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PA STATE LEGISLATIVE 2022 QUESTIONNAIRE
FOR PHILLY NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS

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2022 PA State Legislative Questionnaire

BACKGROUND Please note: answers to questions 7-9 are optional.

1. What, if any, elected or appointed government office(s) have you held?

I served as Press Secretary for State Senator Vincent Hughes and the PA Senate Appropriations Committee.

I served as Director of Communications for Philadelphia DA Larry Krasner and the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office

2. If you have previously held a government office:

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

I primarily worked on criminal justice reform at the DA's Office

I worked on healthcare, minimum wage, and progressive priorities in the state budget when working for PA Senate

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.)

I have also worked as an advocate, union organizer, journalist, and community activist. I have served on multiple boards, including my local civic association and local Democratic Executive Committee.

4. Please provide copies of all your significant campaign materials, including position papers, advertisement copy, and flyers.

5. What, if any, endorsements have you received? What others are you seeking?

We have received endorsements from Philadelphia D.A. Larry Krasner, Councilwoman Maria Quiñones-Sánchez, Councilman Kenyatta Johnson, State Rep. Morgan Cephas, and Reclaim Philadelphia.

We are actively seeking endorsements from many other unions and progressive organizations.

6. What is your plan to win this race, including your fundraising goals and strategies.

In an open seat with no incumbent, we estimate that we will need to raise at least \$150,000 and garner around 5,500 votes to win this race. I ran in 2016 and come within a few hundred votes of winning. My campaign will knock on every door in the district while building a coalition of committee people, labor, and grassroots activists. We have an aggressive fundraising plan to fund paid voter contact with a focus on mail and digital.

7. What, if any, genders, do you identify with?

Male

8. What is your sexual orientation?

Straight

9. What is your racial, ethnic identity?

White, Jewish

ISSUES

Please note: Although many of the following questions may be answered “yes” or “no” you should feel free to elaborate if doing so would provide a clearer statement of your position. If you believe you do not have enough information to answer a question, or have not formed an opinion, please say so.

I. OVERALL

What would be your three highest priorities as a legislator? Explain.

My priority would be ending this pandemic. Republicans in Harrisburg have completely disregarded public health experts and have implemented policies that have increased the toll that COVID has taken on Pennsylvania. After this pandemic ends, we will need to have a just recovery. That means reducing poverty, funding public schools, and putting resources in neighborhoods suffering from increased gun violence.

We've seen Republicans in Harrisburg hard at work to undermine our democracy. From denying the legitimacy of the 2020 presidential election, to implementing restrictive “Voter ID” laws, and repealing popular measures such as vote-by-mail, the GOP will stop at nothing to impose their authoritarian worldview in Harrisburg. That's why protecting our democracy is one of my highest priorities in Harrisburg, and why I will stop at nothing to resist these attacks and confront other forms of authoritarianism in our state government.

II. Education

- 1) Do you believe public college, or community college, should be tuition free?

Yes.

- 2) What role do you believe standardized tests should play in evaluating teachers, schools and students, if any?

I believe we should reduce the reliance on standardized tests. They are often biased against students in a variety of ways and should not be tied to funding.

- 3) What factors do you believe should be considered in determining *overall levels* of school funding in the Commonwealth, and funding *per school district*?

I believe in a fair funding formula for all Pennsylvania schools. We must consider equity when making education funding decisions. We cannot rely on property taxes as the primary source of funding because this inherently hurts low income areas.

- 4) Approximately 33% of Philadelphia students are enrolled in charter schools. What is your position on the expansion of charter schools? Should they be given public money via vouchers or similar programs (like ESAs)? What role do you think public schools play in our city?

I believe we need a moratorium on new charter schools until the statewide charter law is fixed to be equitable and have sufficient oversight. We cannot allow charter schools to siphon resources away from traditional public schools. I am opposed to vouchers and the ESAs.

III. Budget and Taxes

- 1) Do you support a Constitutional Amendment to permit progressive taxation in PA, in whole or part?

Yes. I also believe that localities like Philadelphia should have the power to impose their own forms of progressive taxation.

- 2) What changes if any would you support in the corporate net income tax levels? See this: <https://krc-pbpc.org/issues/corporate-income-taxes/>

We need to increase taxes on corporations, I support increasing the tax levels.

- 3) What changes, if any, would you support in the personal income tax?

