

**PA STATE LEGISLATIVE 2022 QUESTIONNAIRE
FOR PHILLY NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS**

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CANDIDATE CERTIFICATION

Candidate Name: Chris Rabb

Office Sought: PA HD 200

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: 2/20/2024

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

Gloria Gilman: gmgilman@gmail.com

and

Stan Shapiro: shapsj@comcast.net

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 have represented District 200 in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives since 2017.

2. If you have previously held a government office:

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

Social equity, voting rights, environment, criminal legal reform, labor / worker rights, healthcare.

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

on the House Commerce, Finance, Judiciary & Agriculture & Rural Affairs

Committees.

I am also a founder of the Progressive Legislators Working Group, the antecedent to the PA Progressive Caucus on whose founding board I serve; a founding member of the PA Cannabis Caucus & the PA Legislative Climate Caucus for which I wrote the bylaws. I am also the founding chair of the House Democratic Caucus Equity Committee. Additionally, I am a member of several other affinity caucuses including the PA Legislative Black Caucus, Women's Health Caucus, and LGBTQ Equality Caucus. Lastly, I was appointed to serve as the PA representative to the National Conference of State Legislators' Energy Supply Task Force and am the former regional chair of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators.

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.)

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

For more information, visit our social media (@Rabb4thepeople on X, Instagram and TikTok, Rabb for the People on Facebook) and at RabbForThePeople.com.

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

PFT, UniteHere 634, UniteHere 274, TAUP, AFT, Teamsters 830, Amistad Power, Free the Ballot. We are in the process of seeking endorsements from all 20+ organizations who have endorsed me in previous cycles.

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

I have no opponent. My campaign this cycle will be focused on continuing to engage voters in lower turnout areas of our district to expand the vote and prepare our district for the November election.

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

I identify as a cis-hetero man.

8. What is your sexual orientation?

9. What is your racial, ethnic identity?

I'm unapologetically Black.

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.

Voting rights, a green and care-based solidarity economy that prioritizes worker rights, criminal legal reform and shared prosperity.

II. Education

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

Yes. Education is a human right.

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

None. They perpetuate systemic biases and force teachers to teach to arbitrary metrics that reinforce class and race divides.

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 have introduced HB 961 which requires that 100% of state education dollars be routed through the fair funding formula. We need to consider student need and equitable investments that address generations of intentional and abusive funding neglect.

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 need a charter school moratorium, and voucher programs are simply a way for private schools to take money from public schools. Public schools must be the fully funded and resourced educational model and backbone of our city.

I also have introduced legislation to require greater transparency & accountability in the EITC/OSTC programs that funnel tax dollars for the benefit of their wealthy sponsors and students accepted to non-public schools with little oversight.

III. Budget and Taxes

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

Yes, in whole. I have been a co-prime sponsor of a bill that does just that.

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/>

The CNI should be reduced while closing the Delaware loophole.

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

As the majority chair on the Subcommittee on Tax Modernization and Reform, this is an issue that is deeply important to me.

According to a 2019 report from the Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center, 20% of families with the lowest incomes pay roughly 14% of their income on state and local taxes, while those in the top 1% only pay 6%.

It's truly absurd that the bottom 60% of income earners are, on average, paying nearly double the tax rate of what the richest Pennsylvanians pay. That's why I re-introduced my [Fair Share Tax Plan](#).

Under this plan, state income tax on wages and interest would be reduced to 1.9% and the tax on passive income increased to 12%. The result of these changes? Our regressive tax system is made fairer while the overall budget deficit is reduced and \$6.22 billion in new tax revenue is raised every year. That's a win-win-win.

The Fair Share Tax Plan gives PA the opportunity to take our upside-down tax structure and turn it right side up. It's time the ultra rich pay their fair share.

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 have been the prime sponsor of this bill in the House for 4 terms.

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

Yes.

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

I do not support a tax on fracking because such a fiscal policy would encourage the continuation of this insidious industry. Instead, I support carbon pricing which would put a per-ton fee on emissions from the state's largest corporate polluters. I [have a bill](#) which would do just that.

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 cannot affirm the efficacy of the KOZ program in terms of its outcomes for vulnerable and minoritized communities. More generally, I do not support tax avoidance schemes that do not create community wealth where it's needed most.

On a related note, I have introduced a bill that prohibits PA from offering corporate-specific tax incentives so that taxpayers aren't funding race-to-the-bottom approach that too many cities and states employ to lure megacorporations. That kind of effort only hurts workers and local businesses.

