

PA STATE LEGISLATIVE 2022 QUESTIONNAIRE
FOR PHILLY NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS

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CANDIDATE CERTIFICATION

Candidate Name: Elizabeth Fiedler _____

Office Sought: _Representative in the General Assembly for the 184th 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: 2/16/2024

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

Gloria Gilman: gmgilman@gmail.com

and

Stan Shapiro: shapsj@comcast.net

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

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

I am currently serving as the Representative in the General Assembly for State House District 184, and am seeking re-election to the same office.

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?

I have been working since my inauguration in January 2019 to fight for healthy, energy efficient, 21st Century public schools. I have introduced a number of pieces of legislation to demand emergency funding to remediate lead, mold, and asbestos in our schools to protect the health and safety of children and all school workers. I support fully and fairly funded schools and sending all basic education dollars through the Fair Funding Formula.

State Representative Chris Rabb and I have co-sponsored a Fair Share Tax Plan to reform our current unfair tax policies which predominantly benefit extreme wealth and corporate profits.

I serve on the Appropriations, Children & Youth, Environmental Resources & Energy, Health, and Children & Youth committees.

In this term, I have introduced, passed, and had signed into law a bill requiring informed consent for pelvic exams. I also authored the Solar for Schools Grant Program, which will provide money to schools to convert to solar energy, providing CTE opportunities for students and freeing up much-needed funds for facilities repairs.

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.)

n/a

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?

I have been endorsed in the past by:

Philadelphia Neighborhood Networks (thank you!)

Philly First Ward Democrats

PA National Organization for Women

Philly Unite Here!

5th Square

Americans for Democratic Action

EMILY's List

Food & Water Action

Free the Ballot

IATSE Local 8

IBEW 98
ILA 1291
Our Revolution
Eastern Atlantic Regional Council of Carpenters
Pa. AFL CIO
Phila AFL CIO
Philadelphia Democratic Socialists of America (DSA)
Philadelphia Federation of Teachers (PFT)
Public Arts Commission
Reclaim Philadelphia
Represent PA
SEIU 32BJ
SEIU Healthcare
SEIU Pa State Council
Teamsters 830
Teamsters BMWED
Teamsters Local 3012
UFCW 1776
United Food & Commercial Workers
Working Families Party (WFP)
Senator Bernie Sanders

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

Fortunately, I am unopposed in the primary and currently also in the general election.

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

8. What is your sexual orientation? Hetero

9. What is your racial, ethnic identity? White

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 top priorities focus on education, workers' rights, and climate & economy. I am committed to working to ensure our public schools are fully funded, energy efficient, and free of toxins such as lead and asbestos. Reducing the class sizes and fairly compensating our teachers and all school workers is also necessary.

I am a strong supporter of growing and strengthening labor unions. I oppose “right-to-work legislation,” “paycheck protection legislation,” and all legislation that threatens the prosperity of organized labor and workers rights. We must invest in social safety nets and public institutions to create good, family

sustaining jobs that are unionized, and offer stability and consistency instead of forcing workers into a cycle of precarity. I support other pro-labor legislation like expanding OSHA protections to public sector workers and strongly believe every worker has the right to form a union.

To further support workers, we must increase PA's minimum wage to at least \$15/hour, and pass the statewide Fair Workweek legislation I've introduced to ensure predictable work schedules and pay for workers.

As part of a local and global effort to slow climate change, we must invest in clean energy, electrification, efficiency, and climate adaptation — creating permanent union jobs across the city and state. We must also prioritize expanding our public transit systems as part of addressing climate change.

II. Education

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

Yes. Education should be a right, not a privilege.

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

Standardized testing is not a fair evaluation of the hard work that teachers and students do. I am working to end high stakes testing that forces educators to teach to a test, rather than encourage critical thinking or life skills building.

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

We need to have fair and full education funding based on numbers of students and their needs (ex. rates of poverty, numbers of English Language Learners). Education funding needs to go through the Fair Funding Formula.

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?

We must increase public oversight of existing charter schools. I support a moratorium on new charter schools until every neighborhood public school is fully-funded and made safe and healthy for students and education workers.

III. Budget and Taxes

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

The PA Constitution needs to be amended and the Uniformity Clause repealed, as working people and low-income families are hurting from higher taxation rates while corporations are receiving tax breaks.

