

2018 Legislative Questionnaire

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CANDIDATE CERTIFICATION

Candidate Name:

Office Sought:

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:

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

Neighborhood Networks
c/o Stan Shapiro
7213 Cresheim Rd.
Philadelphia, PA 19119

If returning via email, please send to shapsj@comcast.net and sign and return this first page with the candidate signature by mail.

NN Legislative Candidate Questionnaire

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 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 clerked (chaired) the Frankford Friends School committee from 2005-2014.

I am currently clerk of Frankford Monthly (Quaker) Meeting.

I served on the Amicus Committee of the American Immigration Lawyers' Association

-- For information on my work with Frankford Friends School, you can contact Penny Colgan-Davis, past FFS Principal and current Clerk of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. For information on my work with the school and Meeting, you can contact Peg Szczurek, current clerk of the school committee. For information on my work with the AILA Amicus Committee, you can contact my colleague Russel Arbutryn, who was chair of that committee or my colleague, William Stock, who is the President-elect of AILA National.

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

My campaign has publicized detailed policy briefs on the following issues: education, gun violence, labor, and environment. They are available at the following link:

<http://www.votehohenstein.com/issues2/>

For the May 2018 Primary I have been endorsed by Reclaim Philadelphia and Working Families Party PA. I am in talks with several labor unions including the Carpenters and AFSCME DC 47, 33, 1199c and are also participating in the endorsement process of many other influential groups including Working Educators Caucus, Sierra Club, and Liberty City Democratic Club. I have received the support of 23rd Ward Leader Dan Savage.

In 2017, I raised more than any other candidate in my race: 65k from over 140 individual donors including neighbors, friends, and family from near and far. Through aggressive outreach, my candidacy has peaked the interest of the national immigration attorney community, who see me as a champion of their causes and leader in standing up to Trump and his administration in regards to their harmful and unjust immigration policies. In 2018 we are keeping up our aggressive grassroots oriented fundraising and plan to have 135k by election day May 15th.

5. What is your plan to win this race.

Build on the 5,000+ voter IDs from my general election campaign for this seat in 2016, in which I received over 11,000 votes and received almost 45% of the vote against a popular 32 year incumbent.

Field: I, as the candidate, have been and will continue canvassing daily with a target of 500 doors per week. I was able to keep this pace from August - November in 2016. This is supported by a volunteer canvass of 10-15 people each weekend and 4-6 during weekdays. We will also continue to hold meet and greet events in each of the neighborhoods in the 177th district.

Phone: We have a dedicated volunteer base of 10-15 phone canvassers working on a targeted virtual phone bank and in office phone banking sessions.

Direct Mail: We have budgeted a 6-8 piece targeted direct mail.

ELECTION DAY: There are 43 polling places for the 70 divisions of the district. We will have a minimum of 4 poll workers at each with a target of half volunteer and half paid. We are also recruiting attorneys to serve as poll watchers to ensure fair treatment and access for all voters. In 2016 we came close to the above goal with assistance from SEIU 32BJ and only 10 paid workers; and covered approximately 25 of the polling places with attorney watchers.

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, say so.

I. OVERALL

What would be your three highest priorities as a legislator? Explain.

1. Assuring voters of the responsibility of elected officials (namely myself) to listen and act in their best interests, as well as remaining responsible to complete the job for which we are elected. I believe the first job of a legislator is to help improve their constituents' neighborhoods and the second job is to go to Harrisburg and get the resources to make the first job easier.
2. Providing high-quality, local education to our neighborhoods – first through establishing a true fair funding formula for public schools that includes current revenue not just future revenue; recognizing the value of Catholic schools (which, in the 177th, have functioned as a secondary public education system for decades); and ensuring the fiscal and academic standing of charters (which currently carry the weight of people who are dissatisfied with the state of our public schools but do so by taking dollars intended for public schools).

3. Taxing the fracking industry in our state and making corporations pay their fair share to support the state of Pennsylvania. This is an important source of revenue that could help Philadelphia public schools.

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?

In a district like mine it is difficult not to acknowledge the utility and value of charter schools. With the closing of so many of our local public and parochial schools, charters have taken in many of our children. The problem is that they have done so at the expense of the regular public system and they have done so without proper accountability for either academic quality or fiscal responsibility. If elected I would support legislation that makes charters more accountable and establishes separate funding streams for public and charter schools. I believe we need to provide proper funding for public schools, especially for early childhood and elementary education. Our children deserve high-quality and accessible, local education without having to rely on charter lotteries or long commutes to other neighborhoods.

