



## 2016 Congressional Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate: Kumar Barve

Office Sought: U.S. House of Representatives, Maryland 8<sup>th</sup> District

Campaign Address (*street, city, zip code*): 120 Gibbs Street, #287, Rockville, MD 20850

Campaign Contact (*phone, email, website*): Seth Maiman, Campaign Manager, 240/535-1795;  
[Kumar4Congress@gmail.com](mailto:Kumar4Congress@gmail.com); [www.kumarbarve.com](http://www.kumarbarve.com)

***These are my official positions in seeking federal office.***

Candidate Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Candidates: Please indicate your response to each of the questions. **Clarifications, explanations and other information may be attached, but please be certain to indicate clearly the questions(s) to which you refer.** Please return your completed and signed questionnaire to your NEA state affiliate.*

*Please return a completed questionnaire no later than Friday, November 6, 2015 by email to the attention of Sean Johnson, [sejohnson@mseanea.org](mailto:sejohnson@mseanea.org).*

# Section I. Opportunity Begins with Great Public Schools for Every Student

## A. Equity for All Students

### BACKGROUND

- More than 14.7 million children in the United States—20 percent of all children—live in poverty. These children would not have the supports they need to succeed without consistent, targeted federal resources. (Source: [U.S. Census Bureau](#), 2014)
- Some states and districts spend two to three times more per pupil than others, and that will persist without strategies designed to ensure that students have equitable access to resources. (Source: [For Each and Every Child](#), Equity and Excellence Commission, 2013)
- “The educational achievement gap in the United States exists in and out of the classroom, and extends from the earliest years of childhood across the lifespan.” (Source: [The Academic Achievement Gap](#), Campaign for Educational Equity, 2005)
- The “cornerstones of the federal role today” are two laws first enacted in 1965: the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which “provided aid to states and school districts to improve education for children from low-income families and meet other critical educational needs,” and the Higher Education Act, which “opened the door to postsecondary education for those who could not afford it.” (Source: [A Brief History of the Federal Role in Education Policy](#), Center on Education Policy, 1999)
- Since its initial enactment in 1975, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has included a commitment for the federal government to pay 40 percent of the average per student cost for every special education student. The current federal share is under 16 percent.
- Competitive grants—which undermine equity by creating winners and losers among students—have risen in recent years, often at the expense of need-driven formula grants for the students most in need. The Department of Education’s proposed FY2015 budget, for example, called for a cut of nearly 5 percent to discretionary formula grants (compared to FY2014) while competitive grants would increase nearly 70 percent.

### QUESTIONS

1. Do you support requiring each state, as a condition of receiving federal ESEA funds, to submit a plan outlining how—over a period of years—it will remedy disparities in educational tools, services, opportunities, and resources among districts and schools?  yes  no
2. Will you support an appropriation bill that prioritizes federal education funds for critical formula grant programs, specifically Title I?  yes  no
3. Will you support an appropriation bill that prioritizes federal education funds for critical formula grant programs, specifically IDEA?  yes  no
4. Would you vote for mandatory full funding at the promised 40 percent level for IDEA?  yes  no
5. When determining how education dollars are allocated in the federal budget, would you support significantly curtailing the use of competitive grants, which often require states to alter their education policies?  yes  no

## B. Meeting the Needs of the Whole Child

### BACKGROUND

- The out-of-school factors most likely to limit student success are highly correlated with poverty: low birth weight; prenatal exposure to drugs or alcohol; inadequate medical, dental, and vision care; food insecurity; exposure to mercury, lead, and other pollutants and poisons; family breakdown and stress; and neighborhood violence. (Source: [Poverty and Potential: Out-of-School Factors and School Success](#), National Education Policy Center, 2009)
- One in four infants, toddlers, and preschoolers lives in poverty during the crucial early years of brain development, and less than half our three- and four-year olds are enrolled in preschool. (Source: [The State of America's Children](#), Children's Defense Fund, 2014)
- Research shows that high-quality prekindergarten programs confer lasting benefits—children who attend them are less likely to drop out of school, repeat grades, need special education, or get in trouble with the law later on. (Source: [Lifetime Effects: The HighScope Perry Preschool Study through Age 40](#), 2005)
- A survey of schools conducted by the Kids' Safe and Healthful Food Project found that to serve students healthy meals in a cost-effective way, 88 percent of school districts needed at least one piece of kitchen equipment, and 55 percent needed infrastructure upgrades such as electrical and plumbing systems, natural gas, ventilation, and increased space. (Source: [Serving Healthy School Meals](#), The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2013)

