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### CANDIDATE CERTIFICATION

Candidate Name: MELISSA SCOTT

Office Sought: STATE REPRESENTATIVE--200TH LEGISLATIVE 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: 3/16/18

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](mailto: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?  
**Democratic Committee person 50th Ward 23rd Division (2008 to 2014);**
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.)
4. Please provide copies of all your significant campaign materials, including position papers, and information on your campaign strategy, expected funding sources, and endorsements.  
**Please see position statements elaborated on the website.**

5. What is your plan to win this race.

**Engage voters through social media, community events and door-to-door canvassing.**

### **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?

**Safety; Education & Jobs**

**I am seeking to be elected State Representative for the 200th District to enact both a**

legislative and community-based agenda that promotes equity and fairness of opportunity

## 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? **Charter schools have not proven to be as effective as hoped. However, support for these schools should not take away from funding of traditional public schools. Therefore, I would go back to the original plan of separate funding for Charter schools.**

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

**Poverty levels of the district, number of special needs students, overall value of taxable real estate**

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

4) What role do you believe standardized tests should play in evaluating teachers, schools and students, if any?  
**Students and teachers should concentrate on mastery not teaching for the test.**

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?  
**Computers are an important but not the only learning tool and are definitely not a replacement for teachers.**

## III. Budget and Taxes

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

**Yes. It is long overdue and would be fairer to low-income families and persons on fixed incomes.**

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. I agree with Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center Director, Marc Stier that the budget deficit is not a result of too much spending but rather cuts to taxes, especially corporate taxes that fall on the very rich.**

3) What changes if any would you support in corporate net income tax levels?  
**I support the changes put forth by the Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center.**

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

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

- 6) Do you support a tax on fracking, and at what level? **Yes. I support a modest severance tax of 6.5% on natural gas drilling which according to the PBPC would raise \$218 million. We are**
- 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 such an effort and would stand with the many faith-based organizations and other groups to oppose it. Increasing the homestead exemption would make more sense to help low-income property owners.**

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

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

**At the City level, they have begun exploring this issue. I commend city council's leadership and would support any necessary enabling legislation to allow Philadelphia to establish a public bank. Additionally, I would support public hearings on this issue as a first step in considering the viability of such an initiative at the state level.**

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

- 1) Do you believe there should be any restrictions on a woman's right to choose? If so, what? **No.**

What additional protections should be enacted into law to protect women's health care? **I embrace the legislative agenda of the Pennsylvania Campaign for Women's Health which includes workplace accommodations for pregnant women and nursing mothers, equal pay, raising the minimum wage, identifying gaps in healthcare for female veterans, cell phone contract termination for Domestic Violence victims and many other proposals.**

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

**Absolutely. But my election will also serve as a visible example that voters in the 200th Legislative District are taking a stand against the abysmal underrepresentation of women in our General Assembly, which is currently 19%.**

- 3) 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?

**Paid family leave is long overdue. It would be incredibly helpful for middle-class and working class families.**

- 2) Should the state provide universal availability of affordable child care? **More than childcare the State should provide affordable pre-k opportunities for all children.**

## VII. Environment

By way of an overview, it is important to note that as a Pennsylvania elected official I will be legally bound to uphold Article I, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution which guarantees to the residents of the state clean air and water and the preservation of all natural lands. I will take this obligation seriously as I vote on legislation that may adversely impact our environment and jeopardize the quality of life of the citizenry and future generations.

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

I would support legislation to become fossil-free by a specific year, but such legislation must also provide a local job creation and re-training strategy. I would in the interim, look for discretionary state funding to develop pilot projects that would support small business development and entrepreneurship in this area.

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

I would let science lead the policy development in this area. For example, currently, the Delaware Valley Basin Commission has placed a moratorium on fracking.

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

**Yes, but only if it were moving toward renewable energy sources.**

- 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? **Because of its consistently racist application, I think it must be outlawed.**

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

I would work closely with the newly-elected Philadelphia District Attorney, Larry Krasner, to implement legislative proposals to help lessen the incarceration of our minority youth.

- 3) Should marijuana be legalized for recreational use?

**Marijuana is an revenue generator and according to state Auditor General DePasquale regulating and taxing the sales could conservatively generate \$200 million a year.**

- 4) Should privately-owned prisons be permitted in Pennsylvania? **No.**

- 5) Should we ban the box in Pennsylvania? **Yes.**

- 6) Should PA continue to build new prisons? **No.**
- 7) Should PA begin to close prisons? Explain. **Yes. We should be investing in education at all levels.**
- 8) Do you support an end to the death penalty? **Yes. It is too costly and the state has not utilized it in decades. Again, I am in agreement with our new District Attorney's position on this.**
- 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, the money being spent on campaigns on all levels is outrageous.**

## **X. Labor**

**Unions are the backbone of our working & middle-class communities and are under attack in cities and states across our nation.**

**As your State Representative, I will proactively fight for legislation that will help reduce wage inequality and set pay standards. I will stand up for the rights of working families.**

- 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? **\$15/hour.**
- 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?  
**I do not support the privatization of state stores or any other current services that are currently under state control.**

## **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, not only because mass transit is more energy-efficient but because it is relied upon by so many low-income residents. I would also support funding for reverse commuting, a project being spearheaded by the Philadelphia Unemployment Project (PUP) to help city residents get to higher paying suburban jobs.**

## **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.**