

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. As Governor, I will work with all stakeholders and interested parties, including the Forum for a Better Pennsylvania, to improve the employment situation in the Commonwealth, so that all Pennsylvanians who want to work hard and pursue the American dream have the opportunity to do so. I will use my experience as Auditor General to fix the state's economic development programs and hold the recipients of state assistance accountable for creating and retaining the jobs promised. For example, our first-ever special performance audit of the Opportunity Grant Program exposed the state's lax efforts in recovering grants for jobs that were promised by businesses but never created or retained. The Department of Community and Economic Development agreed with most of our findings and recommendations, but we are keeping watch to ensure that all of our concerns are addressed. My administration's economic development programs will focus on small locally-owned businesses, which create the jobs needed in the Commonwealth. We cannot depend on large national or multinational businesses without any ties to our communities; we must develop and nurture homegrown businesses in order to create and retain high quality, family-sustaining jobs throughout Pennsylvania.

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. I am pleased to see that several of these bills have bipartisan support. As Auditor General, I have led the fight for transparency, accountability, and reform in all areas of state government. One area on which I have focused is this very issue –

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state government's awarding of contracts for goods and services. I am very concerned about public contracting that is neither truly competitive nor cost-effective. These issues were at the heart of my special performance audit of the state's information technology contracts, where we found over a half-billion dollars in no-bid, emergency, and sole source contracts given to a single vendor – while that same vendor received \$2.25 million in state economic development assistance to service those very same contracts. Many of the insiders who profit from the current broken system are resistant to change, but reforming that system is one of my top priorities as Governor. It is not only the right thing to do, but it will also reduce the cost of state government for taxpayers and provide real opportunities for businesses throughout the Commonwealth, particularly small businesses and minority-, women-, and disadvantaged-owned businesses.

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. My small group of campaign staff and outside advisors includes African-American individuals such as David Dix, who works with the Philadelphia-area consulting firm Bronstein & Weaver, Inc.; Khari Mosley, Director of Green Economy Initiatives at GTECH Strategies in Pittsburgh; and Richard Utley, my former Deputy Auditor General for Administration and now principal at Utley Associates in Harrisburg. I am also proud of the support of prominent African-American leaders such as Henry Nicholas, President of the National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees, AFSCME, AFL-CIO, and President of District 1199c of the national union, which represents 13,000 members in the Philadelphia area.

In the Department of the Auditor General, we have led by example in the hiring and promotion of minorities and women, even in this challenging budget environment. Over 11% of our employees are minorities; over 23% of our minority employees are in management; and over 22% of our minority employees who are in management are in senior management. Over 38% of our employees are women; over 35% of our female employees are in management; and over 11% of our female employees who are in management are in senior management. We continue to place a high priority on recruiting and maintaining a diverse workforce.

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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. See my answer to Question #2 above. I want to give more vendors, particularly small businesses and minority-, women-, and disadvantaged-owned businesses, the opportunity to participate in the state procurement process. This will create jobs, strengthen communities, and reduce the cost of state government for the taxpayers.

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. As Governor, my administration will lead by example in hiring and working with minorities, women, and members of disadvantaged communities. I welcome and encourage the participation of every qualified Pennsylvanian at all levels of government. Our challenges are too big and numerous to exclude anyone from the efforts to face and overcome them. I welcome your suggestions for appointments to full-time positions, as well as to the various boards and commissions of state government.

In the Department of the Auditor General (see my answer to Question #3 above), and as a member of the Delaware River Port Authority (where my representative and I have the privilege of serving with Forum convener Bob Bogle), I have recognized the importance of diversity and inclusiveness in hirings, promotions, and other aspects of employment.

In addition, my audits have promoted openness and responsibility in employment practices elsewhere. For example, my audit of the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board examined whether there was racial and gender diversity in the jobs created by legalized casino gaming. We found that diversity in employment both at the board

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and at the casinos was positive. Our audit sent a strong message that both state government and the private sector must place a priority on the hiring of local residents representing the diversity of the areas where casinos are built.