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. I have authored in a prior term a bill to create a public bank on the state level that complements and strengthens efforts to do so on a municipal level. I am also introducing a green bank bill for PA to take advantage of IRA funds to promote large-scale public works projects centering on clean energy production and other climate action and environmental justice efforts.

V. Women's Rights

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

No. Healthcare is a human right. I support safe and reliable access to reproductive care for all birthing people and Pennsylvanians and have fought back against forced-birth extremists every year in Harrisburg; even proposing parody legislation that parallels what is being forced onto those with a female reproductive system onto those with a male reproductive system. In previous cycles, I have been strongly endorsed by Planned Parenthood and regularly work on and support legislation to expand abortion access and contraception care.

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 need to enshrine *Roe* in Pennsylvania's Constitution, and we need to pursue creative legislation that emphasizes the logical and farcical conclusion of the kind of legal thinking it will take to overturn *Roe*.

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. Many nations are moving toward longer family leave. We need to move in that direction for the sake of our new families.

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

Yes. My carbon pricing and/or fair share tax plan bills could generate sufficient revenues to fund this ambitious and critical new entitlement.

VII. Environment

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

I support a ban on all *new* fracking activity because the future of our planet depends on our ability, right now, to transition to sustainable energy sources. Fracking draws more blood from our planet's heart at a time when we need to save the patient.

That's why I have introduced legislation to [enhance transparency in hydraulic fracking](#) operations in Pennsylvania to require well operators to annually report various impacts, including expenditures for temporary water supplies, non-disclosure agreements, and the impact on public resources, making these reports publicly available.

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. As the oldest publicly-owned utility in the nation and should be something we collectively reinvent and overhaul in furtherance of environmental and socio-economic sustainability.

We must commit to reimagining PGW as a consumer-owned cooperative corporation committed to providing green, affordable and reliable energy that promotes deep decarbonization and environmental resilience.

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

Addressing climate change and transitioning to renewable energy sources requires multifaceted strategies. We must make plans to invest in renewable energy infrastructure and technology to pave the way for a departure from fossil fuels. We also prioritize sustainable energy efficient initiatives across transportation,

buildings, and infrastructure to curb greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, we set forth ambitious clean energy targets and incentives to drive innovation and investment in renewable energy solutions.

To ensure a just transition, we must advocate for the development of green jobs and workforce training programs, acknowledging the need to support workers and communities in fossil fuel industries while creating a pathway to good union employment for those historically disenfranchised. Along the way, we must emphasize the importance of strengthening environmental regulations and advocating for sustainable land use practices to mitigate climate change impacts and safeguard natural ecosystems.

A few of my relevant climate action bills –

- Getting Pennsylvania [fully carbon neutral by 2050 and shift our economy to renewable sources.](#)
- Ensuring [transparency in fracked gas operations](#)
- Establishing the [Pennsylvania Environmental Justice Policy Center](#)
- Establishing a [Pollinator Task Force](#)
- Making PA's biggest [corporate polluters pay a per-ton fee on toxic emissions](#)

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

I would focus on people who can make wise, people-centered decisions about utilities, and people who understand the urgent need to transition to green utilities.

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

Community engagement has to be at the forefront. Nobody wants to live in pollution, and folks know where the pollution in their neighborhood is. We have to engage with people where they are to identify and remediate these kinds of situations, and we need to fund the kind of green maintenance and renovation programs that replace polluting structures with green ones.

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

Clean air, water, accessible and clean parks, and green schools are all core issues I have

fought for. I believe we need a Pennsylvania Conservation Corps that is tasked with supporting exactly those issues – cleaning our environment, working to repair harm from pollution, and upgrading our schools so that they are green and inviting – e.g., solar panels on public school roofs along with gardens, and double-paned windows that insulate students instead of the iron bar system that is in too many schools.

VIII. Criminal Justice

1) Should stop and frisk be limited or outlawed?

Outlawed. It is both racist and unconstitutional.

2) How would you deal with the problem of mass incarceration of **Black and brown people**, particularly youth?

We need to decriminalize crimes of poverty, mental illness, substance use, or sex work; we need to dramatically reduce sentence length across the board, including ending the death penalty and death by incarceration; we need to invest significant resources into communities and public health systems instead of policing and incarceration. We need prevention – to treat violence as a public health problem – and to invest in violence interrupters, non-police healthcare responders, short-and-long-term at-home care support systems, and care economic jobs that pay folks to help each other out. We need to provide the services people need to have stable lives, and not treat every problem like it is a nail for the police to hammer.

