

## Background

**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 are involved?**
- b) **What committees, caucuses or working groups have you served on?**

N/A.

**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.)**

Although I have never held appointed or elected office, I spent the better part of my legal career working as a public servant at the City of Philadelphia Law Department in its Claim Unit.

In addition to my former public service from 2005 through 2013, my wife and I have been involved in the community in the 188<sup>th</sup> Legislative District since first moving here over a decade ago. We organize our annual block parties. We volunteer at our sons' neighborhood schools, where we have both served on the board and board committees. My wife is the past chair of the Parent-Infant Center's Diversity and Governance Committees. She is a tireless champion for all children. She started the first annual Children's Book Festival at the Parent-Infant Center that is open to the public to celebrate diversity and to foster an early love of reading. She has also chaired the Parent-Infant Center's and University City Arts League's annual fundraising events. We coach our sons' tee-ball teams. We are regular fixtures and volunteers at community events like the annual Spruce Hill Community Association's May Fair, the Penn Alexander School's annual 5K to fund arts and science education, and park clean-up days for Friends of Clark Park and the Chester Avenue Dog Park. Finally, I serve as a committee person in the 27<sup>th</sup> Ward. In short, we are deeply committed to these and other organizations that anchor families' lives in our district. Individuals with knowledge of our involvement include:

City of Philadelphia Law Department – Norman Prajzner, Former Chief Deputy City Solicitor

Parent Infant Center – Deb Green, Executive Director

Penn Alexander School – Michael Farrell, Principal

University City Arts League – Fern Glazer, Board Chair

Philadelphia Athletics Youth Sports Organization – Steve Walicki, President

Chester Avenue Dog Park – Michael McGarvey – Board Member

Friends of Clark Park – Lisa McDonald Hayes – Board Chair

27<sup>th</sup> Ward – Carol Jenkins, Ward Leader

**4. Please provide copies of all your significant campaign materials, including position papers, and information on your campaign strategy, expected funding sources, and endorsements.**

See enclosed.

**5. What is your plan to win the race?**

Our campaign is borne out of the desire for change. It is driven by my neighbors, friends, and family. This is fertile ground from which to grow a grassroots campaign. My opponent has been in office for over thirty years and typically raises close to 80% of his campaign finances through PACs and less than 5% from his actual constituents, while relying upon the local Democratic Party machinery to turn out his votes. I want to run a different campaign – one that will not leave me bound to anyone other than my constituents – and, therefore, will only be accepting donations from individuals.

My family and I are fully committed to this campaign. It was a hard decision for us, because I have three young children including a 7-month old baby, but an important one for us to do something for our community and our children. In January, I resigned from my job so as to dedicate the next four months to speaking with individual voters every day through community events, house parties, and door knocking. This type of grassroots effort of meeting people and earning votes will be effective in this election because voter turnout will be somewhere near 7,000 votes based on past election data – an ideal sized race to challenge the Party Machine and to push the progressive agenda further. Our district's support for Larry Krasner in last year's primary was phenomenal. This community is ready for a change, especially one that is aligned with the current need for fresh, progressive candidates to challenge Trump's agenda and fight hard to get laws and policies in place that will protect and provide opportunities for everyone.

**Issues**

**I. Overall**

**What are your three highest priorities as a legislator? Explain.**

This is a difficult question to answer. Although people have constantly advised me that every campaign should be about no more than three issues – as they say the average voter cannot handle more than this – I reject this notion. There are multiple issues that are important to me. Nonetheless, if I had to boil it down, I would say we need to hold our government accountable for its failure to provide: 1) a quality education for every child that doesn't vary from zip code to zip code; 2) living wages job opportunities for all adults; and 3) healthcare for all. That a country as wealthy as ours cannot provide these three basic rights to all of its citizens is inexcusable to me.

## II. Education

### 1. How do you feel about the role of charter schools in Pennsylvania's educational mix? If dissatisfied, what changes in state law would you sponsor to fix the problem?

