



Connect with your Neighbors.....Change the World

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

**Neighborhood Networks
c/o Stan Shapiro
7213 Cresheim Rd.
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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?

I have not held a prior elected or appointed office. I have served (in military status) as an Air Force liaison to the US Congress and in that role have 7+ years' experience in legislative processes, committees, subcommittees, professional vs personal staff, etc.

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.)

In the role noted in paragraph #1 above, I was the chief strategist for legislative game plans, policy papers and personal meetings with staff on Capitol Hill and Members of Congress. We focused on individual benefits for basic pay, health benefits, survivor benefits □ personnel issues, primarily for Guardsman and Reservists □ and over \$100M in funding for equipment upgrades. All passed and funded by Congress and signed into law by the President. In addition, I and my team provided oral and written answers to over 3000 Congressional inquiries annually.

In a separate role as a Health Policy Fellow for Robert Betz Associates in Washington DC, I served as a health policy analyst on a large spectrum of issues for group purchasers (health care equipment suppliers), hospital associations and individual specialty hospitals.

Please feel free to contact: Dr. Robert Betz, rbetz@robertbetz.com, 202-271-2231
Michael LoGrande, mflogrande@gmail.com 703-601-0199

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 attached campaign materials. Pending/Expected funding sources include:

-
- votevets.org

Need to write here about expected funding sources and endorsements...

5. What is your plan to win this race.

In brief: our analysis of past voter numbers and race results in District 150 shows 3 things:

- The total difference in vote counts for all candidates in the 5 municipalities in District 150 in 2017 was less than 100 votes.

- In 2017 Democrats won approximately 50% of the municipal elections in the 5 municipalities that make-up District 150.
- When we look at the big elections in 2016: Hillary Clinton won in our 5 municipalities. Katie McGinty running against a strong, entrenched incumbent did not...

Summary: good Democratic candidates can win in this district. And our Republican opponent is a first term office-holder. Our intention is to run a local, municipal-like campaign in all 5 municipalities (door-knocking, mailers, events, outreach, social media campaigns, voter registration...). That's doable – now is the time. And we have influential support in place, already, in all 5 municipalities.

In addition, my military experience, time on Capitol Hill and private sector background means simply I'm a better-qualified "statesmen" than my opponent. This is how we reach independent voters and a share of moderate Republicans.

ISSUES

Please note: Although most of the following questions may be answered "yes" or "no" feel free to elaborate if doing so would provide a clearer statement of your position.

I. OVERALL

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

| Issues: | Character and values |
|--|----------------------|
| Public Education | Respect |
| Fair Districting and voter access | Integrity |
| Taxes, Healthcare, Equality, Economic Development, Environment – Our Creeks and Rivers, Transportation / Traffic, Infrastructure, Affordable Housing, Quality Care & Housing for our Seniors, Quality Care & Housing for our Veterans... | Service |

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?
 - a. Charter schools may be the answer for some communities and situations, but we need to be sure that they're subject to the same rigorous oversight by our local school boards as traditional public 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*?

- a. OVERALL levels of school funding need to increase, and funding PER DISTRICT should be determined by a range of factors including the relative cost of living in the district (to ensure compensation is fair and competitive, and that supplies and services are still affordable), the proportion of students with special needs, and the ability of the district to meet its needs through funding sources other than the Commonwealth. Districts deserve as much support as we can give, and education is an investment that yields enormous returns in social, economic, and civic benefits.
- 3) Do you believe public college, or community college, should be tuition free?
 - a. Absolutely – or as near to free as we can make it. The US built the best-educated and most-productive workforce in history thanks to college tuition support through programs like the GI Bill, and the world has seen *more* demand for skilled workers and critical thinkers since then, not less!
 - 4) What role do you believe standardized tests should play in evaluating teachers, schools and students, if any?
 - a. Standardized tests may be useful as a guide or a tool, but should never be a high-stakes requirement that distract from real 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?
 - a. Technology is wonderful and can improve learning outcomes, but nothing beats a high-quality teacher who can spend high-impact time teaching a manageable number of students.

III. Budget and Taxes

- 1) Do you support a Constitutional Amendment to permit progressive taxation in PA, in whole or part? Explain.
 - a. Absolutely. Progressive taxation works to prevent excess income inequality, is economically efficient because it doesn't take dollars away from working families who need and spend every one of them, and does nothing to discourage higher earning.
- 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?
 - a. Certainly. Income is income, and treating it differently based on its source is illogical – to say nothing of the fact that by giving breaks to those who earn their living through capital gains and dividends and stock options are likely paying less of their fair share than their “earning” employees. So long as we're protecting those who rely on retirement benefits, unemployment, disability insurance, etc. then I see no reason not to explore our options.