I believe that we need to make PA's personal income tax more progressive by increasing the amount paid by the wealthy.

- 4) Do you support the Fair Share Tax Plan proposed by the PA Budget and Policy Center, with its emphasis on raising the tax rate on unearned income?

Yes.

- 5) Do you support full elimination of the Delaware loophole?

Yes.

- 6) Do you support a tax on fracking, and at what level?

I support a ban on fracking but if we can't get that we should tax it at a very high level to discourage drilling.

- 7) Do you support the Keystone Opportunity Zone program? Would you introduce legislation to eliminate it, or to limit the number of times a parcel's KOZ designation can be renewed or extended? More generally, do you support tax breaks to lure or retain businesses?

I believe that we need a moratorium on these programs until they can be adjusted to increase equity and oversight. There have been too many examples of projects that did not need public subsidy to succeed and yet got tax breaks or subsidies. I am in favor of some incentives to help responsible business owners either locate or expand in Pennsylvania, but only if those subsidies will create good paying jobs for our residents.

IV. Public Banking

Would you support the creation of a Pennsylvania Public Bank, modeled after the Bank of North Dakota, and/or the creation of local public banks in PA cities and counties?

Yes

V. Women's Rights

- 1) Do you believe there should be any restrictions on a woman's right to choose? If so, what?

I believe that abortion is a form of healthcare and healthcare is a human right. I will oppose any attempt to limit reproductive rights in Pennsylvania.

- 2) What additional protections should be enacted into law to protect women's health care in light of the pending decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to override or sharply curtail Roe v. Wade?

We must enshrine reproductive rights into the PA Constitution.

- 3) Would you support proposals to ensure that women and men working in the Commonwealth receive equal pay for equal work?

Yes.

VI. Children and Families

- 1) Should the state require businesses to provide paid family leave?

Yes.

- 2) Should the state provide universal availability of affordable childcare? If yes, how would you achieve this?

Yes, I believe we should use a progressive income tax to pay for universal childcare.

VII. Environment

- 1) Do you support a ban on fracking in whole or part? Explain.

I believe in a complete ban on fracking. I also believe we must ensure that those workers who rely on fossil fuel extraction to support themselves and their communities are transitioned into well-paying, union jobs creating green energy infrastructure as a part of a Green New Deal for Pennsylvania.

- 2) Would you support banning the use of single-use plastic bags?

Yes.

- 3) Do you think Philadelphia should be compelled or induced to sell PGW?

No, I believe that Philadelphia should keep its control over this public utility.

- 4) What measures would you support to move PA off its reliance on fossil fuels and expand use of renewable energy sources?

I believe in a Green New Deal for Pennsylvania. That mean directing state funds towards green energy infrastructure and the elimination of fossil fuel energy infrastructure across the state. I believe that a Green New Deal is the only way to end our dependence on fossil fuels and simultaneously revitalize local economies. Additionally, we should be providing tax incentives for wind and solar energy, not letting natural gas drillers get away with destroying our environment while failing to pay taxes. Additionally, I will never approve of any new funding or subsidies for fossil fuel infrastructure.

- 5) What criteria would you use in making appointments to the P.U.C.?

I would ensure that prospective appointments to the P.U.C. do not have any personal or economic ties to the fossil fuel industry, or have a record of supporting the proliferation of fossil fuels in our society.

- 6) What steps would you take to ensure environmental justice in the placement and remediation of structures that pollute?

We must have an equity lens to ensure that communities that have been a victim of environmental racism are first in line to benefit from the remediation of structures that pollute.

- 7) What, if any, other measures would you support to preserve or improve our environment? (water issues, park preservation, detoxification of school buildings, etc.)

I strongly believe that we need to allocate funding towards the detoxification of our public schools. A recent study found that 98% of Philadelphia public schools tested had some lead-containing water and that this is likely the tip of the iceberg, additionally, dozens of schools in Philadelphia contain dangerous levels of asbestos. This is frankly unacceptable, it is ludicrous that we have to send our children to schools that are literally making them sick and contributing to negative health outcomes for students and staff members alike. If elected, I will make detoxification one of my key priorities in Harrisburg.

VIII. Criminal Justice

- 1) Should stop and frisk be limited or outlawed?

Stop and frisk should be outlawed.

- 2) How would you deal with the problem of mass incarceration of minorities, particularly minority youth?