### QUESTIONS

6. Would you support legislation that establishes a new federal-state partnership to help fund high-quality prekindergarten for all children from low- and moderate-income families? yes no
7. Do you support providing at least the current level of benefits for children under Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)? yes no
8. Do you support ensuring rigorous nutrition standards for meals and snacks? yes no
9. Do you support technical assistance and adequate funding for improved and/or necessary kitchen infrastructure and equipment? yes no
10. Do you support training for all school nutrition personnel to sustain a highly-skilled, professional workforce through provisions of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act and other federal nutrition policies? yes no

## C. Strengthening the Teaching Profession

### BACKGROUND

- The United States can learn from the examples of the top-scoring nations on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) such as Singapore, Finland, and South Korea. "Top-performing countries have a deep history of prestige attached to teaching ... [and] fund schools for the poor and the affluent roughly equally; in the U.S., a tradition of locally-based school finance leads to wide disparities in per pupil funding—a relevant factor when the chief component of school budgets is teacher salaries ... "[S]tudents receive salaries or stipends while they train. In the U.S., by contrast, students often go into debt to pay tuition at education schools while foregoing the salaries they could earn by working." (Source: [Closing the talent gap: Attracting and retaining top-third graduates to careers in teaching](#), McKinsey and Company, 2010)

- “[In Finland] teachers’ preparation includes both extensive coursework on how to teach—with a strong emphasis on using research based on state-of-the-art practice—and at least a full year of clinical experience in a school associated with the university.” (Source: Linda Darling-Hammond, Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Education at Stanford University, [What we can learn from Finland’s successful school reform](#), 2010)
- Every new teacher should receive targeted support and participate in an induction and mentoring program. Novice teachers need more time for planning than experienced teachers and should have opportunities to observe experienced teachers at work. (Source: [Teacher Assessment and Evaluation: The National Education Association’s Framework for Transforming Education](#), 2010)

## QUESTIONS

11. Do you support providing incentives—through federal policy—for teacher preparation programs to include comprehensive “residencies” in which accomplished teachers provide guidance to new teachers to ensure that knowledge gained from coursework is also rooted in classroom practice?  yes  no
12. Do you support requiring classroom-based performance assessments for all teacher candidates—before they are given the responsibility for a classroom—to ensure they possess both the skills and knowledge needed for classroom instruction?  yes  no
13. Do you support educator certification programs, such as that provided by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which offer valuable professional development and high standards for educators to further their practice?  yes  no
14. Do you support providing incentives—through federal policy—for teacher preparation programs to emphasize recruiting and retaining candidates from under-represented groups to reflect the growing diversity of our student population?  yes  no

## D. Ensuring Access to the American Dream

### BACKGROUND

- About 65,000 undocumented children who have lived in the United States for five years or longer graduate from high school each year. Although they can legally attend most colleges, they are not eligible for most forms of financial aid. Because of barriers to their continued education and their exclusion from the legal workforce, only between 5 and 10 percent of undocumented high-school graduates go to college. (Source: [Immigration Policy Center](#))
- Allowing undocumented immigrants to work in the United States legally would increase their state and local tax contributions by an estimated \$2 billion a year, and boost the American economy by an estimated \$700 billion over a ten-year period. (Source: [Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy](#), [Congressional Budget Office](#))

### QUESTION

15. Do you support comprehensive immigration reform that includes a pathway to citizenship for aspiring Americans, protection of family unity, and the DREAM Act?  yes  no

## E. Revamping Accountability in K-12 Public Schools

### BACKGROUND

- No Child Left Behind increased the number of federally-mandated, high-stakes tests in reading and math from 6 to 14; introduced new high-stakes tests in science; and made participation in the National Assessment of Educational Progress mandatory instead of voluntary. (Source: [U.S. Department of Education](#))
- Three out of four Americans say that increased testing has either hurt or made no difference in improving schools. (Source: [2013 PDK/Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Public Education](#))
- “Today, education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments ... it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.” — Unanimous decision of the United States Supreme Court in [Brown v. Board of Education](#), 1954
- “[A]s the charter sector grows far faster than originally envisioned, the risks are high and growing, while the benefits are less clear ... The problem is pervasive; our search, despite being limited to fewer than half of the states with charter schools, found over \$100 million in public tax funds lost to waste, fraud, and abuse.” (Source: [Charter School Vulnerabilities to Waste, Fraud, and Abuse](#), Center for Popular Democracy and Integrity in Education, 2014)

