



## 2024 Platform Summary

### HOUSING

Every Pennsylvania resident deserves a safe, affordable home with easy access to the jobs, schools, services, transportation networks, and other amenities that shape their quality of life. Whether through new protections for renters, the development of new affordable housing projects, or the full-scale implementation of programs like Whole Homes Repair, this is the time to make a generation-defining investment in deeply affordable, green, and equitable housing.

- 1. Promote livable, walkable communities.** Pennsylvania deserves communities where residents can easily pick up their groceries, drop children off at school, and travel to work. Pennsylvania can invest in mixed-use, high density urban development that equitably expands public green spaces.
- 2. Expand Whole-Home Repairs.** The Whole-Home Repairs program was oversubscribed in its first year of operation. Pennsylvania can use money from the federal Inflation Reduction Act to increase resources for the program, as well as increase its own funding. In a promising step, Governor Shapiro recently announced \$50 million in additional funding for Whole-Home Repairs in his Budget Address.
- 3. Increase the supply of permanently affordable housing.** Pennsylvania needs a generational investment in affordable housing to provide homes to multi-generational Pennsylvanians as well as new immigrants. This will require a whole-of-government approach at all levels, and has the opportunity to provide good jobs and invest in green, comfortable homes.

### CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SAFETY

Pennsylvania is a world leader in mass incarceration, whose incarceration rate exceeds those of every country in the world, including our own. It is past time to make Pennsylvania a leader in mass liberation, not mass incarceration by reducing the cruelty and footprint of our criminal

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systems, devoting resources to proven anti-violence initiatives, and investing in what helps communities thrive.

- 1. End the Death Penalty.** I was proud to stand side-by-side with Governor Josh Shapiro as the governor publicly and proudly announced his opposition to the death penalty. As Governor Shapiro made clear, Pennsylvania “shouldn’t be in the business of putting people to death,” not least because at least 11 people sentenced to death in Pennsylvania in the past 45 years have been exonerated.
- 2. Make Compassionate Release Less Cruel and More Compassionate.** Pennsylvania’s compassionate release for incarcerated people only if they are sick or elderly, cannot walk, and have less than a year to live, inhumane requirements that have led to less than 50 releases in 14 years. At minimum, Pennsylvania should adopt legislation modeled on the federal First Step Act, which permits compassionate release when extraordinary and compelling reasons support it.
- 3. Support Second Chances at the Board of Pardons.** People serving life without parole sentences - or death by incarceration - in Pennsylvania have precious little chance of coming home, no matter how much they have accomplished behind bars. Pennsylvania should boost opportunities for second chances by, at minimum, allowing life sentences to be commuted by a majority vote of the Board of Pardons, rather than a unanimous vote.
- 4. Fund Proven Anti-Violence Initiatives.** Getting serious about gun violence in Pennsylvania requires investing in proven, community-based anti-violence programs like Cure Violence, a strategy that uses credible community members to identify and deescalate conflicts before they become lethal. When implemented in North Philadelphia, Cure Violence led to a remarkable 30% reduction in shootings.

## CARE

From viral pandemics to heat waves, Pennsylvania families are having to survive new extremes with too little support. Pennsylvania needs to establish high standards for long-term, comprehensive health care and ensure that care work is dignified work. Investing in care and health can help end cycles of instability, address community needs, and ensure all peoples’ ability to thrive.

- 1. Paid Family Leave for Pennsylvania.** Too many Pennsylvanians have to make the impossible choice between getting a paycheck or caring for a loved one. Pennsylvania should institute paid family leave and ensure income support for all workers who need to take time off for the care of a loved one.
- 2. Good union jobs for all caregivers.** Pennsylvania’s caregivers are the backbone of Philadelphia’s communities and economy. Those workers deserve high quality, union jobs and fair pay. Pennsylvania should also institute a domestic workers bill of rights for some of the most vulnerable workers in the state.

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- 3. High quality, affordable, and green care for children and adults.** Many working families need support to care for their loved ones — be it support for pre-K for their children or dignified aging or aging in place for their parents. Pennsylvania should provide funding to support high quality and affordable care options to its residents.

## LABOR

Pennsylvania is and must remain a bastion of organized labor power in America. Whether through just transition assistance programs, new standards for community benefit agreements, or cracking down on the misclassification and exploitation of contract workers, Pennsylvania has the opportunity to create new career pathways for organized labor to grow.

