



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF THE WILKES-BARRE AREA AND PENNSYLVANIA

Citizen Education Fund NONPARTISAN VOTERS' GUIDE

PRIMARY ELECTION

MAY 18, 2021

Polls open 7 A.M. to 8 P.M.

© Copyright 2021, League of Women Voters of the Wilkes-Barre Area
(Information obtained from Vote411.com and from candidates.)

2021 CAMPAIGN
'A STEP AHEAD OF THE VOTE'

FOR ELECTION INFORMATION

Contact your county Board of Elections or visit www.VotesPA.com. The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Citizen Information Center also provides election information. Call 717-234-1576 with any questions or go to www.Vote411.org.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The material in this Guide was compiled by the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania-Citizen Education Fund. This material may not be altered or reprinted without the permission of the League. Each candidate's reply has been printed as submitted. Candidates were invited to participate in the Vote411 online voters' guide sponsored by the LWVPA-CEF and Patriot-News/PennLive via email. All reasonable efforts were made to encourage candidates to participate.

The candidates listed are those whose names appear on the ballot as of May 1, 2021. They are listed according to their party and then alphabetically.

Nothing in this guide should be construed as an endorsement or non-endorsement of any candidate, party, or initiative by the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania-Citizen Education Fund.

PURPOSE AND POLICY OF THE LEAGUE

The purpose of the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania-Citizen Education Fund is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government. The League is nonpartisan: it neither supports nor opposes any political parties or candidates. Nothing in this guide should be construed as an endorsement of any candidate by the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania-Citizen Education Fund.

PENNSYLVANIA JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT

JOB DESCRIPTION

The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania is the highest court in the Commonwealth and the oldest appellate court in the nation. The Supreme Court's administrative powers and jurisdictional responsibilities are vested with the seven-member court by the Pennsylvania State Constitution and a collection of statutes known as the Judicial Code. The justice with the longest continuous service on the Supreme Court automatically becomes chief justice. Administratively, the courts within the Unified Judicial System are largely responsible for organizing their own staff and dockets; however, the Supreme Court has several committees and boards responsible for writing and enforcing rules for judges, attorneys, and litigants to ensure an efficient and fair judicial review. Annually, the seven justices receive over 3,000 requests for appellate review.

Term: 10 years
Base Salary: \$215,037

Vote for ONE.

DEMOCRAT

MARIA MCLAUGHLIN (DEM)
Superior Court Judge

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

County: Philadelphia
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 15943
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Education: Penn State 1988. Delaware Law School at Widener University 1992
Qualifications: Current Judge on our PA Superior Court; Served 6 years as Judge, Court of Common Pleas; Chief and ADA, Phila District Attorneys Office; Rated Highly Recommended for the Supreme Court by the PBA
Campaign Website:
http://judgemclaughlin.com
Facebook: http://@Maria4PASC

Twitter: http://@McLaughlin4PASC

Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure that all individuals have equal access to justice?

A. Along with being our highest appellate court, The Supreme Court oversees our statewide court system and legal community. As such we have the opportunity to set rules, educate the legal community and create special court programs dealing with human services issues like substance abuse & mental health challenges, veteran's issues & initiatives focused on autism. All geared toward providing fair treatment and equal access for people with unique circumstances.

Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure an equitable and fair court?

A. As a lawyer & a judge I have always worked to ensure everyone who comes into a courtroom has an opportunity to be heard and the law applied without bias. This is the cornerstone of our legal system. As a Justice I will not waiver from that driving principle. My work on the bench and in my life will always reflect my dedication to fairness and equality.

REPUBLICAN

PAULA PATRICK (REP)
Judge of Court of Common Pleas

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

County: Philadelphia
Mailing Address: 481 City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19151
Education: Bennett College Greensboro, NC Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law Houston, TX
Qualifications: 18 years Trial Judge experience; Legal teaching experience; Frequent presenter/lecturer on legal topics; Highly Recommended by the Pa Bar Assoc.
Campaign Website:
http://VotePaulaPatrick.com
Facebook: http://@JudgePaulaPatrick
Twitter: http://@JudgePatrickPA

Q. What can you do, both on and off the

bench, to ensure that all individuals have equal access to justice?

A. On the Bench-A judge should ensure that people have access to our courts and adequate legal representation. A judge should also be patient with pro se litigants during court proceedings. A judge must also ensure that any and all available resources provided within the court system by distributed to all people equally.

Off the Bench-A judge should get involved in assisting with community, social, professional and/or religious groups to help assist with programs that provided equal access to justice.

Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure an equitable and fair court?

