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# 2010 State Candidate Questionnaire

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Committee Name: \_\_\_Friends of Josh Cohen\_\_\_\_\_

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## CANDIDATE CERTIFICATION

Candidate Name: \_\_\_Josh Cohen\_\_\_\_\_ Office Sought\_State Rep – 194th\_\_\_\_\_

I have read the attached questionnaire responses and certify that the information provided is accurate and the opinions stated accurately reflect my own positions.

Candidate Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_4/14/10\_\_\_\_\_

Please complete, sign and return this form via mail to:

**Neighborhood Networks**  
**c/o John Hogan and Kathy Quinn, Co-Chairs, Elections Committee**  
**7511 Germantown Avenue • Philadelphia, PA 19119**

If returning via email, please send to [kathymquinn@verizon.net](mailto:kathymquinn@verizon.net) and sign and return this first page with the candidate signature by mail or fax to 215-751-0658.

## BACKGROUND

1. What, if any, elected or appointed government office(s) have you held?  
**Appointed-Assistant Press Secretary, Mayor John F. Street**  
**Appointed-Deputy Chief of Staff, Councilman Juan F. Ramos**  
**Appointed-Deputy Chief of Staff, Councilman Curtis Jones Jr.**
2. If you have previously held a government office:
  - a. What are the primary issue areas in which you were involved?  
N/A
  - b. What committees, caucuses or working groups have you served on?  
N/A
3. If you have not previously held a government office, what community or policy issues have you worked on, and in what capacity? (Please provide the names of two or three individuals who can provide information about your previous work.)

**President, Wissahickon Interested Citizen Association-neighborhood quality of life issues; community empowerment, Secretary, Board of Trustees, Northern Home for Children, child welfare issues.**

4. Please provide copies of all your significant campaign materials, including position papers, and information on your campaign strategy, expected funding sources, and endorsements. **See attached for issue paper and website [www.electjoshcohen.com](http://www.electjoshcohen.com). I have been endorsed by Liberty City Democratic Club.**

## **ISSUES**

1. Would you support legislation to provide public financing for state and local election campaigns?

**Yes**

2. What limitations, if any, do you think should be placed on the rights of Pennsylvania citizens (including former prisoners) to vote? **I don't believe there should be any limitations on the right to vote including convicted felons. These individuals should not need to provide state issued identification either. It is vitally important that we allow all citizens the right to vote.**

- 2a. Would you support legislation allowing for a verified paper ballot receipt?

**Yes. Electoral reform is a legislative priority. Please see my website for more details.**

- 2b. Would you support legislation providing for same day registration and unrestricted voting by absentee ballot? **Absolutely. Please see remarks above.**

3. Would you support any limitations, including waiting periods, on a woman's access to abortion? **I am 100% pro-choice. I will fight attempts to restrict a women's right to choose. I also support increased funding for comprehensive family planning.**

- 3a. Would you support repeal of existing restrictions on a woman's right to choose?

**Yes**

- 3b. Would you support any limitations on a woman's access to contraception, including emergency contraception?

**No**

- 3c. If yes to either, what limitations do you support?

**I do not support limitations on a women's right to choose.**

4. Do you believe that same-sex couples in committed relationships should have the right to marry?

**I support same-sex marriage. I will work to repeal Pennsylvania's Defense of Marriage Act which makes same-sex marriages in our Commonwealth illegal. I will also fight any attempt by conservatives to amend the state constitution to define marriage to be only between a man and a woman.**

4a. If no, do you support the right to domestic partnership rights?

**See above**

5. Would you support legislation to limit the purchases of handguns to one a month?

**Yes. Gun control is another major legislative priority.**

5a. What other legislation, if any, would you sponsor or support to reduce the number of handguns in circulation in Philadelphia?