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/>

I support raising the tax on unearned income. I have demonstrated my commitment to this policy position by co-sponsoring the [Fair Share Tax Plan](#) with my colleagues in Harrisburg.

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

I continue to fight for working-class Pennsylvanians on taxes and many other issues. That means prioritizing working and low-income households.

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! I support raising the tax on unearned income. I have demonstrated my commitment to this policy position by co-sponsoring the [Fair Share Tax Plan](#) with my colleagues in Harrisburg.

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

Yes. It hurts Pennsylvanians across the state when we allow corporations to abuse this loophole, severely limiting potential state revenue. More broadly, allowing corporations to incorporate in Delaware (or any other state) and be governed by that state's laws and tax code only serves to exacerbate inequalities that the working class face.

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

Yes. We should be transitioning to renewable energy, while ensuring fossil fuel workers have guaranteed income and benefits and union jobs in renewable energy.

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 support the elimination of - or, at the minimum, a limitation on - the number of times a parcel's KOZ designation can be renewed or extended. I do not support tax breaks to lure or retain businesses when the benefits do not outweigh the cost to our state's residents and taxpayers.

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. Public banks are able to reduce taxes within their jurisdictions, because their profits are returned to the general fund of the public entity. The costs of public projects undertaken by governmental bodies are also greatly reduced, because public banks do not need to charge interest to themselves. A public bank could free us from depending on Wall Street banks for loans, stimulating the success of local and minority-owned businesses that may otherwise lack access to capital.

V. Women's Rights

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

No. Every individual, regardless of gender, should have control and autonomy over their bodies and have access to a safe, legal abortion. I support the protection of reproductive rights regardless of gender.

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 are facing a reproductive rights crisis in the Courts. Cases like *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* that ban individuals from receiving abortion services should concern us all. We must ensure that all individuals who can become pregnant have autonomy and control over their own bodies. Abortion is a healthcare service that should be accessible and affordable to anyone who needs it.

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. Caring for a family member, old or young, should not put people in economic vulnerability. In addition to parental leave regardless of gender, paid family leave should be extended to those caring for an elderly or ailing parent.

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

I support universal pre-k. Care within the home is not simply an issue of care, but one of labor: homecare workers are some of the lowest paid workers, rarely have union representation, are most often women, and are likely to be people of color. These intersecting factors result in an industry that is largely exploitative. To achieve universal availability of affordable childcare, we must protect homecare workers through access to unionization and fair pay and benefits. We must prioritize the needs of people and families over profits.

VII. Environment

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

I support banning fracking in whole. Extraction of natural resources harms our environment, as well as Pennsylvanians' health, water quality, and air quality.

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. Unionized employees of PGW should be able to continue to be public employees. I support finding creative solutions to retrofit homes to make them more energy efficient.

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

I am committed to continuing to work with environmental justice and community groups like Sunrise Movement to organize for the legislative policies we need.

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

Although I'm not a state Senator and do not participate in these confirmations, it is important that those appointed to the P.U.C resemble our state's diverse population and prioritize the transition to renewable energy.

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

Environmental racism harms black and brown and poor communities, and it's important that we prioritize the safety of our environment for all. In particular, our public schools require full and fair funding to remediate pollutants like asbestos, mold, and other environmental hazards.

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

We must fully fund the DEP and state parks. As I've described, remediating toxic schools is a primary focus of my legislative agenda, and I will not stop fighting for safe schools in every neighborhood within my district.

VIII. Criminal Justice

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

Yes. It is ineffective and disproportionately targets people of color.

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

First, we must end cash bail and pretrial detention, both of which violate individual rights and disproportionately impact poor communities.

Further, we must recognize that addiction is a mental health issue that impacts public health. No place understands the harm of addiction better than Philadelphia. We know that the criminalization of addiction does little to tangibly protect our neighborhoods and allows for increased state surveillance. Those suffering from addiction may require mental health treatment, healthcare, trauma and grief support, counseling, housing assistance, and career training opportunities.

3) **Should marijuana be fully legalized?**

Yes.

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

No. No company should ever profit from the imprisonment of a human being.

5) **Should we ban the box in Pennsylvania?**

Yes.

6) **Should PA continue to build new prisons?**

No.