I believe that the solution to our education problems is not more charter schools – it's to equitably and adequately fund all of our public schools without regard to zip code or school district. Although I believe that there is a place for some charter schools in our education system, charter schools now enroll nearly 1 in 3 of our Philadelphia public school students. This was never the intent of the charter school law. Rather, the purpose of the law was to give schools more flexibility in curriculum to experiment with finding ways to innovate and create new ideas that – if successful – could be replicated in the traditional public school system. This has not occurred and now charter schools are too often nothing more than a means to line the pockets of for-profit operators. It is long past time for reform.

I believe that for-profit entities have no business educating our children and will fight for a ban on for profit charter management companies, especially given that too many for profit operators have engaged in misconduct while producing poor results. For instance, in "Philadelphia alone eight charter school officials have pled guilty to federal fraud charges" and a 2014 report found "charter school officials in the state have defrauded at least \$30 million ... since 1997." Despite these findings, charter schools are not subject to the same financial transparency laws and oversight as traditional public schools. This must be changed.

In addition to oversight and accountability, legislation must be passed to ensure that charter schools and traditional public schools receive the same resources. For instance, Pennsylvania "law allows charters schools to receive two to three times more funding per special needs student than public schools." To further exploit the system, charter schools "tend[] to serve high proportions of low-cost special needs students – those with speech and hearing disabilities, for instance – while serving low proportions of high-cost special needs students, such as those with autism or emotional problems." And even worse, charter schools can use this funding for any purpose they see fit, as "Pennsylvania does not require that the charters spend special education funds on special education students." This is not small potatoes – a 2013 report found that charters received \$350 million in special education payments but spent only 150 million "resulting in a \$200 million profit for the charter industry."

Even more problematic than charters are cyber charters. These schools have a 48% graduation rate and no virtual charter has met the state's passing benchmark. In addition, they receive funds for "roughly ... what it would cost the distinct to educate the student [in a brick and mortar school] – sometimes \$30,000 or more for a special education student, even though ... they can provide an online program for a fraction of that cost."

Finally, charter schools on average provide no better outcomes than traditional public schools. And in studies that do show a benefit, those benefits are miniscule compared with the effects of other education reforms. Take for instance the following quote from the NAACP's Task Force on Quality Education:

I wanted to know how African Americans do under the CREDO study [which found a small benefit in attending a charter school]: 0.05 [standard deviations] is the impact of charters in the 2015 CREDO study. Which means that you need a telescope to see it. Class size reduction [has] 400% more impact. Pre-K? 1000% more impact than charters. It is a concern that charter schools have had a larger influence on the national conversation about how to improve education in communities of color than these other well-researched educational investments that have been shown to have much larger effects on achievement.”

Thus, rather than spend limited money on further charter school expansion, I believe we need a moratorium on additional charter schools in Philadelphia until reforms can be made to the charter school law.

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

The number one factor should be the needs of the children in the school. In Pennsylvania, however, the exact opposite is true. Our state's constitution guarantees every child the right to a “thorough and efficient” public education. And yet we have a system that consistently gives more money in per pupil funding to wealthier and whiter school districts than it does to poorer and less white ones. Indeed, Pennsylvania has the highest funding disparities between rich and poor school districts in the country and per-pupil spending in the poorest districts is 1/3<sup>rd</sup> lower than in its wealthiest school districts. This is especially shocking as research shows that the cost of educating low-income children is over two times the cost of educating affluent children. As explained by Keystone Crossing:

Philadelphia educates more children from low-income backgrounds than any other district. More than 80% of Philadelphia students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, almost twice the statewide average of 43 percent. Such a high concentration of poverty comes with added education costs, since it typically requires more remedial work, more need for counseling and violence prevention, and more special education programs.

Finally, multiple studies have also shown that – even controlling for poverty – there are disparities based solely on race with David Mosenkis finding that “[a]t any given poverty level, districts that have a higher proportion of white students get substantially higher funding than districts that have more minority students.”

Although the legislature did finally adopt a funding formula intended to address this funding inequity, Pennsylvania still allocates the vast majority of funding as it did before the formula was enacted and only applies the formula to new revenue. As a result, even “if \$200 million was added [in school spending] each year, it would take more than 25 years for the bulk of state education aid to be distributed fairly.” This inequity cannot wait over two decades for a solution. It must be fixed now.