A. On The Bench-I think the best thing that a judge can do to ensure a fair and equitable court is to follow the law. Our rule of law and our Constitutions are important because they are the foundation of our democracy. If a nation fails to honor its own laws, then we fail as a society.

Off The Bench-A judge should be involved in community service and willing to educate people about their rights and responsibilities under the law when appropriate.

KEVIN BROBSON (REP)

President Judge,
Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

County: Dauphin
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 11683
Harrisburg, PA 17108
Education: Widener Commonwealth Law School, summa cum laude (2nd in class), Managing Editor Law Review; Lycoming College (B.A., Accounting/Economics), magna cum laude
Qualifications: President Judge of the Pa. Commonwealth Court; over 11 years as statewide appellate court judge (elected 2009, retained 2019); Pa. Judicial Conduct Board, 2015-19 (Chair); 14 years' private practice; former federal judicial clerk; "Highly

Recommended" by Pa. Bar Association

**Campaign Website:**

<http://www.brobsonforpa.com>

**Facebook:** <http://www.facebook.com/Kevin-Brobson-for-PA-112608997531221>

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure that all individuals have equal access to justice?**

A. I would work cooperatively with the governor and the legislature to increase funding for legal aid programs. While in private practice, I created a program in Dauphin County to expand pro bono opportunities for lawyers to provide services to nonprofit organizations. I would encourage county bar associations to think creatively about expanding pro bono service to small and minority-owned businesses and nonprofits. I want to ensure our courts have access to interpreters for parties with limited English proficiency. I would build upon the excellent work of Philadelphia Legal Assistance with respect to the representation of low-wage workers and the unemployed by engaging law schools and other legal aid associations throughout the state.

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure an equitable and fair court?**

A. I believe I have earned a reputation as a fair and impartial arbiter of the law. I treat everyone who enters my courtroom, or has a matter before me, with equal respect and dignity. I strive to appreciate the perspectives and points of view of all parties. It is important to me that every litigant, represented and unrepresented, be given every opportunity, within the rules and the law, to present their case. Moreover, as a former Chair of the Pa. Judicial Conduct Board, I am keenly aware of how important it is to Pennsylvanians that our judges observe the highest ethical standards on and off the bench. I hold myself to this high standard. All Pennsylvanians deserve to have faith in a fair and impartial judiciary.

**PATRICIA A. MCCULLOUGH (REP)**

Judge - PA Commonwealth Court

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**County:** Allegheny

**Mailing Address:** P.O. Box 12971

Upper St Clair, Pittsburgh, PA 15241

**Education:** University of Pittsburgh -BA

University of Pittsburgh School of Law- JD

**Qualifications:** Currently Judge- PA Commonwealth Court over 11 yrs. where I rule on issues that are brought before PA Supreme Court; trial judge, Allegheny County Ct. of Common Pleas; Asst.General Counsel, Univ. of Pgh.;private practice attorney; Director Cath.Char; chair,Allegheny Cty. Bd.Prop.Appeals;Chair ACPRC.

**Campaign Website:**

<http://Patriciaforjustice.com>

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure that all individuals have equal access to justice?**

A. As judge and in career, I work with programs that promote restorative and equal justice. The foundational precepts of One Nation under God,"... with liberty and justice for all" must be ensured. I have volunteered: as instructor/faith-based jail program which reduces recidivism to 8-12%; with at-risk youth programs; to help implement residential drug addiction center; to help implement free legal speaker series for those released from incarceration; Chr./App. Ct Proc. Rules Committee/ system more user friendly; cmte.law students to represent pro se parties in UC; educate public to process; cmte./Human trafficking diversion ct. I will fight for openness of all courts for those in need or wronged by the justice system. Art.I,sec.11 Pa,Const.

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure an equitable and fair court?**

**ON-LINE VOTERS GUIDE**

The Vote411 Online Voters Guide is available at [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org). Links to this guide as well as links to Vote411 and other useful information for voters can be found on the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania homepage: [www.palwv.org](http://www.palwv.org).

A. I abide by oath to be fair and impartial and uphold rule of law and Constitutions of PA and USA. To ensure impartiality I did not take money donations from attys. or pacs when I ran for judge of Commonwealth Ct. of PA and I am not taking them for Supreme Ct of PA. I did not take controversial 2005 pay raise and for first 10 yr term on Cmwltth.Ct. gave mthly checks to state treasurer due to pay raise totaling over \$10,000.00 dollars of after tax money returned to treasurer. Sentencing practices must be fair and transparent, not disproportionate; vltims treated with dignity; implement faith-based programs that holistically address underlying issues (e.g. addiction,abuse,anger). I will uphold justice and oppose partisanship or abuse in system.