### QUESTIONS

16. Would you support legislation reducing the number of federally-mandated, high-stakes standardized tests?  yes  no
17. Within the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), do you support an accountability system that continues to count student outcomes but also includes student support and school success indicators – things like access to advanced courses, school counselors, fine arts, and health and wellness programs – and to ensure states report and act to close opportunity gaps that are identified?  yes  no
18. Within the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), do you support requiring the use of multiple measures to evaluate student and school performance?  yes  no
19. Do you support federal mandates that base teachers’ evaluations on students’ scores on standardized tests?  yes  no
20. Charter schools are publicly funded, yet not all federal requirements apply to them. Do you support holding charter schools, including online charter schools, to the same standards of transparency and accountability as all other public schools?  yes  no

## F. Private School Vouchers

### BACKGROUND

- Official evaluations of voucher programs in Milwaukee, Cleveland, and Washington, DC, have found no statistically significant differences in the academic achievement of voucher students compared to public school students. Public school students have been found to outperform private school students when test scores are weighted to reflect socioeconomic level, race, and disability. (Source: [National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education](#), Teachers College, Columbia University)
- Millions of tax dollars have been lost to private school operators who fraudulently misrepresented enrollment data; failed to provide safe, academically appropriate learning environments; and otherwise gamed the system for personal profit. (Source: [District of Columbia Opportunity Scholarship Program](#), U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2013)

### QUESTION

21. Do you support federal private school voucher and tuition tax credit programs, including demonstration or pilot projects? \_\_\_\_yes \_\_x\_\_no

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

### A. Raising the Minimum Wage

#### BACKGROUND

- At the current federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour, a parent who works full-time, year-round does not earn enough to be above the federal poverty line. If the minimum wage were raised to \$12 per hour, nearly 38 million American workers would be affected, half of whom currently have family incomes of less than \$40,000. 18.7 million children, or 1 in 4, have at least one parent who will get a raise if the minimum wage is increased to \$12.00 per hour. (Source: [Economic Policy Institute](#), 2015)

#### QUESTION

22. Would you support legislation to raise the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 per hour to at least \$12.00 per hour by 2020, and tie future wage increases to median wage growth on an annual basis?  yes  
 no

### B. Making College More Affordable and Accessible

#### BACKGROUND

- U.S. students' debt burden of \$1.2 trillion is the second largest form of consumer debt—exceeded only by home mortgages. (Source: [Consumer Finance Protection Bureau](#))
- Seventy percent of U.S. students now borrow money to attend college; the average student graduates with a debt of \$30,000. (Source: [College Board](#))
- “[D]ata from the U.S. Department of Education shows that from 1996 through 2012, public colleges and universities gave a declining portion of grants—as measured by both the number of grants and the dollar amounts—to students in the lowest quartile of family income. That trend has continued even though the recession hit those in lower income brackets the hardest.” (Source: [Public Universities Ramp Up Aid for the Wealthy](#), ProPublica, 2013)
- “As recently as in the 1980s, the maximum Pell Grant covered more than half the cost of attending a four-year public college. Even after the recent increases, the \$5,730 maximum Pell Grant in 2014-15 is expected to cover less than one-third of the cost of college—the lowest since the start of the program.” (Source: [Institute for College Access and Success](#), 2014)

#### QUESTIONS

23. Would you support legislation allowing federal student loans to be refinanced—like mortgages—when interest rates decline?  yes  no
24. Do you support expanding federal loan forgiveness programs for those who choose public service careers—specifically, educators?  yes  no
25. Which of the following approaches to Pell Grant awards would you support?  
 Increase to keep pace with inflation  
 Maintain the current maximum of \$5,730 per student per year  
 Decrease