3) Should marijuana be fully legalized?

Yes, and taxed equitably so that communities disproportionately impacted by its criminalization receive the benefits of its legalization.

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

No. They should remain un-privatized. We should also de-privatize halfway houses and all other actors in the supervision/surveillance space within the carceral system.

5) Should we ban the box in Pennsylvania?

Yes – as long as we implement policies and programs that address the pernicious tactics employers use to find proxies for race & ethnicity. I am working on legislation that would fast-track returning citizens reentry into the workforce by creating an on-ramp to earning a qualified employment certification for employers to affirmatively embrace as a formal affirmation of their viability as an employee.

6) Should PA continue to build new prisons?

No. If we build them we will fill them.

7) Should PA begin to close prisons? Explain.

Yes. Studies increasingly show there is no community safety benefit to prisons – they do not reduce recidivism at any point, and make later violence more likely. Ever since the first prison was constructed in the United States, people have seen their inhumanity and sought to close them. There are better ways of reducing violence, promoting community safety, and providing redress for harm.

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

Yes. After introducing my [bill to abolish the death penalty](#) 4 times, the legislation was successfully passed out of the House Judiciary Committee in 2023 with bipartisan support.

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

Never. I have authored a [bill to end automatic sentencing](#) of youth 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?

The state should establish a well-funded, multi-agency entity to address gun violence as the public health crisis it is. We must understand the factors that cause it and appropriate, trauma-informed, non-law enforcement interventions. To build that understanding, we need to collect and evaluate necessary data to determine the complexity of this crisis.

We must also stop treating the pandemic like it is a blip, and start seriously investing in impacted neighborhoods so that we can build the local economy and service system people need. End the dangerous black marketization of controlled substances. Invest in violence prevention – violence interrupters, non-police healthcare responders, crisis intervention teams, wraparound service providers, school counselors instead of cops, and mental health services that allow people to turn somewhere other than police when a loved one is experiencing a crisis.

Lastly, I have authored an evidence-based piece of legislation that addresses the gun violence epidemic in urban centers from a supply-side approach by modernizing and incentivizing good faith operations of federally licensed gun dealers.

IX. Campaign Finance Reform

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

Yes!

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. I've introduced [a bill to raise the minimum wage](#) to \$21/hour and index it thereafter to inflation; abolish the tipped minimum wage; strengthen protections against wage theft; expand the minimum wage to include gig workers, incarcerated workers and neurodivergent individuals; and allow municipalities to set their own minimum wage. All work has dignity. And there is no excuse for allowing a poverty wage in our commonwealth.

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

No. Localities differ in cost of living; a given city may have a higher cost and may want to establish a higher minimum wage as a result.

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.

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 grants and training programs that offer benefits for local hiring and retention, and we need to create an educational environment that nurtures our talent so that people are well-placed to get those jobs. Our curriculum should offer multiple avenues for young people to find success – not just an expensive degree route.

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.

XII. Public Health

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

Yes. Healthcare is a right and single payer is the best and most cost effective way to achieve that.

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?

Part of the answer is in producing more, better trained healthcare professionals — especially from the most minoritized communities.

The more we can invest in the people who have the trust of loved ones, the better we will be. We also need to scale up education and outreach programs, and incentivize vaccination and medication in a targeted way.

We also need to modernize, fully fund, appropriately staff and expand public health departments statewide.

XIV. Housing

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

In the midst of the housing crisis, tenants are suffering at the hands of disreputable landlords, being forced to sign leases containing unfair provisions or facing discrimination based on their income or credit history. In addition, rising rents and extraneous fees place a burden on renters that is unfair, requiring additional protections.

For these reasons, I am working on legislation which seeks to extend key protections for tenants. Security deposits would be limited to two months' rent, certain lease stipulations would be prohibited, and demands for extensive rental and credit histories limited. Certain unfair housing practices related to discrimination and misrepresentation of housing availability are also addressed in [this forthcoming bill](#).

We also need to dramatically increase our housing stock in direct ways, without relying on developer grants. I am interested in new ways cities and states are exploring addressing the housing crisis — Seattle, for instance, recently created an independent social housing board tasked with creating and managing deeply affordable housing for Seattle residents. Federal and state lawmakers need to work together to address legislative barriers to new housing stock, but we also need to seriously invest in green retrofits to — and support systems for — existing properties that make them more livable and keep folks where they are.

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

Yes.