

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

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CANDIDATE CERTIFICATION

Candidate Name: Paul Prescod

Office Sought: 8th Senate 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:


Candidate's Signature

Date: 02/18/22

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? *None*
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've done work primarily on the issues of public education and labor rights. As a public school teacher I've consistently fought for a better funded public school district. As a PFT member, I've worked to strengthen my own union as well as build coalitions with others. Tanya Bah and Shakeida Gaines can speak to my work in the realm of education. Richard Hooker and Ernest Garrett can speak to my work in the labor movement.

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've received the endorsement of the following unions/organizations:

- *Teamsters Local 623*
- *Teamsters BMW*
- *AFSCME District Council 33*
- *APWU Local 89*
- *AFT Local 2026*
- *TAUP*
- *Philly DSA*
- *Free the Ballot*
- *Reclaim Philadelphia*
- *Run for Something*

I'm still seeking the endorsements of:

- *Working Families Party*
- *AFSCME District Council 47*
- *PASNAP*
- *SEIU State Council*
- *UNITE HERE*
- *Food and Water Action*
- *Penn Environment*
- *NOW*

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

-Drive up turn-out among younger, more progressive voters, especially in West Philadelphia (wards 21, 56, and 51)

-Large canvass operation to knock 250,000 doors, utilizing the volunteer power of endorsing organizations and unions.

-Effective use of mailers and digital ads

-Early contact with super voters

-Raise \$380,000 through call time, union/organizational PAC donations, and fundraising events (we've raised \$160,000 as of now)

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

8. What is your sexual orientation? *Straight*

9. What is your racial, ethnic identity? *Afro-Caribbean*

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 legislative priorities relate to the reversal of austerity policies and the expansion of the public sector:

- Fully funding public education
- Addressing climate change through a clean energy transition that creates high quality union jobs and a top-class infrastructure
- Reforming the tax system so the burden is placed on the wealthiest individuals and corporations

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? *No, they should not play any role in evaluation. As a former teacher, I've seen that these standardized tests do not truly measure the abilities of teachers and students. They do not account for the varied ways that students learn, nor the structural inequities in education 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?

All school funding through the fair funding formula to ensure more equal funding for school districts on a per-student basis. The current surplus in the state budget should be spent immediately to make urgently needed school building upgrades that eliminate toxins.

- 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?

The data has shown that there has been a clear lack of oversight over existing charter schools. They've been allowed to operate under different criteria than public schools, and have diverted crucial funding from our public schools as well. Many charters close rapidly and fail even by their own standards, and have not been proven to improve student achievement. We need to halt the approval of new charter schools until the existing ones are subject to proper evaluation and oversight. There is a growing coalition in support of this measure, and this position is consistent with that of community organizations like the NAACP.

Vouchers divert funding from public schools without measures of accountability or oversight. Schools funded by vouchers are able to deny students that public schools cannot, such as students with special needs or behavioral challenges. This only serves to further defund and segregate an already unequal school system. Instead of vouchers, we need to commit to a quality education for all by fully funding our public schools.

III. Budget and Taxes

- 1) Do you support a Constitutional Amendment to permit progressive taxation in PA, in whole or part? *Yes, we need to allow for progressive taxation if we're going to have robust investment in the things working people need; public schools, infrastructure, housing, etc.*
- 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/>

Corporate income taxes should be raised to at least the previous 1972 level of 30%, if not more.

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

The personal income tax should be structured so that the burden is placed on the wealthiest individuals, not ordinary working and middle class people.

- 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, the fair share tax plan would ensure that the heaviest tax burdens fall on the super rich, not ordinary working people.

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

Yes, this needs to be eliminated immediately.

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

Yes, there should be a severance tax of at least 5% on 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?

I don't support the KOZ program. The approach of offering tax breaks to lure businesses and investment has been tried repeatedly for decades now. Consistently the results show that this strategy drains cities of revenue, leaving vital public services and programs starved of funding. Businesses can and should pay their taxes just like ordinary individuals do.

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?
No
- 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?

With Roe v. Wade increasingly under attack, I would proudly support legislation to protect these rights through statute as a safeguard against court decisions that might infringe upon them.

- 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've seen during COVID-19 especially how important it is for workers to be able to take time off to take care of family needs.

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

Yes. I support making public daycare centers free at the point of use and I support paying new parents who would rather care for their children at home a home care benefit, following the example of many other countries throughout the developed world. As of now, the federal government is negotiating over the spending levels and administrative form that subsidized childcare will take, but it currently looks like the federal plan may create benefit cliffs that the state could help mitigate. Regardless of the level of federal funding, I commit to raising state revenues such that center based daycare and home care are available to every PA child.

VII. Environment

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

I support ending the use of fracking by levying a heavy tax on it and using that revenue for a detailed transition program that makes sure workers are secure and leaves time for clean energy alternatives to be put in place to meet energy demands. In other words, fracking should be banned but I don't think it can happen overnight. I think we can follow the model of SB 2408

in Illinois, which provides the following benefits to displaced natural gas workers; 24 months of health insurance available at the previous cost and benefit level, full tuition scholarships for trade schools and higher education, and employment assistance.

- 2) Would you support banning the use of single-use plastic bags?
Yes, as long as viable alternatives are made abundantly available.
- 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?