I believe that we need to completely overhaul our criminal justice system and I have been involved in significant efforts to make reform happen, including working for District Attorney Krasner and the Philadelphia DA's Office.

- 3) Should marijuana be fully legalized?

Yes.

- 4) Should privately-owned prisons be permitted in Pennsylvania?

No.

- 5) Should we ban the box in Pennsylvania?

Yes, PA should follow Philly's lead on this issue.

- 6) Should PA continue to build new prisons?

No.

- 7) Should PA begin to close prisons? Explain.

Yes, we must reduce the number of people sentenced to state prison by enacting criminal justice reform at the local level. .

8) Do you support an end to the death penalty?

Yes.

9) When if ever, should a juvenile be tried as an adult?

We should change state law so that no juvenile can be tried as an adult, regardless of the offense.

10) As a general matter, what do you think the state can do to reduce the murder rate in Philadelphia, while maintaining respect for civil liberties and the overall need for decarceration of our city?

We cannot pretend that closing schools, recreation centers, and other critical pieces of public infrastructure in response to the pandemic did not have an impact on gun violence. We need to double down on safely reopening these facilities to provide support to young people in some of Philly's hardest hit neighborhoods. We also need more investments in economic development, education, and job training. Finally, we need more resources for violence prevention to stop shootings before they happen by investing in people first.

IX. Campaign Finance Reform

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

Yes. I also support limits on campaign contributions.

X. Labor

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

Yes.

2) Should the minimum wage be increased? If so, to what level and should the increase be indexed to inflation?

Yes. Pennsylvania's minimum wage is wholly inadequate considering inflation and the rising cost of living. I would raise the minimum wage to \$15/hour and have it indexed to inflation

3) Do you believe that Philadelphia and other municipalities should continue to be pre-empted from increasing the minimum wage on their own?

No.

- 4) Do you support privatization of retail liquor sales in Pennsylvania? Are there any other services that you believe should be considered for privatization?

No. I am deeply skeptical of efforts to privatize public services and institutions.

- 5) Philadelphia remains the most impoverished major city and about 75% of our residents lack bachelor's degrees. What policies would you implement to ensure that decent, high-paying jobs created here are accessible to the majority of our population, not just the relatively well-educated and already well off?

We need to invest in education to increase the number of Philadelphia's who have bachelor's degrees. We also need to create jobs that require a variety of skillsets, including well-paying union jobs with benefits. I believe that any "Green New Deal" should include efforts to create jobs that can be done without a bachelor degree.

XI. Reforming Legislative Districts

- 1) Do you support legislation that would (1) form an independent commission, and (2) apply sound methodologies, to draw all congressional, State House, and Senate districts fairly in Pennsylvania?

Yes. For years, Republicans in Harrisburg appointed themselves the majority party through their cynical and opportunistic gerrymandering. I support any legislation that ensures the creation of fair districts drawn by an independent commission using proven methodologies.

XII. Public Health

- 1) Would you support state legislation to create a single-payer system in PA?

Yes.

- 2) How would you reduce or eliminate the racial disparities in the provision of health care, in particular the distribution of lifesaving COVID vaccines and medications?

The racial disparities in health outcomes is indicative of the structural racism embedded into our healthcare system. I believe the biggest step we can take towards reducing these disparities is by instituting a single-payer healthcare system for Pennsylvania, giving healthcare to each and every resident in the Commonwealth, including to communities of color that are more likely to be uninsured or underinsured. Additionally, many communities of color do not have access to high-quality healthcare nearby, that's why I will fight for increased

funding for community health centers in underserved areas and communities of color. Insofar as reducing the racial disparities in the distribution of COVID vaccines and medications, I would distribute funding to vaccine clinics and outreach programs in communities of color run by community leaders themselves such as faith leaders and organizations like the Black Doctors COVID Consortium.

XIV. Housing

- 1) How would you deal with the growing affordable housing gap in PA, both in the homeownership and rental markets?

I support increasing funding for affordable housing in all parts of PA. That means making sure that there are the resources available in every budget to expand affordable housing. It also means adjusting state law to require large developers to include affordable units in major developments. Finally, we need to work to make sure that state funds, especially RCAP, are not being used to develop projects that undermine affordability or cause gentrification in our neighborhoods.

- 2) Would you support a mandate requiring landlords to show good cause for evictions?

Yes.