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# 2010 State Candidate Questionnaire

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## CANDIDATE CERTIFICATION

Candidate Name: Gregg Kravitz

Office Sought: State Representative, 182 Legislative District

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: \_\_\_\_\_

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?

I have not previously held elected office. I currently serve as an appointed member of the 8<sup>th</sup> Ward Democratic Executive Committee.

2. If you have previously held a government office:

a. What are the primary issue areas in which you were involved?

b. What committees, caucuses or working groups have you served on?

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.)

My background is in political organizing and campaign management, and one of my roles was communications strategy. On several of the campaigns I worked on, I was an integral part of policy development process. I helped candidates craft their stance on issues such as: marriage equality, foreign affairs and immigration reform.

Charlie Stewart (Candidate for Congress in Florida) and Manan Trivedi (Candidate for Congress in Pennsylvania) would be happy to provide more information upon request.

4. Please provide copies of all your significant campaign materials, including position papers, and information on your campaign strategy, expected funding sources, and endorsements.

## ISSUES

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

Yes  No

2. What limitations, if any, do you think should be placed on the rights of Pennsylvania citizens (including former prisoners) to vote?

None, I believe voting is a fundamental right and should not be restricted in any way.

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

Yes  No

- 2b. Would you support legislation providing for same day registration and unrestricted voting by absentee ballot?

Yes  No

3. Would you support any limitations, including waiting periods, on a woman's access to abortion?

Yes  No

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

Yes  No

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

Yes  No

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

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

Yes  No

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

Yes  No

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

Yes  No

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

I am in favor of strict punishment for “straw purchasers” and believe law enforcement should aggressively prosecute those that purchase guns for others. Further, I favor legislation requiring gun owners who lose or have their firearm stolen to report that loss within 24 hours or face stiff penalties.

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

Yes  No

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

Yes  No

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

As a member of the LGBT community, I have a personal investment in protecting my community from discrimination. I strongly support HB-300 and would be happy to sign on as a co-sponsor if elected.

Amending the PHRA to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression would provide basic protection to ensure fairness for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Pennsylvanians.

Twenty states already have laws protecting gay, lesbian, bisexual people from discrimination. Thirteen states also prohibit discrimination against transgender people through legislation or case law. Almost 300 municipalities in the United States, including Philadelphia and many others in Pennsylvania, have civil rights protections based upon sexual orientation, gender identity, or both. Moreover, more than 100 employers in Pennsylvania have non- discrimination policies including sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Pennsylvania must pass legislation prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and make Pennsylvania competitive with many of our neighbors.

Furthermore, I favor adjusting the language of the current Anti-bullying law to include specific reporting requirements in order to properly analyze the data collected and improve the existing policies. Strengthening current laws will create a better and safer learning environment because it will:

- Require schools to have clear procedures for reporting and investigating bullying
- Ensure that the school personnel are trained in bullying prevention and response
- Require parents of both the victim and the bully to be notified in cases of verified bullying

Moreover, I advocate specifically delineating LGBT and other at risk groups in the Anti-Bullying legislation. Available statistics illustrate the importance of making this change:

- 86.2% of LGBT students reported being verbally harassed, 44.1% reported being physically harassed and 22.1% reported being physically assaulted at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation.
- More than half (60.8%) of students reported that they felt unsafe in school because of their sexual orientation, and more than a third (38.4%) felt unsafe because of their gender expression.

Making sure that LGBT youth are specifically protected is essential not only to their school safety, but also for the community in general. No student can succeed in an environment that is unsafe or intolerant. The 2005 GLSEN report From Teasing to Torment: School Climate in America, conducted by Harris Interactive, found that students whose schools have a policy that specifically includes sexual orientation or gender identity/expression are less likely than other students to report a serious harassment problem at their school.

**9. Would you support proposals to ensure that women and men working for contractors of the Commonwealth receive equal pay for equal work?**

Yes  No

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

Yes  No

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

Approximately one million out of our 12 million citizens have no health coverage of any kind. Every Pennsylvanian is entitled to quality, affordable healthcare and I believe a single-payer system is the most cost-effective way of tackling rising costs and limited coverage.

I strongly support H.B. 1660, currently under consideration in the House, which will:

A. Protect Pennsylvania jobs

(a) by limiting employer contribution to the Health Trust employers currently paying for employee health insurance coverage will realize substantial savings;

(b) I will work to ensure that any healthcare legislation protects the many jobs already provided to our region by private insurance companies. We must insure that those workers are hired by the State and are retrained to implement and manage the single payer system;

B. Reduce Prescription Drug Cost - Pennsylvania's 12.5 million citizens represent a formidable bargaining force while dealing with drug companies;

C. Curb Defensive Medicine - according to a recent survey, 90% of Pennsylvania physicians admit to practicing some form of defensive medicine. Replacing fault based malpractice with a no-fault program will promote quality assurance instead of punishment;

D. Reduce Administrative Costs - a single payer approach eliminates the unnecessary and redundant overhead of existing public and private payers;

E. Reduce Personal Bankruptcy Resulting from Healthcare Expenses -universal coverage will preserve the dignity and savings of families placed at risk by the expense of uninsured illness;

F. Restore the Emergency Room - universal coverage assures that all citizens will have access to primary care physicians, thus ending the wasteful practice of using hospital emergency rooms as primary care centers.

**12. Do you believe that taxation should generally be progressive, so that people and businesses with higher incomes pay taxes at higher rates?**

Yes  No

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

Yes  No

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

Pennsylvania has one of the most regressive tax systems in the nation. The poorest 20% of wage earners pay 12 cents in state taxes per dollar earned, while the richest 1% pay only 4.3 cents after the federal deduction for state and local taxes.