I will tirelessly advocate for decarbonizing our state's economy by following a model of government-labor union partnerships on project labor agreements to build clean energy infrastructure in wind, solar, and geothermal, upgrade and weatherize our buildings, and improve public transit systems across the state. This legislation needs to be crafted with the involvement of the workers and communities most affected by climate change and a transition towards clean energy. We cannot leave workers currently in the fossil fuel industry out to dry during this transition. We need to make sure they are taken care of and able to meaningfully transition to new careers at a similar or better wage. If we start on initiatives that already have broad agreement, like green schools, we can build the trust and credibility that will enable us to take on more contentious issues.

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

All PUC appointees must support entrance into RGGI and be free of personal or familial connections to the fossil fuel industry.

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

Structures that pollute are disproportionately placed in working-class black and brown communities. These areas should be prioritized for remediation. We should seek to avoid as much as possible creating new polluting structures anywhere in the state. New energy infrastructure should prioritize various forms of clean energy; geothermal, solar, wind, energy efficient buildings, etc.

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

Detoxification is an issue I care deeply about. As a former teacher, I've seen how our schools are infested with mold, lead, and asbestos. In general, a large percentage of carbon emissions in Philadelphia come from buildings. Retrofitting buildings is a great way to improve respiratory health, limit carbon emissions, and create good union jobs.

VIII. Criminal Justice

1) Should stop and frisk be limited or outlawed?

It should be outlawed

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

We cannot continue to deal with structural social problems through mass incarceration. Robust public investment in schools, good jobs, housing, healthcare, and infrastructure provide people with a secure future. We know that in more affluent communities where the essentials for a quality life are provided, there is much less incarceration and crime.

We must also enact specific measures to curb the over-policing of minority communities. I would push for a full and permanent end to transfers of military equipment to state and local law enforcement agencies. This practice directly leads to the militarization of police and exacerbates police brutality. I also support civilian review boards that have actual power to hold police accountable. As a state senator I will take an active role to make sure these review boards are properly supported and allowed to function with real teeth. We also can impose stricter limits on the police use of force, like [HB 1664](#) introduced by Summer Lee and Ed Gainey.

3) Should marijuana be fully legalized?

Yes, and the records of people who have been previously charged for the possession of marijuana should be expunged.

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

No

5) Should we ban the box in Pennsylvania?

Yes, banning the box increases employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated people and lessens the likelihood of recidivism.

6) Should PA continue to build new prisons?

No

7) Should PA begin to close prisons? Explain.

PA should close prisons only if it can be done in a way to avoid a situation where inmates are held in fewer, overcrowded facilities which is much more cruel and dangerous than keeping existing prisons open and preventing them from being closed prematurely.

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?

Broadly speaking, public investment in the things needed for a high-quality, secure life would reduce violent crime. We've seen the murder rate crime as conditions have become more precarious for an increasing number of working people. But other smaller measures can be taken as well; common sense gun control and enforcement of the ban on ghost guns, investment in on-foot beat officers instead of military police equipment/tactics, support for community organizations that intervene to reduce gun violence, summer youth job programs in partnership with trade unions.

IX. Campaign Finance Reform

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

Yes, the current model heavily favors candidates who are already personally wealthy.

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 it should be increased and indexed to inflation. The current minimum wage should be at around \$17/hr, when factoring in the inflation that has taken place since the \$15/hr demand was introduced as part of the national Democratic platform in 2016.

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

No, municipalities should be free to make decisions on raising their minimum wage.

- 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, our state-owned liquor stores are a vital source of revenue and living wage union jobs. I don't support privatization, we need to invest more in the public sector.

- 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 simply need to create more good-paying jobs that don't require a college degree, in both the private sector and public sector. I will fight for a model of government-labor union partnerships on project labor agreements to build clean energy infrastructure, upgrade and weatherize our buildings, construct universal broadband, and improve public transit systems across the state. By dramatically expanding the pool of labor and amount of jobs that need to be filled, more workers can have the opportunity to join unions and attain jobs previously shut out to them. Also, we can create more good-paying jobs by dramatically increasing funding to the public sector. Jobs like teachers, postal workers, city workers, public transit workers, etc. are more likely to be unionized, offer good benefits, and have more job security. Many of these sectors are understaffed due to years of austerity. By reversing austerity we can improve these services while creating more good jobs.

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, I absolutely support the creation of a single payer healthcare system in Pennsylvania. A RAND Corporation assessment of the New York Health Act (Liu et. al. 2018) showed that single payer is economically feasible even in a state with higher healthcare costs than PA, and it presents a menu of progressive tax options for fully funding the program that would leave anyone making under around \$150,000 per year with more money in their pockets. I would be honored to work with healthcare unions, public healthcare advocates, and grassroots organizations to introduce analogous legislation in the PA General Assembly.

- 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?

Communities of color are disproportionately poor and working-class, and thus more likely to be uninsured or underinsured. A single-payer healthcare system would ensure that all people receive quality healthcare regardless of their racial or economic background. We also need to invest in basic public health infrastructure like community health centers, which again is especially lacking in communities of color. Extra outreach should be done to make sure COVID vaccines are distributed to as many people as possible. As a State Senator I would utilize a canvassing operation to go door-to-door giving basic information on why and how people should get vaccinated.

XIV. Housing

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

There have been a variety of innovative measures proposed to address the housing problems that we (and other areas) face, and many are worthy of consideration. However, one that particularly appeals to me is the government-owned urban wealth fund. Our cities, instead of selling precious land at pennies on the dollar to real estate moguls who will flip it at a huge profit, could (and should) hold on to it and manage it in the public interest. It could be developed for subsidized housing, or commercially, as the city sees fit—and the proceeds would flow back into the people's pockets rather than developers', thereby boosting local budgets as well. Our state legislature should reward cities that keep public wealth public.

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