**3. Do you believe public college, or community college, should be tuition free?**

Yes. Pennsylvania currently has the highest average student loan debt of any state. This is no accident, but rather is the direct result of our state’s failure to fund public education adequately. Pennsylvania now ranks fourth from last in per capita spending on higher education. As a result, Pennsylvanians attending state schools now pay the third highest amount of tuition out of all other states.

Higher education – and in particular public universities – must be accessible to all. Our city and state have some of the best public and private colleges and universities in the country, and yet so few can afford to attend. This must be changed and I would support legislation to make public colleges and universities free, as well as provide need-based cost of living and book stipends to low-income students.

**4. What role do you believe standardized tests should play in evaluating teachers, schools and students, if any?**

There is way too much overreliance on standardized testing in our schools. Although such tests may be useful in helping to identify problems that should be fixed, too often now our students are being are not being educated, but rather simply instructed on how to take these tests. We need to greatly reduce the amount of standardized testing and allow our teachers to teach again.

**5. What is your view of plans to increase the use of computers in public schools, particularly as a way to reduce the number of teachers?**

I have a very negative view of this. Although students do need to learn how to use computers, I reject the notion that technology necessarily improves education. Indeed, I am incredibly skeptical of big data and technology in the classroom. In general, I favor listening to educators about how best to educate children and question why individuals who have made fortunes in technology have any qualifications when it comes to how best to educate our children.

**III. Budget and Taxes**

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

Yes, 100%. Over the last few decades, the rich have made out extremely well, while everyone else has struggled. The Keystone Research Center found that from 1979 through 2011, the bottom 99% of earners in Pennsylvania saw their income grow by 12.1% while the top 1%'s grew by a staggering 125.5%. Given how the rich have benefited from our state's economy while everyone else has struggled, I believe it is only fair that they shoulder more of the burden of funding our government. And yet, Pennsylvania currently has one of the most regressive tax structures in the entire country. According to research from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, the richest 1% of Pennsylvanians pay only 4.2 cents in individual state taxes out of every dollar they make while the middle class pays 10.3 cents and the poorest pay 12 cents. This must be changed. If just the top 1% paid taxes at the same rate as the middle class, Pennsylvania would raise an additional \$3.75 billion a year. And if this was extended so that the top 20% paid at the middle class rate, we could raise almost \$7 billion.

Although adoption of a progressive income tax will require a constitutional amendment overturning the uniformity clause, this is a phenomenal issue for Democrats to organize around long term. Let the Republicans try to justify why, at a time when the legislature continually relies upon one time fixes to fund our Commonwealth's budget, our state continues to under-tax our richest while overtaxing everyone else. This is especially shocking given the top 1% pay some of the lowest income and capital gains taxes in the country.

**2. If legal, would you support raising the tax on unearned income as a way to increase state revenues without increasing burdens on working people?**

Yes, 100%. See previous answer.

**3. What changes if any would you support in corporate net income tax levels?**

In 1972, Pennsylvania raised 30% of its revenue from corporate taxes. By 2016, that had fallen to 17%. As stated in Governor Wolf's Comprehensive Tax Reform Plan, 70% of corporate taxpayers pay no corporate income tax. Meanwhile, gas taxes have risen 80% between 2013 and 2016 alone and the tolls on the Turnpike have been hiked over 120% between 2008 and 2016. Just as with our regressive income tax system, poor and average Pennsylvanians are yet again forced to pay more in taxes so that the well off – including out-of-state corporations – can pay less. This must be changed and I would support any effort to restore the balance between corporate tax receipts and personal tax receipts to the level it was in the early 1970s.

Although our state's corporate net income tax is one of the highest in the country, very few large corporate entities pay anywhere close to that rate. First, because of Pennsylvania's lax laws regarding pass through entities, we now have nearly 500,000 LLCs that do not pay the corporate net income tax but rather are taxed at the much lower personal income tax rate of 3.07%. These entities include large law firms and

other firms offering professional services. According to a 2015 Pennsylvania Treasury Department analysis, allowing these entities to file as pass throughs costs the state hundreds of millions of dollars annually. This must be changed.