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

Districts with a property tax base that cannot support their school systems depend more heavily on state funding. The loss of that funding has hit our district in Philadelphia extremely hard. The poorer school districts often exhibit critical needs – crumbling infrastructure, over-enrollment, and loss of employees though lack of funding. Barometers such as test scores or matriculation rate should be acknowledged as red-flags for schools or districts in need of increased support and attention. I believe that the current legislature sees these metrics as failings of the district, rather than failing to fund. Our current representative is part of the Republican majority that re-established funding for all of the wealthier school districts before poorer districts like ours in Philadelphia. The real solution is to establish a fair funding formula similar to most of the rest of the states in the country.

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

Ideally, community college should be free to all students. In order to accomplish that, it is imperative that we reach a place where public colleges are not relying on student tuition for funding and instead or given that support by the Commonwealth.

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

Standardized tests are useful in identifying schools districts that are in need of increased attention – something within that system is not functioning to provide quality education to the students and ought to be addressed. They are not generally good measures for individual student performance and I do not support test-based curricula that sacrifices real education for a three hour, pressure packed performance.

- 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?

III. Budget and Taxes

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

I am attracted to this concept, but do not know enough about how such an amendment would work or be put into place to state unequivocal support. I would query why progressive taxation would require a Constitutional Amendment.

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

I think the state needs to explore ways to increase revenue without increasing the burdens on working people. I would have to evaluate exactly which form of unearned income would be taxed, but in general I support the concept.

- 3) What changes if any would you support in corporate net income tax levels?

First, the oil and natural gas industry need to be taxed on their extraction processes (which still must be adequately studied and regulated). As for the rest of the corporate income tax structure, those rates may actually be best served by maintaining them, but requiring corporate owners and shareholders to take profits and then utilizing a more progressive individual income tax. That way owners will either provide more investment into growing their businesses – to avoid having to take profits or they will have to pay higher rates on the individual income from those profits.

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

See above. I would support progressive individual income taxes.

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

Yes.

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

I believe that all natural gas fracking in the state should be taxed and assessed extraction fees. The tax on the fracking industry should be aligned with other large industry taxes as well as acknowledging the environmental impact, and residential impact (such as direct or indirect displacement). I would at the very least support Governor Wolf's proposed 3.5% tax and 4.7 cent impact fee from 2015. I would also consider higher rates. I would want to make certain that any tax/fee levied on this industry contains set aides for proper environmental impact studies.

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?

I would not support the abolition of the property tax for all or some payers. In Philadelphia, I would support a measure to encourage certain entities that are currently not paying taxes to pay their fair share. I strongly condemn and oppose recent Republican efforts to eliminate property taxes without replacing revenue. We can't continue to bankrupt our government and the important social services it provides.

IV. Public Banking

Would you support the creation of a Pennsylvania Public Bank, modeled after [the Bank of North Dakota](#)? Explain.

I fully support and would advocate as a legislator for the creation of a state bank that can partner with local community banks and credit unions to keep the local economy healthy.. It is clear to me that the 2008 financial crisis disproportionately affected middle and low income folks, but wealthy business people in the largest banking and insurance companies made off with huge bonuses. This is not right. Furthermore, because the federal government bailed out those businesses after they knowingly took on risky debts and falsely advertised them as safe investments, the private gain of those banking insiders that were able to get out of the market before it collapsed was subsidized a public loss of our taxpayer money.

V. Women's Rights

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

No, there should be no limit to a woman's right to choose.

- 2) What additional protections should be enacted into law to protect women's health care?

I support legislation that prohibits protests from being held in front of doors to clinics that provide abortions. I also believe that the state should provide stronger support for education on all health issues, especially women's health.

I support eliminating the "luxury" status of feminine health products. This status has women paying higher taxes on necessities, like tampons or feminine hygiene products. Similarly, I believe insurance regulations can and should include assurances for coverage of treatment of issues specific to women's health.

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

Yes.

- 4) Do you support legislation to protect individuals against sexual assault?

Yes.

VI. Children and Families

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

Yes. As a small business owner I have provided my staff with a month of paid leave in addition to any accrued vacation and sick time upon the birth of a child. I know it is insufficient for the real needs of a working family – but I feel it is my responsibility to do what I can for the people whose work helps provide me a living.

2) Should the state provide universal availability of affordable child care?

Yes.

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?

Stronger enforcement of the provisions of AEPS. Also, educating local and state legislators on the economic value – especially in the area of job growth – that can come with developing renewable technologies. In my district specifically, the Clean Energy Incentive Program (CEIP) is a huge opportunity to establish solid jobs. This is a program mandated by the federal government under the Clean Power Plan. My district in particular, situated along an industrial stretch of the Delaware River, is a prime location for the PA DEP to implement the CEIP.

2) Do you support a ban on fracking in whole or part?