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

We must take measures to reduce prison populations and close prisons. To begin to do this, we should end cash bail, which violates individual rights and disproportionately harms the poor and black and brown communities, and does not make our communities safer.

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

Yes.

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

Juveniles should not be tried as adults.

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?**

There are a number of policies we should be working towards to reduce violence in our city. In particular, we need more mental health and healthcare services, trauma and grief support, counseling, housing assistance, a better education system, and career training programs right in the community.

IX. Campaign Finance Reform

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

Yes. I know firsthand how difficult running a campaign as a grassroots candidate. Politics should not be reserved for the elite and well-connected, and a public small-donor matching system in Pennsylvania could reduce the financial barrier working-class people face in running for office.

X. Labor

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

We must strengthen the enforcement of existing labor laws, with repercussions for employers who engage in union-busting and wage theft. At the state level, I believe that projects the state invests in should create good jobs, not only on the job site, but for the long term. I support the expansion of prevailing wage provisions, particularly on projects that the state subsidizes. All our lives as working people are better because of unions. Unionization is connected with higher wages for all workers, and lower income inequality. My parents are both proud union members, and I will not give up this fight.

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

The minimum wage should be increased to at least \$15/hour. Every worker deserves a living wage. It is unacceptable that people are making \$7.25/hour right now, which is not enough to afford a two-bedroom apartment anywhere in the entire state. We need to raise the minimum wage to at least \$15/hour, and to establish one fair wage so that those who currently rely on tips to meet their basic needs can be certain they will make a minimum of \$15/hour.

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?

I oppose the privatization of liquor sales in PA.

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?

Workers deserve a living wage regardless of their level of education, or the job they're tasked with doing. It's unconscionable that people are making \$7.25/hr right now, which is not enough to afford a two-bedroom apartment anywhere in the entire state. We need to raise the minimum wage to \$15/hour, and to establish one fair wage so that waiters and waitresses, for example, can also be certain they will make a minimum of \$15/hr. I co-sponsored this legislation in the State House.

We need to invest in training programs and structures so we can train thousands of people to make our buildings use less energy, and to use renewable sources of energy. We need to make sure there are career paths for people to follow from those jobs, whether they were coming from school, from unemployment or from incarceration. This work can and should be done in partnership with the unions that work hard to ensure a high-quality job is done, and is done safely.

I have also introduced Fair Work Week legislation, and worked with unions, colleagues, and community groups to push it forward. This legislation would ensure that workers get two weeks notice of their work schedule, and that if last minute shift changes are made (shifts added or removed), they would receive compensation pay. This way, people could have predictable schedules that would allow them to schedule the rest of their lives (childcare, college, doctor's appointments) and have predictable budgets within their household as well.

I have pushed for funding to remediate conditions in our schools, which will create jobs, and for more basic education funding, which would create more jobs for librarians, counselors, teachers, nurses, custodians, cafeteria workers, and other staff.

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. Voters should choose their representatives, not the other way around. Gerrymandering has long been a threat to democracy, as evidenced by the current battle in Pennsylvania over redistricting.

XII. Public Health

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

Yes. Everyone living in Pennsylvania should receive healthcare as a right, from the day they are born through old age and death.

- 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?**

Legislating a single-payer system in Pennsylvania would be a good first step in reducing the racial disparities in healthcare. Healthcare costs as they are now are exorbitant, and render high quality healthcare inaccessible to a vast number of our neighbors.

We also need to consider other factors that lead to poorer health outcomes including unstable housing, lack of access to healthy food, and environmental pollutants that further exacerbate health issues.

XIV. Housing

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

We all deserve a warm, dry, safe place to call home. Rising housing costs, and the fact that so many jobs pay too little, have made realizing that reality very hard for many people. Across our district, city, and state, many people struggle just to pay their rent or mortgage, while also affording groceries, medical bills, prescriptions, and childcare. We need to raise the minimum wage, pass our Fair Work Week legislation, strengthen unions, and implement comprehensive housing reform, including increasing funding for public and affordable housing that is safe.

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

We need to change eviction expungement procedures. Many renting tenants face eviction through no fault of their own, and under current PA law, this eviction record follows them for years. Under legislation I have introduced, an eviction that came from a “not-for-cause” eviction would be sealed: giving a clean slate to many families who are looking for and deserve safe and affordable housing.