Putting aside the problem of liberal pass through treatment, Pennsylvania has numerous other loopholes that permit large corporations to pay little to no taxes. These loopholes must be closed and the adoption of reforms such as combined reporting are an important first step in ending corporate welfare.

**4. What changes, if any, would you support to the personal income tax?**

See response to question 1. In short, Pennsylvania must adopt a progressive income tax. In the interim, I favor any constitutionally permissible method of reversing our state's insanely regressive tax system.

**5. Do you support full elimination of the Delaware loophole?**

Yes. See response to question 3.

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

Yes. Although I do not favor natural gas extraction and believe Pennsylvania should strive to be on the forefront of green energy, so long as natural gas is being fracked it should be taxed. But Pennsylvania is the only major energy producing state without a severance tax. According to the Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center, a severance tax could generate over a billion dollars in the next two years.

Severance taxes are levied on energy producers as soon as the gas is extracted and are passed mostly to out of state consumers. Failure to pass a severance tax means Pennsylvanians are paying more taxes in order to benefit out-of-state energy companies and their out-of-state (and, in many cases, out-of-the-country) customers.

**7. Would you support abolition of the property tax for all or some payers? If so, which ones, and how would you replace the revenue?**

Yes, I would. Although I appreciate that elimination of the property tax is tricky because we must have a plan to replace the lost revenue, I still believe this regressive and selective tax should be repealed. The property tax has several fundamental flaws. First, it is regressive, and too often falls hard upon seniors and others who have difficulty keeping up with rising rates and valuations. This is especially worrisome in areas such as the 188<sup>th</sup> where residents face property value increases and the ensuing property tax hikes. Second, it is an expensive tax to collect as it requires that the properties be regularly assessed. Third, it is complex and unequal. All too often, property valuations for similar properties can vary dramatically from town to town or even neighborhood to neighborhood.

To replace the revenue lost by elimination of property tax, I would favor adoption of a progressive income tax. As a short-term solution to lessening the property tax's regressiveness, I would work to lessening taxes on property used as a primary residence while increasing taxes on second homes and properties used for a business purpose.

#### **IV. Public Banking**

**Would you support the creation of a Pennsylvania Public Bank, modeled after the Bank of North Dakota? Explain.**

Yes, 100%. Due to years of deregulation, I believe our banking system now serves only itself and not the public. Given our federal government's failure to responsibly regulate our banking system, it makes complete sense to create a public bank in Pennsylvania. Public banks – free of the need to maximize short term share value – will allow our economy to grow and create jobs, help our citizens advance career prospects by funding educational loans, and provide loans at a lower rate than private banks.

#### **V. Women's Rights**

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

I do not believe there should be any restrictions on a woman's right to choose. Throughout our history and in recent years, there has been an orchestrated effort to undermine women's reproductive rights and choice. I believe that this is solely a woman's right.

**2. What additional protections should be enacted into law to protect woman's healthcare?**

The Affordable Care Act was an important step forward in providing health care to everyone but there is still much work to be done. State lawmakers play an extraordinarily important role in ensuring that additional protections be put into place to protect women's health care. The Trump administration and anti-choice majority in Congress have been systematically attacking women's rights and health. Not only have they attempted to repeal the Affordable Care Act and defund Planned Parenthood, but also to eliminate coverage for contraceptives. It is crucial that states are proactive and fight back to ensure that every woman has access to health care, including reproductive health care and services such as prenatal care, maternity care, contraception, and abortion. Pennsylvania must enact laws at the state level to protect women's right to affordable health care.

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

I would support and advocate for proposals to ensure that women and men working in the Commonwealth receive equal pay for equal work. The gender pay gap is real and must be eliminated.

There are many reasons for the pay gap including gender discrimination, devaluation of traditional “women” only fields like teaching and nursing, and a disproportionate percentage of women exiting full time employment to take care of their children and aging family members. While some factors are not intentionally discriminatory, we need more policies and regulations in place to recognize the enormous value that women add to our workplaces and society at large while remedying the fact that they do this while receiving lower wages and experiencing greater inequities and discrimination, sexual harassment, and job insecurity.