- 3) What changes if any would you support in corporate net income tax levels?
 - a. PA currently has a corporate income tax rate that is slightly higher than our neighbors, so raising that rate may not be advisable since it could drive business out of the commonwealth. However, where we have industries that are geographically bound (such as shale extraction), then we should be leveraging that resource to help offset the costs of protecting our air, water, farmland, and natural beauty. We can also devote high-return funds into tax enforcement to ensure that corporations are truly doing their part!
- 4) What changes, if any, would you support in the personal income tax?
 - a. A shift to a progressive state income tax is a step in the right direction.
- 5) Do you support full elimination of the Delaware loophole?
 - a. 100%. Unless you're one of those people who believe in the "more than 100%" answer, in which case, pick the biggest number you can think of, and that's the percentage I support eliminating the DE loophole!
- 6) Do you support a tax on fracking, and at what level?
 - a. Yes, as noted above. The level and mechanism is a matter for discussion, but 5-7.5% of the market value would be consistent with the effective rate found in other states.

IV. Public Banking

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

- That would depend on the structure and goals of the bank. What works for North Dakota may not work for PA, but it is certainly true that PA has similar low-population and agriculturally-focused regions that may benefit from a public-option bank in places where private banks don't see the profit in operating. Public banks introduce new options for financing public projects, economic development, and community support, and we should be willing to consider and study proposals to establish one.

V. Women's Rights

- 1) Do you believe there should be any restrictions on a woman's right to choose? If so, what?
 - a. No. The state has no business regulating anyone's private healthcare choices – a principle that the Supreme Court of the United States has recognized for half a century. We're not going back to a time when women were placed at risk because of the moral judgments of their government.

- 2) What additional protections should be enacted into law to protect women's health care?
 - a. Guaranteeing support and reimbursement for women's health clinics, public education programs, protecting women's healthcare benefits, birth control, etc. and more might be helpful. But we should be relying on the advice of physicians and the women of the commonwealth to answer this question.
- 3) Would you support proposals to ensure that women and men working in the Commonwealth receive equal pay for equal work?
 - a. There is no excuse for pay inequality when duties, hours, and qualifications are comparable.

Joe 2/19/2018 3:46 PM

Comment [1]: Josh, I added "healthcare benefits and birth control." These are typically areas where insurance pays for Viagra but not for the women's needs.

VI. Children and Families

- 1) Should the state require businesses to provide paid family leave?
 - a. Yes. No parent should have to choose between rushing back to work and devoting essential time to their new child.
- 2) Should the state provide universal availability of affordable child care?
 - a. Absolutely – this is especially important to ensure that single parents can support their families and grow in their careers.

VII. Environment

- 1) Do you support a ban on fracking in whole or part? Explain.
 - a. Fracking is dubious technology that extracts a "resource" that causes serious environmental damage when it leaks into the atmosphere. Natural gas burns "cleanly," but a single small leak from a single well can have as much "greenhouse" impact as a diesel car running all day, every day. Much like nuclear power, *if* we can extract it safely, then it can be an option on the table, but if not, then it should be banned – and regardless of the outcome of that technical assessment, we should be investing in renewable, green technology at every turn.
- 2) Would you support developing the Philadelphia area as an Energy Hub? Explain.
 - a. No. From what I can see, the project is an excuse to pour money into fossil fuel infrastructure that will soon be obsolete. Instead, we should be focusing on renewable resource development.
- 3) Do you think Philadelphia should be compelled or induced to sell PGW?
 - a. Privatization is always a risky endeavor. Yes, some cost savings might be realized, but there's never any guarantee that the savings will be passed on to consumers. In capital-intensive industries like energy, residents can often be faced with near-monopolies and a lack of competition. I know this isn't an answer, but the honest answer is, "maybe – maybe not." Much would depend on the terms and circumstances of the sale.

- 4) What measures would you support to move PA off its reliance on fossil fuels and expand use of renewable energy sources?
 - a. Our state should be providing incentives to consumers and producers alike to buy and create renewable energy, directly investing in research programs and Commonwealth universities to develop new green technologies, encouraging and modeling energy efficiency in all state, county, and local offices and activities, and showing our residents that clean energy is not just some kind of “feel-good” hobbyhorse, but an economic engine that will pay dividends for generations to come.