In whole, ideally. However, in lieu of being able to completely ban natural gas fracking, I support a comprehensive and strict tax on the fracking industry to simultaneously limit their scope and support the gaps in our current budget. I also recognize the need for further study on the environmental impact of fracking.

3) Would you support developing the Philadelphia area as an Energy Hub?

Yes, but not in the way it is being proposed by supporters of more natural gas. I actually believe there is a space for Philadelphia to be a leader in investment in renewable energy, particularly solar and wind. I would oppose the current plans to expand natural gas transport in and through Philadelphia – or at the very least insist on equal investment in renewables. The key is a plan that will reach or exceed the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards (AEPS) as established in Act 213.

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

Philadelphia should hold PGW and not sell off this valuable public asset. PGW should be reformed to focus more strongly on the above mentioned AEPS.

VIII. Criminal Justice

1) Should stop and frisk be limited or outlawed?

Outlawed. Stop and Frisk relies completely on stereotyping and personal bias of police officers which provides far too much space for potential misconduct. True security is obtained through the development of trusting relationship between law enforcement and the community it is intended to protect and serve. Stop and frisk harms, rather than helps that relationship.

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

The problem of mass incarceration has to be combated by the reevaluation of sentencing for nonviolent crimes. Too often minority youth are given lengthy sentences for minor crimes such as drug possession or traffic violations, which impacts not only the capacity of prisons but also the perception of minorities by the public and by law enforcement. The focus on punitive measures, rather than rehabilitative ones serves to stifle the development of younger offenders. Prisons function as home-bases for criminalized youth instead of places where a person can turn his or her life around. I would support expansion of continuing education programs to the incarcerated that are then continued when they are released and become returning citizens. More coordination between the incarcerating institutions and follow up services should lead to a reduction in recidivism.

3) Should marijuana be legalized for recreational use?

Yes. It has been shown in the numerous states that have legalized marijuana for recreational and medical use that the economic benefits to the private sector have been greatly increased as well as a notable decrease in petty crime as well as arrests for minor drug offenses.

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

No. Private corporations should not operate with a profit incentive to incarcerate more people so to create more demand for their services [prisons].

5) Should we ban the box in Pennsylvania?

Yes.

6) Should PA continue to build new prisons?

No. When new prisons are built the only thing increased is the requirement to fill them which negatively impacts communities that are targeted for nonviolent crimes. I have served one population which has become a cash cow for the prison industry – non-violent and non-criminal immigration violators. There is little or no societal value gained by detaining non-violent immigration violators, especially those with US citizen family members.

7) Should PA begin to close prisons? Explain.

I am undecided on this issue. Building new prisons is unnecessary, and private prisons should be closed. I am undecided on how and in what way to close current state or county detention facilities.

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

Yes.

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

Never. However, assessments for truly violent offenders should be conducted when they reach the age of majority. At that time, the need for continued detainment can be determined. I would work to implement the mandates for fair treatment of juveniles as set forth by the U.S. Supreme Court in the *Miller v. Alabama* and *Montgomery v. Louisiana* decisions.

IX. Campaign Finance Reform

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

Yes. Ending or reducing the impact of big money on elections is a necessary step in the re-establishment of a truly democratic system.

X. Labor

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

Yes. The right to organize is one of the most essential to the protection of our workers. I come from a family with a strong union background. I know that our country was at its most prosperous – with the strongest middle class – during the heyday of unions from 1947–1980. Workers' right to organize and strike

provide additional positive economic impacts that it is the smart thing to support economically in addition to being the right thing to support humanistically.

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

Yes. The minimum wage should be increased to a place that a single parent working at that wage, full-time job should be able to support herself and her children. I fully endorse a \$15 minimum wage, but I recognize even that is not truly a livable wage. The increase should be indexed to inflation.

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

No.

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

No, although I remain open to the concept of privatization, I have not seen a public industry in which it has improved services or efficiency. In many instances privatization has reduced worker security. With that being said, I recognize that the Pennsylvania liquor control system is an anachronism and in need of reform. I just don't think it should be done at the expense of workers and consumers. Quality of service will also likely suffer when a profit margin, rather than a public service, is seen as the bottom line. One particular concern I have is a higher potential for under-age drinkers to be served in for-profit liquor stores.

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. I have been a regular rider of public transportation from the time I was a child. I appreciate and value how a good public transportation system improves lives on many levels.

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.

- 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.

I note that the NNA questionnaire did not address either gun control or issues facing immigrants in our communities. I will briefly state that I believe that sensible regulation of gun ownership will make all our communities safer. I also believe that programs and regulations that are more welcoming to immigrants will also increase safety and prosperity in our neighborhoods by making a marginalized part of our community feel more valued.