

2018 Legislative Questionnaire

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CANDIDATE CERTIFICATION

Candidate Name: Malcolm Kenyatta

Office Sought: Pennsylvania State Representative - 181st 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:

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?

n/a

2. If you have previously held a government office: n/a

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.)

As a board member of the National Organization of Women (NOW), I have also worked on women's rights issues. As a member of Liberty City LGBT Democratic Club, I have worked on issues involving fair housing issues, workplace issues, and justice issues for LGBT people. As a board member of Smith Memorial Playground, I have worked for recreational opportunities for children from disadvantaged communities. I have spoken out publicly on issues of immigrant rights, criminal justice reform, anti-gun violence, education funding and more. For my work with Liberty City, additional information can be provided by Wade Albert; For NOW, additional information can be provided by Jenne Ayers. For the Smith Playground, information can be provided by Meg Wise.

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

Expected Funding Sources: Donors, endorsements, fundraisers

Endorsements: Philadelphia Federation of Teachers, Temple Association of University Professionals (TAUP)/ American Federation of Teachers Local # 4531, Run For Something organization, Former Pa. Governor Edward G. Rendell, Asa Khalif (head of Black Lives Matter Pennsylvania), Sheila Armstrong (schools activist), Cathy Blunt (retired educator), Joe Khan (former U.S. Assistant Attorney and former candidate for Philadelphia District Attorney), Jenne Ayers (school board candidate and expert in finance and higher education), Jamira Burley (former head of Philadelphia Youth Commission), Pastor Clarence E. Wright (Love Zion Baptist Church)

Policy positions are outlined at <https://www.malcolmforpa.com/issues>

5. What is your plan to win this race.

To engage voters of the 181st District on issues surrounding poor and working poor families and the pursuit for a living wage, a historic boost in education funding and protection for seniors and others on limited incomes who want to remain in their homes in the face of skyrocketing housing rates. We are reaching voters through personal conversations during door-to-door canvassing, distribution of campaign literature, mailings that promote the candidates issues, endorsements from labor, civic and advocacy organizations, and other elected officials, addressing audiences at candidates forums and fundraisers, media outreach and community newspaper advertising. We are financing this race through donations, endorsements and fundraising, and with the assistance of a group of dedicated volunteers.

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.

Helping poor and working poor families through support for a living wage and defense of collective bargaining rights; Seeking the largest investment in the public education in state history; protecting seniors and others on limited incomes from being displaced from their homes as a result of skyrocketing housing rates due to gentrification and development.

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? More than anything I want a good school for every single one of our kids. Charter schools have and will play a role. Many show the advantages of flexibility in operations and the safety of intimate settings. However, charter schools must be better regulated. Many discourage attendance by students with behavioral and academic disabilities, relegating large concentrations of high needs students in neighborhood schools. Charter schools cannot, in this instance and others, come at the expense of disenfranchising other public schools. I would sponsor legislation that seeks greater accountability of charters. We also have to fix the reimbursement formula as soon as possible.
- 2) What factors do you believe should be considered in determining *overall levels* of school funding in the Commonwealth, and funding *per school district*? I believe we need to make the greatest investment in public education in Pennsylvania history. In 2012, Pennsylvania ranked 44th in the percentage

share of education costs covered by the state. It is time for Harrisburg to step up and provide the education funding our students deserve. A fair school funding formula carefully takes the needs of every school district into account, and the ability of that municipality to cover those needs. Localities across the Commonwealth have been saddled with raising money through property taxes to fund their district schools, which disproportionately burdens low-income communities in need. Pennsylvania needs to contribute more.

- 3) Do you believe public college, or community college, should be tuition free? Yes.
- 4) What role do you believe standardized tests should play in evaluating teachers, schools and students, if any? Standardized tests can help educators measure students' performance, needs and progress. They should not be the only evaluation of a student's academic status. They should be used along with classwork, regular grading, daily performance and the teacher's observations. They should not be the source of excessive test prep, which in itself impedes time spent actually teaching and learning.
- 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? The world is increasingly digital and technology-based, so the use of computers must be taught in our schools, and they should be used for content and assignments. However, computers are not a replacement for a teacher. Teachers are trained professionals whose effectiveness calls on everything from pedagogy to youth development. While computers can improve efficiency and accessibility, they should absolutely not be viewed as a replacement for a real, live teacher.

