

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

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CANDIDATE CERTIFICATION

Candidate Name: Deja Lynn Alvarez

Office Sought: PA State House Rep., 182nd 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: Digital Signature - Deja Lynn Alvarez

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?
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.)

I have worked on homelessness, addiction, healthcare, undocumented immigrant rights, poverty, hunger, LGBTQ rights, and Police reform. I co-founded and ran a shelter and recovery facility targeted at LGBTQ communities. I have helped to set up and run healthcare and mental health services for the uninsured and underinsured. Started a food program during the height of the pandemic for undocumented and immigrant communities. I have worked with the Philadelphia police department to create and implement new policies and directives and training to address implicit bias.

Three individuals who can provide further information about my previous work are Incumbent State Rep. Brian Sims - cell number (215) 266-4696, Karla Rojas (267) 449-9895, Former Deputy Commissioner Joe Sullivan (267) 882-7119.

4. Please provide copies of all your significant campaign materials, including position papers, advertisement copy, and flyers. www.dejaforpa.com
5. What, if any, endorsements have you received? What others are you seeking?

Endorsements received: Incumbent State Rep. Brian Sims, State Senator and Vice President of the Pennsylvania Democratic Party Sharif Street, PA State Rep. Joe Hohenstein, City Councilmember Mark Squilla, LGBTQ activist Kendall Stephens, Muslim advocate, and community leader Salima Suswell, MA State Senator Julian Cyr, former Vice President of Harrisburg City Council Ben Allatt, and President of Yardley Borough Council David Bria, and our first PAC endorsement, LPAC. We also recently received the endorsement of Actress, Comedian, Singer, and Activist Sandra Bernhard. We are seeking more unions, PACs, and people power.

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

Part of the strategy that I built upon my first run for office in 2019 was growing and solidifying my support within the Philadelphia Democratic Party. Hiring a team of veteran campaign staff who have run and won PA House Rep races and keeping the overhead low are some of the biggest assets to our grassroots campaign. As a Democrat in a democratic majority city our Primaries is where the bulk of our field strategy will unfold. Identifying my base, turning out super voters, and chasing the mail-in ballots of approximately 5,000 votes before election day will be made possible by establishing a phone, door-knocking and mailer program which we are currently training and finalizing our print media. The more votes we can bank before Election Day the better. We want to have an aggressive field approach, and are actively fundraising and solidifying verbal commitments and interviewing. Starting with nomination petitions we will have our paid team working in tandem with our organizing volunteers. We have already begun to train our volunteers over zoom on how to collect and survive the petition challenge window, whenever that may be. We know we will be challenged therefore we will be putting together our door-knocking and pop-up petition events throughout the divisions in the Wards 2,5,8, and 30th, utilizing both volunteer and paid field. We are in the 10 month process of building our campaign coalition of neighborhood and community stakeholders, inroads into all the wards, and working to steadily attain the larger campaign donations through union endorsements and multiple PACs.

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

Transgender woman

8. What is your sexual orientation?

Straight

9. What is your racial, ethnic identity?

Mexican, and 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 priority if elected to office is to continue growing the district’s economic recovery. The 182nd is full of industries that were directly impacted by COVID and the subsequent shutdown. Depending on which committees I sit on my impact will be targeted but I plan to fight for the money in Harrisburg to be released from the rainy day fund. I seek to further the regulation and legalization of cannabis for adults directly creating a new taxable revenue stream that can both help pay for more treatment centers to tackle our opioid crisis and help to fill our budgetary deficit for funding our public schools.

II. Education

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

Yes, I do believe that public college or community college should be tuition free. It was not too long ago that having a college education alone would ensure that you had a family sustaining job. Times have significantly changed so too should how we view public college and community college. It is a way to help our citizens grow and a means to stabilize the workforce. Instead we are burdening generations with debt that keeps many from purchasing and investing into their communities long term.

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

No, I do not believe that standardized tests should play in evaluating teachers, schools and students. Public education is not a business that should be viewed solely on a spreadsheet.

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

Public funding of education in this state is not adequate nor equitable. We need fair and equitable funding for public schools, regardless of socioeconomic status or zip code. There are millions of dollars that should have gone to the Philadelphia school district, however, our governing bodies are withholding necessary funds and playing party politics. In finding a funding formula that is equitable, I look to the Basic Education Funding Commission, where all students have equal access to critical resources which is far more equitable than the Basic Education Funding (BEF) framework that controls our current state

education funding. I will work closely with AFT and PFT to make sure our educators and unions are at the table and represented in Harrisburg to fight for an equitable funding model.

- 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?

Let me begin by stating that public schools play an integral part in our city. Charter schools should not be taking funding when our public schools are literally failing our students. Our teachers no matter what school they teach in should have access to the same resources to perform their jobs. Our public schools should be offering a high-quality education. There should not be a need for families to meet a certain criteria for their kids to get a better education. Zip codes should not determine the quality of education students receive nor should it determine what resources are available for our teachers to do their job in a safe, and supportive way.

III. Budget and Taxes

- 1) Do you support a Constitutional Amendment to permit progressive taxation in PA, in whole or part? **Yes.**
- 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 would want to close the Delaware loophole that allows corporations to not pay their fair share.
- 3) What changes, if any, would you support in the personal income tax? I feel that we can bring in revenue without raising the personal income tax.
- 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 do support it.**
- 5) Do you support full elimination of the Delaware loophole? **Yes**
- 6) Do you support a tax on fracking, and at what level? **No, we need to end fracking.**
- 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?

While I do support the Keystone Opportunity Zones (KOZ) program in theory, and the notion of attracting more business to the Commonwealth. I also believe that there must be more oversight and stronger policies in place to better control how the funds are disbursed, making sure that it provides real benefits to Pennsylvanians and not just large corporations. Generally, I do support tax breaks to lure or retain 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?