- 1. End the misclassification of workers as independent contractors.** Increasingly corporations are moving workers from full time employees to independent contractors or gig workers and therefore eliminating the workers' rights and benefits. This isn't just Doordash or Uber drivers, but also solar installers or care workers. Pennsylvania should tighten its classification of workers to address this unfairness.
- 2. Fight for a higher minimum wage.** Inflation and cost of living has rocked Pennsylvanians. But the minimum wage is still only \$7.25 per hour. While the House passed a bill that could raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour in 2026, this is too little too late for many working families. Pennsylvania needs to increase the minimum wage to \$17 per hour by 2025.
- 3. Make all government spending support project labor agreements and community benefits agreements.** The energy transition and major investments in the state's infrastructure offers an opportunity to create union jobs and support communities. Wherever possible, Pennsylvania should stipulate the requirement for high quality PLAs and CBAs to be set in place on all large-scale projects.
- 4. Establish a just transition state fund for fossil fuel workers transition assistance.** As Pennsylvania transitions off fossil fuels and winds down fracking and fossil fuel production, workers and communities deserve to stay whole. Pennsylvania should start a state fund for workers to support their transition into new jobs, careers, or retirement. It should also support the larger community beyond those directly impacted by fossil fuel operations shutdowns that will be affected by the transition.

## CLIMATE

Pennsylvania is at the epicenter of the climate crisis. It is a massive contributor to the nation's carbon emissions, and home to a variety of frontline communities, where displaced fossil fuel

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workers, toxic sites, and other features of the state's high-carbon legacy are damaging lives and livelihoods.

- 1. Clean Transportation for All.** Transportation accounts for almost a quarter of Pennsylvania's greenhouse gas emissions and plays a vital role in Philadelphian's access to education, jobs, healthcare, parks, and everyday necessities. Not only does SEPTA face a post-COVID fiscal cliff in 2025 that must be addressed immediately, but it is already under-funded compared to peer transit systems in the region. Pennsylvania can invest in public transit infrastructure for all instead of constantly expanding highways.
- 2. Fight for Utility Justice.** [17%](#) of low income households in Pennsylvania experienced energy shutoffs in 2019. As extreme heat and climate becomes all the more prevalent, communities need access to basic services. Shutoffs for electricity, gas, water, and broadband must be permanently stopped.
- 3. Leverage the IRA to build Pennsylvania's clean energy future.** There are billions of federal dollars available through the Inflation Reduction Act to decarbonize Pennsylvania's economy. The state should take full advantage of these funds to build clean energy, bring new jobs to the region, and invest in communities on the frontlines of the climate crisis.
- 4. Transition off Fossil Fuels:** A clean, safe future for all means phasing out fossil fuels. Pennsylvania is one of the largest fossil fuel suppliers in the country. The infrastructure—from the pipelines to the gas stoves—are also public health and safety risks. The state needs a plan to transition off of fossil fuels and keep communities healthy and whole.
- 5. Community-Climate Based Development:** Massive new development projects are proposed and underway across Pennsylvania — from major housing complexes to utility-scale solar installations. Pennsylvania needs to ensure these large projects align with community needs and climate realities. When Pennsylvanians express major concerns about proposed projects — such as the 76ers arena and FDR Meadows development — they need to be taken seriously. The state should ensure that large scale infrastructure projects are developed with deep community collaboration, built by union labor, and designed to meet climate goals.

## EDUCATION

Many Pennsylvania students go to school every day in toxic school buildings. Public school infrastructure has been woefully disinvested across the state, hurting students' education and health. It is time to fully fund public schools, so that they can support the next generation.

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- 1. Build safe, fossil-free schools to provide a 21st century standard of learning for all students.** Construct and renovate school using a community planning process that directly involves school communities in decision-making, and pay for it through direct appropriation in the short term, and the reestablishment of a strengthened PlanCon program in the long term.
- 2. Raise new funding equitably to ensure every public school delivers a high standard of learning and supports students social, emotional, and material needs.** Enact a fair share tax plan to raise additional money for schools through taxes that primarily impact wealthy individuals and profitable businesses, and put this new appropriation through the fair funding formula to ensure increased levels of support staff and lower class sizes in high-needs school districts.
- 3. Maintain community control and fight the privatization of public schools.** End all forms of vouchers or tax credits that direct money to private or charter schools that would have otherwise gone into public budgets that fund public schools.
- 4. State funding for Career Technical Education:** Develop school-to-career pipelines for green industries prepares Pennsylvania's young people for a warming world — while ensuring they have good pay, stable work, and the ability to stay within their communities for the duration of their careers.
- 5. End Property Tax Exemptions for Penn and other universities to fund public education:** Property taxes, which Penn does not pay, provide the majority of local funding for the public school system. Instead of waiting for Penn and other universities to pay their fair share, the state legislature should enact specific Payments In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) contributions from the schools.

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