## C. Ensuring Democracy in the Workplace: Protecting Workers' Rights to Collectively Bargain

### BACKGROUND

- Thirty-four states and Washington, DC, explicitly allow collective bargaining for teachers and education support professionals and higher education faculty. Although 17 states do not have collective bargaining statutes, in most of those states limited bargaining takes place for some or all categories of education employees. (Source: National Education Association, Collective Bargaining and Member Advocacy Department)
- “[E]vidence and examples drawn from the public and private sectors show that collective bargaining and workplace innovations based on a mutual interest, joint problem-solving approach can produce positive outcomes for employers, employees, customers, and citizens, especially during fiscal crisis ...” (Source: [Getting It Right: Empirical Evidence and Policy Implications from Research on Public-Sector Unionism and Collective Bargaining](#), Employment Policy Research Network, 2011)

### QUESTION

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

## D. Improving the Affordable Care Act

### BACKGROUND

- The NEA-supported Affordable Care Act represents the most sweeping overhaul of our nation’s health-care system since the creation of Medicare and Medicaid in 1965. Thanks to this landmark legislation, up to 17 million children no longer face coverage denials due to pre-existing conditions, young adults can stay on their parents’ plans until age 26, and health-care costs are growing at the slowest rate in decades. (Source: [whitehouse.gov](http://whitehouse.gov))
- Employer-sponsored health benefits have never been taxed in this country. American workers have made financial sacrifices to maintain their health benefits, often forgoing salary increases to ensure that they and their families have the security provided by health insurance. (Source: [Joint Committee on Taxation](#))
- Taxing health benefits would disproportionately affect women and older workers. The age and gender composition of a covered group is a major determinant of plan expense. Employer groups that are predominantly women, like educators, will be faced with a higher tax simply because of the gender of their workers. (Source: [The Problem with Taxing Cadillac Health Plans](#), Watson Wyatt Worldwide, 2009)
- Middle class taxes would go up between \$2,000 and \$3,000 per tax return if benefits were taxed. (Source: [Joint Committee on Taxation](#))

### QUESTION

27. Will you work to repeal the taxation of employer-sponsored health insurance?  
yes no

## E. Honoring Work by Ensuring Retirement Security

### BACKGROUND

- The Government Pension Offset reduces or eliminates the Social Security survivor benefits of over 615,000 beneficiaries; of these individuals, 44 percent are widows/widowers and about 81 percent are women. The approximately one million beneficiaries currently affected by the Windfall Elimination Provision lose a significant amount of their earned Social Security benefits. (Source: [Congressional Research Service](#))
- In 2014, 59 million people will collect Social Security benefits. For nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of elderly beneficiaries, Social Security is the principal source of their cash income. Among the elderly, for 22 percent of married couples and about 47 percent unmarried people, Social Security provides more than 90 percent of their income. For one-quarter (24 percent) of elderly beneficiaries, Social Security is the sole source of retirement income. Today, every dollar of the average Social Security retirement benefit of about \$15,500 is absolutely critical to the typical beneficiary. (Source: [Social Security Administration](#))
- Without Social Security benefits, more than 44 percent of Americans aged 65 and older would have incomes below the federal poverty line, all else being equal. With Social Security benefits, less than one-tenth of the elderly do. The program lifts more than 15 million elderly Americans out of poverty. (Source: [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#))
- Most retirees enroll in Medicare's Supplementary Medical Insurance (also known as Medicare Part B) and have Part B premiums deducted from their Social Security checks. As healthcare costs continue to outpace general inflation, those premiums will take a bigger bite out of their checks. (Source: [Center for Retirement Research at Boston College](#))
- Recent Republican proposed budgets (i.e. the 2014 Ryan Budget) would convert Medicare to a voucher system and limit the growth rate of Medicare spending for new beneficiaries from year to year. Also, Medicare would no longer make payments to health care providers such as doctors and hospitals; the only way to keep Medicare cost growth within their target would be to limit the annual increase in the amount of the premium-support vouchers. As a result, the vouchers would purchase less coverage with each passing year, pushing more costs on to beneficiaries. Over time, seniors would have to pay more to keep the health plans and the doctors they like, or they would get fewer benefits. (Source: [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#))

### QUESTIONS

28. Do you support eliminating or reforming the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision? yes no
29. Do you support raising the Social Security payroll tax cap? yes no
30. Do you support converting Medicare to a voucher system? yes no
31. Do you support providing at least the current level of benefits for Medicare recipients?  
yes no