- **Support HB 29-If an individual loses or has their handgun stolen they must report it to law enforcement in a timely manner**
- **Support a waiting period for the sale of handguns**
- **Support limitation on assault weapons**

6. Would you support legislation to strengthen protection for workers trying to form or join a union?

**Yes**

7. Do you favor an automatic cost-of-living adjustment to the minimum wage?

**Yes.**

8. What measures, if any would you support to strengthen anti-discrimination laws?

**I will fight to enact HB 300 which would amend the PA Human Relation Act to include "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" among the list of classes protected against discrimination in housing, employment and public accomodations.**

9. Would you support proposals to ensure that women and men working for contractors of the Commonwealth receive equal pay for equal work? **Women who work full time are paid on average only 78 percent of what men are paid. The disparity is even worse for women of color. I will fight for strong equal pay legislation**

10. Would you support an increase in the state's share of funding for public schools?

**Yes**

11. What measures would you support to guarantee access for all Pennsylvanians to quality affordable healthcare?

I support single payer universal healthcare and believe the bill passed by Congress will eventually help millions of people who wouldn't never had a chance to receive healthcare but implementation of this bill is not until 2014. We cannot wait until then. We must pass HB1660 and SB400 now and if elected I will vote for it without reservation.

12. Do you believe that taxation should generally be progressive, so that people and businesses with higher incomes pay taxes at higher rates? **Yes. Those who can afford to pay more should pay more.**

12a. If yes, would you support an amendment to the state constitution allowing such taxation?

**Yes**

12b. What other measures do you support, if any, to make PA personal and business taxes more progressive?

**I would need to research this question more in depth before giving an answer**

13. What categories of state spending do you think should be significantly increased or decreased?

We need to significantly increase spending in public education and public transportation. We have made great strides in recent years on both fronts. Public transit is critical for Pennsylvania residents. In 2008, miles driven on Pennsylvania roads dropped 4% and public transportation increased 4%. These numbers will continue to grow as more and more people will rely on public transportation for economical and environmental reasons. Currently, Act 44 is funding public transit through Turnpike tolls and bonds at a projected rate of about \$740 million a year for 50 years for 73 public transportation agencies throughout the Commonwealth. Combined with stimulus funding and other sources, Act 44 has proven to be a dedicated source of funding for public transportation. However, a critical component of Act 44 is tolling I-80. If this is not to become a reality, then we must look at other revenue streams to make up the difference including increasing vehicle registration fees and increasing taxes on gasoline. The Commonwealth has also made great strides in the funding public schools in our state after the implementation of Act 61. The new spending formula has made it more equitable for poorer school districts and lessened our reliability on using local tax revenues to

fund schools. Additionally, stimulus money has helped tremendously to better fund schools this year. We must continue down this track and hold the Commonwealth responsible for its share of public school funding. The Governor has proposed to increase funding \$354 million this year. We must look to new revenues stream to maintain this funding including taxing smokeless tobacco, a severance tax on natural gas drilling and closing loopholes on corporate taxes.

14. What economic development strategies for Pennsylvania and Philadelphia would you seek to encourage?

Pennsylvania should focus its job creation efforts on homegrown businesses. These types of businesses are where most jobs come from, According to a recent report, 28 times more Pennsylvania technology jobs in recent years came from growing our own companies than came from job movement across state lines. Additionally, we need to do a better job of investing in communities to make them more attractive places to live and work especially older industrially based communities who have hit hard times.

15. Currently the state constitution mandates that revenue from the state gasoline tax be spent only on roads and bridges. Would you support an amendment allowing gas tax revenue to be spent on public transportation?

**Yes. Please see answer to #13.**

16. What measures would you support to ensure that Pennsylvanians have clean air and water?

The drilling at Marcellus Shale is very exciting but very concerning. While the revenues to the Commonwealth from natural gas drilling can help boost our economy we cannot move forward with drilling without more stringent environmental protections. I would commit funds for greater environmental protection especially the safety of our drinking water in Philadelphia which can be affected by Marcellus Shale.

Furthermore, we must levy a severance tax on these companies drilling and use that money to help offset environmental costs.

17. What measures would you support to preserve and provide parks and green spaces?

We need to follow through on the Governor's Growing Greener program and provide additional funding to DCNR to preserve natural areas and open spaces; improve state parks; and enhance local recreational needs. The Governor has been a leader in this area and I fully support his efforts.