Solutions that work include better paid leave and affordable childcare including expansion of Universal Pre-K to support women and help them get back into the workforce after welcoming children into the family. Government can provide incentives for workplaces that attract and retain women—this will foster workplace cultures that allow women the flexibility to be caregivers without having to exit out of the workplace. In addition, workplaces must provide gender discrimination and sexual harassment training in order to reduce unconscious bias and encourage women to report (without fear of retaliation) violations. As another example, my wife recently served on a panel to discuss the gender pay gap and to empower women to negotiate their salary. She made the point that there is little transparency around pay equity—most wages are not published and it behooves the employer to keep it that way because women may not even be aware of a pay gap. This makes negotiating salaries very difficult. We need policies to ensure that there is transparency in the process and protections for women if they report this as an issue within their organization.

Finally, although there are countless reasons why Pennsylvania must raise its minimum wage, one is that it would help narrow the gender pay gap. Although I favor raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, according to the Economic Policy Institute, even raising it to \$10.10 in Pennsylvania would lift 2.4 million people out of poverty. Further, raising the minimum wage would help close the pay gap as of “those seeing a raise from an increase in the minimum wage, 55% are women and 25% are woman of color.” In addition to the minimum wage, we must also raise the “tipped” minimum wage. Although the minimum wage was last raised almost a decade ago, the tipped minimum wage has remained flat since 1998. If it had been indexed to inflation, it would have grown from its current level of \$2.83 per hour to over \$4.00 per hour. Moreover, the failure to raise the tipped minimum wage disproportionately affects women. According to research by the Keystone Research Center, tipped “women make 15% less than tipped men.” Further, there is a strong correlation between failure to raise the tipped minimum wage and sexual harassment. According to a 2014 study on sexual harassment in the restaurant industry, “woman in tipped jobs in restaurants in states with low tipped wages are twice as likely to experience sexual harassment as women in states that pay the same minimum wage to all workers.”

**4. Do you support legislation to protect individuals against sexual assault?**

We need stronger legislation to prevent and protect individuals against sexual assault and harassment. As an initial matter, sexual harassment must be addressed as a pervasive social ill. For too long, victims have been silenced and witnesses have been complicit. We are starting to see the movement for change, however, from a legal context, sexual harassment is a high legal bar to meet for victims. We need to address this at the legislative level with firmer laws and policies for violators. Sexual harassment training must be mandatory for employers and employees must be protected against retaliation for making reports. In addition, laws must be enacted to eliminate confidentiality agreements for sexual harassment and assault claims that are brought against elected politicians. Politicians should not be allowed to use taxpayer money to settle claims and cover up their misdeeds with confidentiality agreements.

We need better procedures in place in Harrisburg when claims of sexual harassment are made and we need to do more to encourage people to come forward when they either experience or witness such conduct. We need to foster a culture where sexual harassment is unacceptable and complicit behavior is not tolerated. Victim advocacy must be stronger so that we encourage early reports so this behavior is stomped out at the onset. This is important because sexual assault is underreported with low conviction rates. Victims must be supported with increased funding for victim advocacy services and the quality of justice in sexual assault cases must improve by training prosecutors and others in the legal system to take a victim-centered response.

**VI. Children and Families**

**1. Should the state require businesses to provide paid family leave?**

Yes. As a parent of three young children (ages 6, 4, and 7 months), my wife and I know the burdens that come with starting a family. And as a son to an incredibly brave woman who fought cancer for two years, I know what it is like to care for a sick relative. Fortunately for my wife and I, our employers offered at least some benefits that made both of these experiences easier. For those without such benefits, however, FMLA and existing Federal and Pennsylvania law come nowhere even close to providing the proper amount of assistance. I believe 100% that our legislature needs to do more to help support families.

**2. Should the state provide universal availability of affordable childcare?**

Again, as parents of two pre-school aged children, my wife and I know full well the cost of quality childcare. I also know not only what the studies say (finding in some cases a rate of return of \$17 to society for every \$1 dollar spent), but also what I observe in my own children's development. Moreover, I am proud to say that my

wife and I were both involved in our children's school's expansion to add two new mixed income classrooms that brought the center up to almost 50% subsidized seats. Simply put, early childhood education is fundamentally important to all children and is an amazing investment both for the children and our society at large.