# Section III: Opportunity for All Requires a Democracy that Works for All

## BACKGROUND

- In the past, Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act provided crucial preclearance oversight from the federal government when states wished to change voting laws. This oversight was an invaluable protection in states and counties with a chronic history of voter discrimination and voter suppression. The mere existence of Section 4 often served as a deterrent to states attempting to enact unjust voting laws. While the Voting Rights Act was successful in eliminating voter suppression devices over the past four decades, voter suppression efforts continue to evolve. In 2013 alone, 92 restrictive voting bills were introduced in 33 states and at least 9 of those bills became law in 8 states. (Source: [Brennan Center for Justice](#))
- Unlimited campaign expenditures by corporate and other moneyed interests undermine the role of individual citizens and voters in our democracy. In 2012, a mere 61 donors to Super PACs, giving \$4.7 million on average, matched the \$285.2 million in grassroots contributions from more than 1.4 million small donors to the major-party presidential candidates. Of the record \$6 billion spent in the 2012 elections, more than \$1 billion—triple the amount in 2010—came from outside sources, mainly a relatively small group of wealthy donors that “reportedly sought to raise \$400 million for tax-exempt groups that are not required to disclose their spending.” (Source: [Little to Show for Cash Flood by Big Donors](#), New York Times, 2012)

## QUESTIONS

32. Would you support legislation to update Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act to ensure voter protection and access by requiring preclearance of proposed voting laws in those jurisdictions that have a *recent record* of violations of voting rights and disenfranchisement?  yes  no
33. Would you support a constitutional amendment enabling Congress to regulate and limit federal political campaign contributions and expenditures?  yes  no

## Section IV: Essay Questions

1. Please describe your top five priorities for public education and how they contribute to ensuring all students attend a great public school.

My top priorities for public education are:

1. Reducing the achievement gap by reallocating resources and ensuring that all students have equal opportunities for educational success.
2. Reducing the number of high-stakes tests and putting the education of our children back into the hands of our teachers.
3. Expanding access to early childhood education.
4. Expanding the provision of wrap around services in targeted school districts to provide a more holistic approach that recognizes that physical and mental health, including nutrition, preventive health care, and family life issues, affect opportunities for education success.
5. Using the bully pulpit of Congress to raise the level of respect for and interest in the teaching profession. Expanding the opportunities and requirements for teacher training and on-hands experience and for mentoring of young teachers by experienced professionals.

In Maryland I have used my leadership position in the House of Delegates to help gain and retain our states' status as the top public school system in the nation. Although there is much work still to do to address the achievement gap, especially in Montgomery County, where our great schools have not yet been able to fully address the changing demographics and needs of our students, Maryland has been a leader in public education. The federal role in education should be insure that all states and school district are receiving adequate resources and to address educational disparity by targeting resources and policies to address systemic problems.

2. Traditionally, the federal government's role in public education has been aimed at ensuring equal access for students most in need, including students in high-poverty schools, students with disabilities, and English language learners. As a Member of Congress, what specific steps would you take to close opportunity and resource gaps to ensure educational equity for all students regardless of their background?

As a Member of Congress I would support taking steps to ensure educational equity for all students regardless of their background. This includes everything from supporting increased, or at least adequate, funding for Title I, IDEA and other base programs to post-secondary programs such as TRIO and support for HBCUs and institutions that serve Native and other minority populations. Additionally, I support comprehensive immigration legislation and the Dream Act (and fought its passage and voter ratification in Maryland) in order to give those students an equal opportunity for a quality education. I support expansion of wrap around services in and around high-poverty schools.

Moreover, I support refocusing the federal educational role on the public school and the public school teacher as the primary answer to ensuring educational success across race and economic class lines. The so-called education reform movement has splintered educational resources and further marginalized students from high poverty areas and with special needs. The federal role in education is to level the playing field and ensure that states and school districts are meeting critical needs. We must strengthen public school systems, as we have done in Maryland, not under resource them into oblivion.

As a public school educated person of color – and a member of an ethnic minority that had virtually no presence in Montgomery County when I was growing up – and I understand the societal and educational inequities present in our nation. My story, and my family's immigrant story – including my grandfather's fight against the government all the way to Supreme Court to retain his citizenship – is an American story. Rosemary Hills E.S., East Silver Spring E.S., Takoma Park M.S. and Paint Branch H.S. – and their wonderful teachers and administrators who worked there – gave me the education needed to become an accountant and become the first Indian American elected to a state legislature in American History. We must ensure that our schools are adequately resourced, our teachers are allowed to teach, that special needs or our student population are identified and that societal factors that limit student educational success are recognized and addressed.