I believe that Pennsylvania should join more than 30 other states and institute a graduated income tax to enable the Commonwealth to provide essential services to its citizens. I realize such a change would require a constitutional amendment, but I am ready to lead the effort to make this essential change a reality.

Pennsylvania must also address the manner in which education is funded. Reliance on property taxes burdens home-owners. I believe we must completely reexamine our system of funding public education. It is simply unacceptable that some suburban school districts can afford to pass out Apple computers to each student, while inner-city schools struggle to afford notebooks and other basic school supplies. We need to implement a funding system based on the unique needs of the varied and diverse school districts throughout our Commonwealth.

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

I believe that state spending on economic development should be significantly increased. Specifically, there must be more attention paid to Green jobs, and training our workers to embrace new technologies. I also believe that education funding must be intelligently increased to maximize the value to students.

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

There are far too many smart, qualified and hard-working Pennsylvanians who have lost their jobs or are underemployed. My plan to put Pennsylvania back to work includes:

1. Philadelphia is fighting a constant battle to provide core services to its most needy. Recently, we have heard a lot of discussion about the need for trash fees, soda taxes, and cuts to recreational services. Frankly, none of this would be necessary if Pennsylvania met its financial obligations to Philadelphia – specifically by assuming the operational costs of Philadelphia’s court system. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court has ordered that the State pay these costs, yet Philadelphia continues to foot the bill. On my first day in Harrisburg I will introduce legislation demanding that Pennsylvania meet its court ordered obligation to fund Philadelphia’s court system.

Further, we should all be outraged that our current representative has been silent on this issue. As chair of the State Government committee, she is in a unique position to force action on this issue at the State level, yet she chooses to focus her attention elsewhere. This is unacceptable leadership.

2. Extend and expand unemployment benefits to give Pennsylvanians a larger cushion when a job is lost, keep families in their homes during a time of unemployment, and provide the resources Pennsylvanians need to conduct a job search. Although Pennsylvania already provides adequate benefits relative to our neighbors, I believe there is always room to improve.

3. Work to expand funding for vocational training to allow job seekers to acquire the technological

or mechanical skills needed to obtain employment.

4. I will advocate for the continuation and expansion of Green job tax credits and local infrastructure improvement projects that put Pennsylvanians back to work. Green technology is the key to bringing jobs to Pennsylvania, and to that end I will introduce legislation requiring all new construction or substantial renovation of state buildings, public universities and schools to meet Green Building Standards. These measures will create new jobs and offset the up-front increase in construction costs by lowering overhead costs for state buildings.

5. I will introduce legislation to reform the Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ) Program to make sure it works for all Pennsylvanians.

The KOZ Program provides incentives for developers to construct new buildings on unused or underutilized parcels of land, such as old industrial sites or abandoned warehouses. Once developed, businesses are offered tax incentives to move into these new buildings. This program sounds great on the surface. In practice, there are significant problems that the KOZ program creates which must be addressed:

A. Philadelphia is giving away valuable real estate without requiring businesses to create and maintain job growth.

B. Philadelphia is experiencing increased vacancy rates in office buildings that are not a part of the KOZ program. This increased vacancy occurs because tenants are moving into KOZ buildings in order to take advantage of KOZ tax breaks. This causes the state and local municipalities to lose tax revenue.

C. The KOZ program creates short-term construction jobs to build KOZ buildings, but it fails to address the need to promote long-term, organic economic growth.

To address these problems, I would propose the following:

A. Require businesses taking advantage of KOZ tax relief to maintain job growth in order to continue receiving KOZ tax benefits. KOZ businesses would have to reapply for tax benefits on a yearly basis, so that Philadelphia and Pennsylvania get more jobs in return for KOZ tax breaks.

B. Create the greatest tax incentives for KOZ buildings in the most impoverished neighborhoods. This way we will develop our struggling communities and bring jobs to areas of Pennsylvania that are most in need of economic relief.

C. For KOZ buildings in neighborhoods with high real estate value, only offer KOZ tax benefits to businesses currently based outside of Pennsylvania, to encourage new companies to bring jobs and economic growth to Pennsylvania. This will also create more business for the local retail stores (such as restaurants and small shops) that depend on a vibrant business community to succeed.

**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. Public transportation is one of the many keys to ensuring that Philadelphia continues to grow. Providing efficient, cost effective transportation improves the quality of life, allows citizens to more easily get to their jobs

and provides additional employment opportunities for our dedicated public transit workers. I am proud to have received the endorsement of Transit Workers Union Local 234.

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

Working to protect the environment should be a primary concern for every Pennsylvanian. Pennsylvania must do its part to repower America with clean energy.

I will propose or support legislation that creates better energy efficiency incentives and requires the state to meet green building standards.

I will also work to promote responsible extraction of Marcellus Shale natural gas. Pennsylvania must require natural gas companies to pay a severance tax. I will work to ensure that this tax is applied fairly and that the revenue is distributed equitably. I will also work to impose federal water safety restrictions on gas companies.

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

I support added funding for the Fairmount Park Commission and the Philadelphia Department of Recreation. Philadelphia's abundant green space is one of its greatest treasures, and we must do what we can to preserve it for future generations. In addition to providing the departments that care for these spaces with the funding they need, I believe the City and State must partner with local organizations to preserve local parks. In the 182<sup>nd</sup> alone there are many local volunteer groups already doing this, including the Friends of Rittenhouse Square, Friends of Segar Park and Friends of Schuylkill River Park. Partnering with these fine organizations will increase the impact of State resources dedicated to Green preservation.