

**Forum for a Better Pennsylvania
PA Gubernatorial Candidates' Issues Questionnaire**

1. Statewide urban-focused job creation program.

In the midst of a national and statewide African-American unemployment crisis, Pennsylvania's urban centers, such as Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and Erie, are suffering from disproportionately high joblessness. That situation creates economic and social hardship for Pennsylvanians and negatively impacts the statewide economy. To address that challenge, we believe the next governor should support an urban-focused job creation program. If elected governor, would you support such an initiative?

Yes No .

Please comment:

The short answer is, of course. I have a plan centered on building a new economy and generational jobs, and as governor, these initiatives would directly impact the chronically unemployed, underemployed, and the economic vitality of the Commonwealth. Focus will fall to the biotech and other high-tech spheres, realigning our educational curricula with these industry needs as well as redirecting state training dollars to industry and community colleges to bring those already of age up to speed. That component would include a twin track for on-the-job training opportunities for small- and mid-sized operations that would provide an opportunity to develop a strong work ethic along with salary-subsidized jobs that will create a greater pool of taxpayers and more bottom lines to grow. Failing to put this population to work – by providing the access to training and means to fully engage in these already burgeoning industries – damages our overall economic viability across the Commonwealth and our competitiveness globally. Double-digit unemployment figures often are highlighted in urban areas, yet some of these same concerns also exist in rural areas that are equally overlooked and costing us in terms of an underdeveloped, underutilized workforce.

2. Among other things, House Bills 2140-2149 and companion legislation, Senate Bills 1210-1218, would ensure that small businesses and minority-owned, women-owned and disadvantaged-owned businesses across the state have fair access to contracts let by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; create a cabinet-level secretary for minority and women business development; and facilitate timely payments to subcontractors on state projects.

Does your campaign support passage of these bills through the House and Senate? Yes No .

Please comment:

I am a co-sponsor of this legislation.

3. **Disclosure of diversity profile of gubernatorial campaigns, especially at senior levels.**

A critical indicator for ascertaining the projected accessibility and support that the Commonwealth's 1.3 million black Pennsylvanians will have in the next Governor's Office is the degree to which African Americans are currently included at senior staff or consultancy levels in the candidates' campaigns. Please indicate whether your campaign includes such input and describe that involvement? Yes No _____.

Please comment / Elaborate:

My campaign's primary goal was to seek the best and brightest. We took that as an opportunity to meld seasoned hands with the next generation of young, energetic, creative and intelligent political minds. To that end, I have assembled one of the most diverse staffs in the race, comprised of black, white, and Latino staffers, not to mention countless advisors of every color, creed, and orientation. On the senior level, as an example, my campaign manager and communications director are young African-American women, whereas my director of field operations is a young African-American male.

4. **Commitment to an accountable and credible diversity initiative for statewide procurement, to include recommended goals of 4, 6, 8 and 10 percent, respectively, in the first four years of the new governor's term.**

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has not demonstrated a stellar track record in the area of supplier diversity. In fact, it is estimated that contracts let to African Americans stand at less than 3 percent of annual total procurement. Will your Administration commit to more reasonable levels of African-American vendor inclusion at the recommended levels? Yes No _____.

Please comment:

While the goal numbers outlined are respectable, in certain areas, we can be even more aggressive. I don't want to limit or capture myself to any specific number, but am certainly comfortable with the numbers outlined.

5. **A focus on the appointment of representative levels of meaningful, senior-level staff members and board, agency and commission members, wherever feasible and appropriate.**

According to a March 2003 report by the General Assembly's Joint State Government Commission, the Governor's Office has the authority to appoint nearly 900 Senate-approved nominees to key statewide boards, agencies and commissions. The rate of such appointments among African-Americans candidates – especially at chairmanship levels – has been disappointingly low. Will your administration commit to an initiative that would produce more representative levels of inclusion in such posts? Yes No _____.

Please comment:

As governor, I intend to fully exercise the opportunity to appoint people to boards of all sizes and impact that reflect the diverse communities served.

6. **A commitment to continue to provide adequate levels of funding to the Commonwealth's public schools and charter schools.**

Given the demographic profile of the School District of Philadelphia and other school districts in high-density, African-American-populated urban centers. We are seeking a commitment to a continuation of adequate levels of funding for those districts. We are also seeking a commitment that the composition of the School Reform Commission (SRC), and other such school district governance/fiduciary bodies, will fairly reflect that demography. Given the critical role that school board chairpersons play in these school districts, we are also interested in the retention of the current SRC board chairperson. Will your administration make such commitments? Yes No .

Please comment:

I am an original architect and champion of the school choice process in Pennsylvania. Since the creation of both charter schools and the SRC, I have pushed for a full menu of options when it comes to K-12 education. Families should make the ultimate decisions on where they send their children to be educated, and in what type of environment. It is a fundamental right that should not be compromised nor dismissed. I fully intend to fund programs and buildings that work. However, I am adamantly opposed to continuing to spend countless taxpayer dollars without clear, measurable outcomes for the investment. Our children deserve nothing less, and our citizens expect nothing more.

7. **The Pennsylvania Convention Center; We are seeking a commitment that board appointees, executive and senior-level leadership and procurement activities at the expanded facility be appropriately inclusive of African-Americans – as managers, trustees and vendors. There has been no regular, ongoing disclosure of operations-based supplier diversity or management composition at that facility, to date. Will you make such commitments and disclosures, if elected governor?**

Yes No .

Please comment:

As a supporter of open records, in fact, a co-sponsor of that legislation, it is critical that we have detailed information as it relates to a variety of different demographics in order to assess how everyone is benefitting from these economic engines. That includes African Americans as well as other underrepresented people of color if we are to leverage our full capacity as a city, region and Commonwealth.

Anthony Hardy Williams

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8. **We are seeking executive-level elected official support for review of race-based inequities in sentencing across the Commonwealth, and the development of a credible, statewide re-entry initiative? Will you make such commitments?**
Yes No .

Please comment / Elaborate:

Clearly, discrimination is bad in any form and I am adversely opposed to it.

9. **We are seeking a commitment to an enhanced focus on preparing young Pennsylvanians for careers in three of the Commonwealth's anticipated economic growth areas —education, healthcare and the sciences. Such a program should include a discrete focus on underrepresented African-American and minority students. Will you make such a commitment, should you be elected?**
Yes No .

Please comment / Elaborate:

My goal as governor is to increase the pipeline of the 21st century workforce. Too often we have slighted ourselves by not fully engaging all available minds, due to zip code, income level, or geography. That must end, and will end, in my administration.

Completed by: __Nia Ngina Meeks_____ Campaign: __Williams for Governor_____

Title: __Communications director_____

Date: ____April 12, 2010_____

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