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. As both a public official and a parent, I have always believed that every public school should have the resources needed to provide our children with the best possible education. I have worked to improve the system of funding public education in the Commonwealth in a fiscally responsible way.

As a State Senator for ten years, I fought to increase the Commonwealth's share of education costs and distribute those resources more fairly among the state's school districts. As a member of the Senate Democratic leadership and the Senate Appropriations Committee, I helped pass Governor Rendell's education plan, which provided significant increases for basic and special education and funded reforms such as early childhood education, full-day kindergarten, tutoring, and lower class sizes.

As Auditor General, my cyclical audits of school districts and other public school entities have determined whether state and local tax dollars are spent wisely and identified waste, fraud, or abuse of funds, resulting in more funds being available to be redirected to the classroom. My audits of state government programs and agencies in general have identified hundreds of millions of dollars that could be saved in the state budget by improving the management of various programs and services. As Governor, I will implement my audit recommendations and other ideas in order to generate significant savings that could be used to provide stable and sufficient funding for public education in Philadelphia and throughout Pennsylvania.

I am also very concerned about the high school dropout rate. I believe that one of the best things that we can do for our young people is to make sure that they stay in school. It also benefits our state as a whole. Studies have shown that states with higher graduation rates have lower crime rates and lower expenditures for corrections, social services, and welfare programs.

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As Governor, I will continue my focus on school safety. Children cannot learn, and teachers cannot teach, in an unsafe or disruptive environment. Anti-bullying initiatives are an important component of school safety and society in general. One of my goals as Auditor General was to use my professional background and experience as a safety engineer to develop and conduct audits to promote modern, safe, and healthy schools throughout the Commonwealth. Based on the results of a statewide survey, our department developed a school safety and security checklist that we began implementing with our cyclical school audits.

We also conducted a special performance audit of the Department of Education's duties and responsibilities with regard to safe schools initiatives. We found that the Department of Education has adopted a hands-off, reactive approach to the task of addressing violence in Pennsylvania schools, impeding its ability to quickly identify dangerous schools and target limited state resources to assist schools that need the most help. In particular, the Department of Education was failing to enforce Act 26, which the General Assembly passed in 1995 and I voted for as a State Senator to address violence in Pennsylvania schools. The law requires the Department of Education to create an Office of Safe Schools and collect school violence statistics and issue the information each year in a School Safety Annual Report. The law also requires the department to employ a Safe Schools Advocate to address issues of school violence in the Philadelphia School District. I was shocked to find that the department has not complied with Act 26, which I voted for as a State Senator. As Governor, I will make sure that the department fully complies with the law and makes school safety a priority.

I am open-minded about other appointments to the School Reform Commission, with whom I have had many positive communications with regard to our audit of the School District of Philadelphia. I welcome your input about the commission and related district bodies.

- 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. As discussed in my answers to Questions #2-5 above, I believe that minorities and women should have the opportunity for full participation in publicly-funded agencies and their vendors. Being Auditor General is all about leading the fight for transparency and openness. I would support and encourage the disclosure of diversity data at the convention center.

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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. I also believe that investments in education, social services, and workforce development programs can prevent criminal activity from occurring in the first place and/or from re-occurring after release from incarceration.

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. In addition, one of my top priorities as Governor is to create a HOPE (Helping Our Pupils to Excel) Scholarship program to make higher education affordable for Pennsylvania students who attend Pennsylvania colleges and universities. Students who graduate from high school with at least a 3.0 grade point average would have their tuition paid for at a state-owned university. Students choosing to attend a state-related institution (Penn State, Pitt, Temple, and Lincoln universities), a private institution, a community college, or a vocational-technical school would receive a scholarship valued at the average cost of a state-owned university. The program would be funded by excess profits from table games at Pennsylvania casinos.

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