I am hesitant to support and put more taxpayer money at risk. The Bank of North Dakota, while often used as an example of success, also loans to other banks and not in the business of what is currently being proposed on the city level of loaning to businesses or citizens.

V. Women's Rights

- 1) Do you believe there should be any restrictions on a woman's right to choose? If so, what? **No, absolutely not!** As a very proud Latina Transwoman, I believe that the government should never decide what to do with a woman's body!
- 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*? It should be made into law on the federal and state level protecting a woman's right to choose.
- 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. We need our employees to have a meaningful balanced life to continue to be active members of society. There are few life events as life altering as making additions to your family unit and our employers need to understand that an investment in easing the transition only makes for more invested employees and harder workers.

- 2) Should the state provide universal availability of affordable childcare? If yes, how would you achieve this? With the current legislative body in Harrisburg being Republican-controlled there are 2 ways to try and achieve this, 1) would be to utilize my platform to help unseat Republicans around the commonwealth and get a democratic majority. 2) To reach across the aisle and identify individuals who would be open to working on such legislation. Understanding that our job as a legislature is to figure out how to get the work done and sometimes that may mean working with people you may not always agree with.

VII. Environment

- 1) Do you support a ban on fracking in whole or part? Explain. A complete ban on Fracking. I believe that fracking is slowly destroying our lands and ecosystems. Water should not be flammable. I also feel that fracking has been pushed on landowners by unscrupulous companies who seek profit over people. It impacts communities not too far from Philadelphia and as we do not live in a vacuum especially when it comes to impacts on our environment, we too will suffer the ecological devastation from fracking. When it was proposed I found it ludicrous that we would allow our resources to be stripped of our land without so much as a tax. Well turns out we were one of the only states to allow our lands to be pilfered without so much as a tax incentive. The health impact we are now seeing, I believe will be detrimental for generations. I would like to see the data that tracks the birth rates and cancer rates of the communities in the commonwealth with the highest levels of fracking to see what the long term impacts are for allowing such a practice. For all those reasons and more, I support a ban on fracking.
- 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**

- 4) What measures would you support to move PA off its reliance on fossil fuels and expand use of renewable energy sources? The climate crisis is such that we cannot ignore the increasing disasters and extreme weather patterns or economic recovery costs. Instead, we must heed the warnings of scientists and activists to curb the long-term economic and social implications supporting policies to reduce emissions, increase job growth and strive for environmental equity. I support the goals of the non-binding congressional resolution of The Green New Deal in curbing greenhouse gas emissions turning from fossil fuels with the promise of creating new high-paying jobs in the clean energy industries while also trying to address poverty, economic and racial inequality. On the state level, I support the call for 100% renewable resources and support H.B. 1425 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and create significant job growth and training in the evolving energy industry. I would continue to support climate investments, infrastructure changes for our public transit, and more low-carbon transit options.
- 5) What criteria would you use in making appointments to the P.U.C.?
 - (1) No one with a financial stake in any energy company or public utilities could be appointed, and
 - (2) all communities, races and ethnicities should be represented.
- 6) What steps would you take to ensure environmental justice in the placement and 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.) Protecting our green spaces, our water ways, and air are fundamental not just as sound legislation but as basic necessities. Often areas most polluted are areas that are more impoverished.

VIII. Criminal Justice

- 1) Should stop and frisk be limited or outlawed? **Outlawed.**
- 2) How would you deal with the problem of mass incarceration of minorities, particularly minority youth? We have to first acknowledge that our justice system is still racist and biased. We need to invest in our youth. We need to build school-to-job pipelines instead of prison pipelines. More community lead diversion programs need to be in place.
- 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.**
- 6) Should PA continue to build new prisons? **No.**
- 7) Should PA begin to close prisons? Explain. **Yes.** We should be addressing the reasons for our high prison populations such as poverty, racism, implicit bias etc. We need to fully and equitably fund our public schools and social programs to reduce the need for individuals to commit economic-based crimes. We need to divest in over-policing, prisons, and probation and parole and invest more in people.
- 8) Do you support an end to the death penalty? **Yes**
- 9) When, if ever, should a juvenile be tried as an adult? **Never.**

- 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? **By addressing systemic racism and poverty. Pass common-sense gun legislation. Providing more resources for education, jobs, and mental health.**

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.**
- 3) Do you believe that Philadelphia and other municipalities should continue to be preempted 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.**
- 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?

Investing in vocational schools and services and working to build a school to union pipeline.

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.**
- 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? **This is what I do daily whether it's around covid, HIV prevention, and treatment, mental health resources, addiction treatment etc. Any time there is a public health issue we must have people who have lived it and understand it at the decision-making tables. Nothing about us without us is something that I always keep in mind when addressing disparities.**

XIV. Housing

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

As someone who has faced poverty, discrimination, and homelessness, I know firsthand how hard it is to find a decent place to live let alone an affordable one. I currently have to work

multiple jobs just to cover the bills. Affordable safe housing should be available for all people. We need to protect our renters from predatory practices and landlords. If you own property, you must maintain it, regardless of if you live out of state. We must change the way we allow developers to just buy up entire neighborhoods and push out long-time residents to build homes that the families who have lived here for generations cannot keep or afford to purchase. I do believe in progress, but I believe progress can also be made fairly and equitably. We need to utilize some of the abandoned homes in our city to build safe affordable housing. Large developers should also be made to invest back into the same communities that they make millions in profit from. We also need to reevaluate what we consider affordable housing. \$1,200.00 a month for a studio is not "affordable". We also need to create more pathways to homeownership particularly in the most impoverished communities.

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