit-oriented-development around stations like Milford Mill, and enabling accessory-dwelling-units so aging-in-place is more attainable. Third, my office will function as a one-stop-shop for benefits navigation. Too many already qualify for tax credits, utility relief, or other programs but leave money on the table. Long term, affordability depends on stopping population decline. If we don't strengthen our tax base, the alternatives are higher taxes, worse services, or both.

Q: Baltimore County is facing a 19,000-unit deficit in housing. How do you plan to address this?

A: This won't be solved by pretending every project is good or by allowing "no" to become the county's default housing policy. My approach is to add housing where it makes the most fiscal and planning sense, and causes the least disruption to existing communities: around transit, where infrastructure already exists, and through redevelopment of underused corridors and commercial sites.

First, I'll reform our zoning rules that block transit-oriented-development near town centers and existing infrastructure. Second, I will propose legislation putting "NBA Shot Clocks" on residential permitting. When approvals drag on for months, carrying costs and fees rise and get passed on to renters and buyers. Third, I will prioritize the restoration of struggling corridors along Reisterstown and Liberty Roads, vacant shopping centers, and obsolete commercial properties into mixed-use communities with housing, retail, and open space. The tradeoff is real. More housing can strain roads, schools, and stormwater systems if poorly planned. Simultaneously, more housing will reduce the financial pressure on older adults ready to downsize and young families trying to grab a foothold. That is why I support infrastructure-backed growth, not reckless sprawl. The answer is not "build anywhere." It is build smarter, where the county can actually support it.

Q: Baltimore County has long faced accusations about backdoor dealing and limited transparency. How do you plan to earn people's trust in local government?

A: Baltimore County's trust problem starts when residents believe decisions are made before the public ever sees them.

Too often, decisions are made around residents, not with them. I will attack that systematically.

First, I will keep a public calendar and require my office to log meetings related to major land-use and procurement decisions so residents can see who is in the room before decision are made. Second, on development and budget items, I would propose legislation requiring earlier public notice and plain-English summaries containing what is being proposed, the costs, who benefits, the goals and tradeoffs, and considered alternatives before votes are made. Third, for every vote, you will see written explanations justifying my decision. If I support or oppose something, I should be able to explain exactly why. Fourth, I will host regular “drop-in office-hours” across District 4 and have an online-dashboard where you can track the status of your requests in real time, because distrust only grows if people think our county only works for insiders. Most importantly, my office will not treat community input as something that begins after a deal is made. If residents are only invited at the end, it isn’t transparency, it’s theater.

Q: As the council expands and becomes more diverse, how will you work to build consensus and collaborate with colleagues who hold different perspectives?

A: I think the first responsibility is to respect what our county’s diversity actually means. Different councilmembers will be hearing different things from their communities, and those differences are not performative. I cannot claim to be a stand-in for every person across a district--let alone a county--this diverse and complex. What I can do is listen seriously, understand how different neighborhoods experience the same issues in different ways, and make transparent decisions in good faith.

I also believe consensus starts with preparation. A lot of conflict gets worse when leaders are vague, reactive, or more interested in slogans than substance. My approach would be to continue showing up relentlessly to each and every community across the district, understand the pros-and-cons of each decision, and explain them clearly. If I disagree with a colleague or constituent, I want that disagreement to be grounded in facts, budget realities, and what we think is best for residents. I love a good argument, and am comfortable being challenged or learning from people with more experience and a different point-of-view. Convince me of your perspective on any given issue, and you won't find a stronger advocate. To me, that is how serious governing works.

Republican

Name: Gary Schuman

Candidate did not respond to The Banner's voter guide questionnaire.

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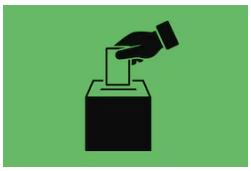

Key Races

Statewide

US House

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