Moreover, caring for children (whether at home or in early education) is a role that disproportionately falls on females. Providing universal childcare will allow more women to return to work and will also ensure that those providing childcare (which are currently typically low paying jobs) will be properly compensated for the incredibly important job they perform and will cumulatively help narrow the gender wage gap.

## **VII. Environment**

### **1. What measures, if any, would you support to move PA off its reliance on fossil fuels and expand use of renewable energy sources?**

As a former scientist, I believe that climate change is real and is directly related to human activity, and disproportionately affects the poor and minorities. As a lawyer, I believe that corporations need to be held responsible for the pollution they create.

To address climate change, Pennsylvania should take practical steps such as joining the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. This is the only cap and trade program in the country and Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont all participate in it. Through RGGI, these states have been able to reduce their carbon emissions. Almost as important, "RGGI is credited with reducing average utility bills by 3.4 percent across the region, driving \$2.7 billion in revenues to be reinvested into public projects and creating at least 30,200 new jobs over the past eight years."

In addition, every Pennsylvanian will likely agree that Pennsylvania needs to grow more jobs. Transitioning to green energy will accomplish this. As Mayor Kenney rightly has committed Philadelphia to complying with the Paris Accord and pledged to work towards 100% renewable energy, Philadelphia has a great opportunity to be a leader in developing green jobs. According to a report from POWER, we could create "15,000 new jobs that can lift at least 1 in 5 families out of poverty with strategic, smart and targeted investments in Green Jobs ranging from increased transit opportunities and building out local food systems to creating solar throughout the city and region." Power further notes that if PECO committed to purchasing just 20% of its energy from local solar installations, we "could create 2,700 annual jobs in construction and installation – jobs that often average \$20 to \$26 per hour." If elected, I will work hard to make these dreams a reality.

### **2. Do you support a ban on fracking in whole or part?**

I do.

**3. Would you support developing the Philadelphia area as an energy hub?**

This would depend upon the definition of “energy hub”. If you are referring to an energy hub for oil and natural gas, then no I do not. Our City’s future needs to be in green jobs, not dying industries like oil and natural gas.

**4. Do you think Philadelphia should be compelled or induced to sell PGW?**

I do not. In general I do not support privatization of government functions and Philadelphia.

**VIII. Criminal Justice**

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

Yes. We all know stop and frisk and other methods of racial profiling are unjust and alienate the police from the public they serve. What we are learning now is that they don’t make us any safer. For instance, research has shown that ending of stop and frisk in New York had no effect on criminal conduct. Further, a study of the Philadelphia Police Department by Villanova University found that “mostly black neighborhoods drew 70% more frisks than nonblack areas.” And yet despite these additional stop and frisks, these racially motivated police practices actually “yielded less contraband” than stop and frisks in non-minority neighborhoods.

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

At a very broad level we need to reverse over-incarceration and make our criminal justice system equitable. As Supreme Court Justice Brandeis once said, “If we desire respect for the law, we must first make the law respectable.” I believe that people want to feel and be safe in their neighborhoods – both from crime and from the criminal justice system itself. To that end, I support policies such as decriminalizing drug use and ending cash bail.

After spending more than \$1 trillion nationally over the last forty years with no significant decrease in drug abuse, I believe it is time to drastically rethink our government’s war on drugs. As someone who worked as a biologist before going to law school and becoming a lawyer, I will listen to the medical experts and seek evidence-backed solutions to drug addiction. And according to the National College of Physicians:

Substance use disorders are treatable chronic medical conditions that should be addressed through expansion of evidence-based public and individual health initiatives to prevent, treat, and promote recovery.

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Treatment for substance use disorders should be made available in a timely manner, including for those in the criminal justice system as an alternative to incarceration and other criminal penalties.

Not only is this approach more effective in treating drug abuse, it also will:

- Free up resources that can be directed towards more serious crime. On a national level, “four times as many people are arrested for possessing drugs as for selling them ... [and h]alf of those arrested for possession are charged with nothing more serious than possessing marijuana for personal use.” This is a waste of resources better directed toward combating violent and serious crime.
- Reduce discriminatory treatment of blacks and other minorities. According to research by the ACLU of Pennsylvania, blacks are 3.6 times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than whites – despite that both races use marijuana in roughly equal rates.