III. Budget and Taxes

- 1) Do you support a Constitutional Amendment to permit progressive taxation in PA, in whole or part? Yes!
- 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? Yes.
- 3) What changes if any would you support in corporate net income tax levels? I'd want to look at the specific piece of legislation, but generally I'm open to reviewing those levels for change.
- 4) What changes, if any, would you support in the personal income tax? I don't want to see any taxes raised for the middle class and the poor.
- 5) Do you support full elimination of the Delaware loophole? Yes.
- 6) Do you support a tax on fracking, and at what level? Yes.

- 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? No. We should not get rid of property taxes in general, but we do need to look at increasing the level in the Homestead exemption/expanding the LOOP program.

IV. Public Banking

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

That is certainly an interesting idea I could be supportive of in principle. But that's one of those things where the devil is in the detail, and I could want to look at any plan proposed.

V. Women's Rights

- 1) Do you believe there should be any restrictions on a woman's right to choose? If so, what? No. It's 2018 we should stop having conversations about what medical procedures women are allowed to have. That is between them and their doctor.
- 2) What additional protections should be enacted into law to protect women's health care? We need to get government out of women's health care decisions.
- 3) Would you support proposals to ensure that women and men working in the Commonwealth receive equal pay for equal work? No.
- 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.
- 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? In general, we need to increase the safety restrictions around natural fuel, because there are a number of examples we can look at where fracking has been dangerous. Natural gas can serve as a bridge tool, but we have to look at

wind, solar and other technologies in that field, and assure that natural fuel is taxed and safe.

- 2) Do you support a ban on fracking in whole or part? I support a moratorium on new drilling while we shift our focus to renewable energy.
- 3) Would you support developing the Philadelphia area as an Energy Hub?
No.
- 4) Do you think Philadelphia should be compelled or induced to sell PGW?
No

VIII. Criminal Justice

- 1) Should stop and frisk be limited or outlawed? It should be outlawed. We need to stop racist police practices.
- 2) How would you deal with the problem of mass incarceration of minorities, particularly minority youth? I believe in reforming our criminal justice system and ending mass incarceration as a detriment to American society writ large. Mass incarceration is equally a health and accountability issue, and solutions should target both these areas. We should end mandatory-minimum sentences. A report by the All-Cities initiative cited a number of reforms for creating a more equitable court system. They included “eliminating court-access fees, prohibiting juvenile fines, capping the allowable share or revenue from fines and fees, ensuring access to free public defender services and ending warrants and jail time for unpaid fees. The current bail reform process, including cash bail, criminalizes the poor and the working poor. In schools, we need to support practices other than detentions and expulsions, which are disproportionately applied to minority youth and are often students’ first step in the school-to-prison pipeline. Unless of a very serious nature, conflicts should be addressed by the school, instead of police, who feel may feel compelled to respond with criminal charges against the source of a complaint.
- 3) Should marijuana be legalized for recreational use? Yes.
- 4) Should privately-owned prisons be permitted in Pennsylvania? No. I am absolutely opposed to privately-owned prisons.
- 5) Should we ban the box in Pennsylvania? Yes.
- 6) Should PA continue to build new prisons? No. We need to decrease population in the ones we have now.

- 7) Should PA begin to close prisons? Explain. Yes. The prison population is decreasing, as it should, given that we have relied too heavily on such bad policies as mandatory-minimum sentencing and criminalizing addiction.
- 8) Do you support an end to the death penalty? Yes.
- 9) When if ever, should a juvenile be tried as an adult? Never.

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, to \$15 an hour, and tied to a cost-of-living increase, as it is for state legislators.
- 3) Do you believe that Philadelphia and other municipalities should continue to be pre-empted from increasing the minimum wage on their own? No. I will introduce this legislation opposing this when I get to Harrisburg.
- 4) Do you support privatization of retail liquor sales in Pennsylvania? Are there any other services that you believe should be considered for privatization?

I support modernization but not wholesale privatization because that will hurt a lot of the workers.

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.

- 2) Would you support the reduction in size of the current PA House from 203 seats to 151 seats, as stipulated in HB 153? No. Reducing the size of the legislature would hurt communities of color who depend on their elected officials to provide constituent services. Additionally, cutting the size of the legislature without doing broader reforms around redistricting, big money in campaigns, etc., doesn't solve the problem. So I will connect myself with an amendment by Mary Jo Daley, who submitted a proposal that said we have to look holistically at this.