VIII. Criminal Justice

- 1) Should marijuana be legalized in all circumstances, or for medical use? Explain.
 - a. Marijuana should be legalized in all circumstances, and regulated and taxed appropriately. Marijuana’s illegality does nothing to inhibit its use, and legalizing it will do nothing to increase the risk of its abuse. However, regulating and taxing it will provide a revenue stream to help address public health crises like the opioid epidemic and rising healthcare costs.
- 2) Should privately-owned prisons be permitted in Pennsylvania?
 - a. Never. Rehabilitation is vitally important, and it should never be profitable to encourage incarceration and recidivism.
- 3) Should we ban the box in Pennsylvania?
 - a. Yes, for most offenses. The harder it is for ex-offenders to find employment, the more likely it is that they’ll re-offend, which helps no one – not even the employer.
- 4) Should PA continue to build new prisons?
 - a. Where needed and appropriate, but resources can probably be put to better use in preventing the need for prisons in the first place.
- 5) Should PA begin to close prisons? Explain.
 - a. If possible and appropriate, yes.
- 6) Do you support an end to the death penalty?
 - a. Yes. Neither you nor I know how many innocent people have been executed in our commonwealth and the US, but the number is definitely “more than zero,” which is unacceptable in this case because there is no taking such a punishment back. The potential for abuse in such a system is also disturbing, given the stakes involved. The “deterrence” case for the death penalty is completely unconvincing as well. Simply put, we are risking the greatest of injustices in exchange for simple vengeance.

- 7) When if ever, should a juvenile be tried as an adult?
 - a. Rarely, and only when a judge *and* jury both reach that determination. Severity of the crime and the circumstances of it *may* indicate that it is appropriate, but otherwise there is a reason that we consider those under the age of 18 children – they are not fully-formed, capable, and legally-responsible adults until that age.
- 8) How would you deal with the problem of mass incarceration of minorities, particularly minority youth?
 - a. Targeted community investment in education (programs that improve both quality of schools and attendance/graduation), job skills training, and economic development are great programmatic options, and we should also be rigorously overseeing state and local legal entities to ensure that there is no discrimination at play, either actively or passively.
- 9) Should stop and frisk be limited or outlawed?
 - a. Absolutely outlawed. It is inherently offensive to the US and PA Constitutions, does nothing to prevent crime, and has been definitively shown to be a vehicle for racial harassment.

IX. Campaign Finance Reform

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

Joe 2/19/2018 3:52 PM

Comment [2]: Need something here...

X. Labor

- 1) Should the minimum wage be increased? If so, to what level and should the increase be indexed to inflation?
 - a. The increase should definitely be indexed to inflation, and an increase is definitely called for – the current rate has not kept up with the cost of living in the country, and certainly not in many parts of the state. A flexible rate that accounts for cost of living by county (and subject to decennial review) can be discussed.
- 2) Do you believe that Philadelphia and other municipalities should continue to be pre-empted from increasing the minimum wage on their own?
 - a. No. If our municipalities believe that the state-mandated minimum wage is insufficient to provide a livable wage to the workers in their communities, then they should have the ability to either raise the wage themselves, or at a minimum to apply to the commonwealth for an exception for their communities.
- 3) Do you support privatization of retail liquor sales in Pennsylvania? Are there any other services that you believe should be considered for privatization?

- a. Liquor sales should absolutely be privatized in PA. Our residents pay higher prices for the same products – or don't, when they simply cross into another state to make their purchases, driving the business out of the state.
- 4) Would you support legislation to strengthen protection for workers trying to form or join a union? Explain.
- a. Absolutely. The trade union movement has been one of the greatest drivers of equality, community, and prosperity in history, and it has been under attack for too long, with predictable results: stagnant wages, poorer working conditions, and increasing inequality.

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?

- A voluntary “opt-in” system similar to the federal program – where residents can elect to have a few dollars of their state tax obligation donated to the fund – is worth exploring, especially if residents are also incentivized to seek public office. A citizen should not need to be wealthy or a fundraising machine to serve, and municipal campaigns can be undertaken with minimal cost and an emphasis on door-knocking and speaking to our neighbors!

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?
- a) It is essential that PA move away from a partisan, gerrymander-heavy redistricting process. There are many good and healthy and fair ways to draw districts, but it is completely unrealistic to believe that those being elected should decide who elects them. This cannot happen soon enough, and I applaud the PA Supreme Court for calling this out for what it is: an attack on basic democratic fairness and the essential civic rights of all Pennsylvanians.

Joe 2/19/2018 3:54 PM

Comment [3]: This is the answer to a different question.

Public Transportation.

I think the answer is yes. Revenue from the state gasoline tax should be available to public transportation initiatives. Public transportation provides economic opportunity across income levels and across townships and municipalities. It reduces environmental impacts and can help reduce wear and tear on roads and bridges. It fits the category of transportation infrastructure inherently. Note: this fund does pay for State Police...