In addition, we must end “cash bail”. As noted by premier criminal defense and civil rights attorney Bryan Stevenson, “We have a system of justice in this country that treats you much better if you’re rich and guilty than if you’re poor and innocent.” Perhaps nowhere is this as true than with cash bail – a system that incarcerates accused, non-violent offenders not based on likelihood to commit new crimes but merely because they are too poor to afford bail. In Philadelphia, almost 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s of our incarcerated are not yet convicted but held awaiting trial. Of those, one in every three is held simply because they cannot afford cash bail. Not only is this system unjust, it is also ineffective and costly. A 2017 report by the City Controller’s Office found that eliminating cash bail would save the City of Philadelphia “over \$75 million annually” by relying on less costly measures such as “electronic monitoring and other methods of passive supervision” that are just as or more effective than cash bail in ensuring court appearances and reducing the likelihood of violent crime.

**3. Should marijuana be legalized for recreational use?**

Yes. See response to previous question.

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

Absolutely not.

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

Yes. Given our country’s insane over-incarceration of the last few decades as well as its discriminatory impact, “ban the box” legislation is needed.

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

No. As explained in response to question 2, we need to reverse over-incarceration.

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

As explained in response to question 2, Pennsylvania needs to reverse over-incarceration. As this efforts come to fruition, we will see a large drop in the number of incarcerated and will be able to close prisons and invest that money in more effective methods of crime prevention such as education (and early education), job training, counseling for drug abuse and mental health, and others.

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

Yes. We must end Pennsylvania's wasteful experiment with the death penalty. First, new technologies like DNA testing have shown how unreliable many criminal convictions are. Indeed, research shows that for every nine people who have been executed, at least one person has been exonerated. Simply put, we cannot accept a system where we are sending so many innocent people to death row. Moreover, since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976, Pennsylvania has spent more than \$1 billion dollars pursuing it while only executing three individuals during that time – and then only after each voluntarily agreed to drop their remaining appeals. Given that the death penalty in Pennsylvania is so unjust, ineffective, and overly costly, it must be abandoned and the significant money spent in pursuit of it should be diverted to better uses that actually help keep our communities safe.

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

I do not believe a juvenile should ever be tried as an adult. Although there is only limited research and more is needed, the existing research shows trying children as adults has no effect in lowering the juvenile crime rate. Moreover, research has found that children tried as adults are more likely to reoffend. Further, as our Supreme Court has begun to realize in holding capital punishment and life without parole for juvenile offenders as unconstitutional, juvenile brains are not wired the same as adult brains. And so treating juveniles like adults is not the answer to reducing crime.

**IX. Campaign Finance Reform**

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

This is a tough one. Although I agree that money in politics is one of our society's biggest problems, I do not theoretically favor public financing for state and

local election candidates. Rather, I believe we need a constitutional amendment reversing Citizens United as well as strict limits on donations. Nonetheless, as neither of these are likely to happen overnight, I would support public financing in the interim as a stopgap method to making elections fairer.

## **X. Labor**

### **1. Would you support legislation to strengthen protection for workers trying to form or joint a union?**

Yes. The economy has not been working for the majority of us for a long time. As summarized by the Economic Policy Institute:

Most Americans believe that a rising tide should lift all boats – that as the economy expands, everybody should reap the rewards. And for two-and-a-half decades beginning the late 1940s, this was how our economy worked. Over this period, the pay (wages and benefits) of typical workers rose in tandem with productivity (how much workers produce per hour). ... But in the 1970s, this started to change.”

Since 1973, although productivity rose 73%, hourly compensation only rose 11.1%. This is not a random result but is rather a direct result of policy choices made by our government to benefit corporations and the rich. And a key weapon of the rich in this class warfare was its attack on unions. If we are going to turn our country around, defending and expanding unions must be a principal focus.

According to a 2014 paper in the New Labor Forum, “de-unionization can explain about a third of the entire growth of wage inequality among men and around a fifth of the growth among women from 1983 to 2007.” Other causes of this inequality are international trade, de-regulation of various industries, and policies such as “efforts to privatize public-sector functions; weakened labor standards (for example regarding overtime pay and independent contractor status); lax enforcement of existing labor standards; an eroded safety net, including changes to unemployment insurance ...; and increasingly dysfunctional immigration policy that includes temporary worker programs that undercut the wages of workers in such disparate fields as landscaping and hospitality ... and science and technology.”

As union membership has declined, wages have stagnated due to the loss of collective bargaining power. This wage stagnation is not confined to union members alone, but also to other workers due to the wage setting standards unions influence for entire sectors of the economy. I will work to strengthen rights to collective bargaining and assist efforts to bring unionization to new areas of the economy. If our society is moving from a manufacturing economy to a service economy, then unionization must spread to these jobs to ensure that workers are paid a living wage and fairly and safely treated.

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

Yes. We must increase the minimum wage and I support raising it to \$15 per hour and indexing it to inflation going forward.

Every year our legislators get an automatic pay raise based upon inflation. And yet the minimum wage in Pennsylvania has not been raised in almost a decade. According to the Keystone Research Center “After adjusting for inflation, the hourly earning of the bottom fifth of workers in Pennsylvania are lower today than they were in 1979 ... despite ... that the[se workers] are better educated and more productive than in the past.” At a time when our country’s corporations are enjoying phenomenal earnings, they can afford to pay workers more. This is especially true given that corporations in Pennsylvania pay their workers a lower minimum wage than in every one of our neighboring states.

We need to see this failure as what it truly is – yet another form of corporate welfare. When employers are allowed to get by without paying their workers a living wage, the burden to help these workers falls on all of us through public and/or private programs including SNAP, public housing, and other programs to address poverty.

Although I favor raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, according to the Economic Policy Institute, even raising it to \$10.10 in Pennsylvania would lift 2.4 million people out of poverty. Further, raising the minimum wage would help close the pay gap as of “those seeing a raise from an increase in the minimum wage, 55% are women and 25% are woman of color.” Finally, in a city where over 1 in 3 children live below the poverty line, raising the minimum wage to just \$10.10 would mean “nearly one-in-five children would see at least one parent receive a raise.”

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

No. As explained in the prior response, we must raise the minimum wage. And if the Commonwealth is not able to accomplish this for all Pennsylvanians, then at a minimum it should not prevent municipalities from doing it on their own.

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

In general, I do not favor privatization of governmental services. As to our system of state stores, however, this is a more difficult question. Although I am certainly sensitive to the potential loss of good paying jobs and do not favor the privatization of retail liquor sales, I cannot say that our current system makes the most sense for Pennsylvania. Nor can I in good conscience say that fighting against the privatization of retail liquor sales is one of my core issues. Instead, I believe that fighting strongly for the other issues discussed in my responses (including raising the

minimum wage, ending over-incarceration, restoring equality to our school funding system, building strong labor unions, etc.) are more important if we truly want a Harrisburg that is working for all Pennsylvanians.

## **XI. Transportation**

**Currently the state constitution mandates that revenue from the state gasoline tax be spent only on roads and bridges. Would you support an amendment to the Constitution allowing gas tax revenue to be spent on public transportation?**

Yes.

## **XII. Reforming Legislative Districts**

**1. Do you support SB 22 (2017), which would (1) form an independent commission, and (2) apply sound methodologies, to draw all congressional, State House, and Senate districts fairly in Pennsylvania?**

Yes. Unlike my opponent, who voted with the Republicans to gerrymander our congressional districts in 2011, I believe gerrymandering is contrary to democracy. Elections should be determined by the quality of the candidates and not by lines on a map. We must fight against gerrymandering and for fair elections at all costs. Further, we must take steps to get money out of politics and to ensure that voting rights are protected.

**2. Would you support the reduction in size of the current PA House from 203 seats to 151 seats, as stipulated in HB 153?**

Yes. Unlike my opponent who failed to vote when a similar bill was brought up in 2011-2012 and then voted against another similar bill in 2013, I believe it is appropriate to shrink the size of the legislature as Pennsylvania has the second largest legislature in the country.