**PENNSYLVANIA JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT**

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

The Superior Court is one of Pennsylvania's two statewide intermediate appellate courts. This court, established in 1895, reviews most of the civil and criminal cases that are appealed from the Courts of Common Pleas in the Commonwealth's 67 counties. The Superior Court consists of 15 judges. The president judge is elected to a five-year term by his/her colleagues. A large number of appeals flow to the Superior Court from the trial courts. Generally, appeals are heard by panels of three judges sitting in Philadelphia, Harrisburg, or Pittsburgh. The court often is the final arbiter of legal disputes. Although the Supreme Court may grant a petition for review of a Superior Court decision, most petitions are denied, and the ruling of the Superior Court stands.

**Term:** 10 years

**Base Salary:** \$202,898

Vote for ONE.

**DEMOCRAT**

**JILL BECK (DEM)**

Attorney

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**County:** Allegheny

**Mailing Address:** PO Box 81583

Pittsburgh, PA 15217

**Education:** I graduated cum laude from The George Washington University with my bachelors degree in criminal justice and a minor in psychology. I then graduated cum laude from Duquesne University School of Law, where I was an editor of the Law Review and a member of the Moot Court Board.

**Qualifications:** Spent 10 years in the Superior & Supreme Court chambers of Christine Donohue, where I drafted over 500 decisions; represented clients in every area of the law that the Superior Court hears and in that Court itself; highly recommended by the ACBA and recommended by the PBA for the Superior Court.

**Campaign Website:**

<http://www.JillBeck.com>

**Facebook:**

<http://www.Facebook.com/electjillbeck>

**Twitter:**

<http://www.Twitter.com/electjillbeck>

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure that all individuals have equal access to justice?**

A. On the bench, a Superior Court Judge must provide a full, fair, & thorough review of every case that comes before her. The role requires a careful balancing of error correction through the appropriate lens & deference to the court below, without serving as a rubberstamp for any interest. A judge must also be decisive and efficient -- litigants should not be required to wait years for a decision on whether they will be free from incarceration, able to continue in their livelihood, or able to obtain custody of their children. Off the bench, a judge can educate the public about Pennsylvania's judicial system, their rights and responsibilities when coming before the courts, & the courts' reciprocal responsibilities to the public.

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the**

**bench, to ensure an equitable and fair court?**

A. When providing a full & thorough review of every case, the judge must treat all litigants fairly & equally, regardless of the parties' race, religion, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual preference, disability, or wealth. All persons are entitled to a fair consideration of their case, no matter who they are or what they are alleged to have done, & the writing deciding the appeal should reflect this. A judge should not be impatient or impertinent in her written decision, as this is indicative of a failure to treat those involved & the issues raised with the dignity and respect they deserve. All judges should also participate in implicit bias training to learn what it is, the role it plays in decision making, & tools to combat it.

**TIMIKA LANE (DEM)**

Judge - Court of Common Pleas

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**County:** Philadelphia

**Mailing Address:** 647 W. Union St. Whitehall, PA 18052

**Education:** West Catholic High School and went on to graduate Howard University in Washington DC & received my Law Degree in 2002 from Rutgers University School of Law in NJ.

**Qualifications:** Major Trials Judge presiding over 1000's of trials, authoring 100's of opinions. I handle all human trafficking cases & many of the most serious criminal cases & Grand Jury matters. Certified Child Advocate & as former Exec Dir of the Senate Govt Cmte advised on the constitutionality of legislation

**Campaign Website:**

<http://www.judgelane.com>

**Facebook:** <http://@LaneforSuperiorCourt>

**Twitter:** <http://@JudgeTimikaLane>

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure that all individuals have equal access to justice?**

A. As a sitting Judge, I ensure everyone in my courtroom is treated with dignity and respect regardless of race, gender, creed, religion, sexual orientation or socioeconomic status. As a member of the Access to Justice Committee, we address this issue by looking at possible barriers and how to remove those barriers to ensure everyone has equal access. As co-chair of the Local Criminal Rules Committee we recommend the qualifications for court appointed attorneys to make sure that indigent people have capable legal representation. We ensure that the local criminal rules are fair and applied equally to all who all who come before our courts.

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure an equitable and fair court?**

A. The Superior Court is an error correcting court & often the last line of defense for the parties involved in a case. When reviewing an appeal It is vital the appellate judge have strong courtroom experience on both sides of the bench to best determine the if the proceedings in the lower court were fair, all parties were heard and the law has been applied fairly regardless of race, creed, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or economic status. I will ensure equity and fairness in all cases before me, just as I do

**IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW VOTERS**

If you are a new voter or if you are voting at a polling place for the first time, then you must bring your voter ID card or a photo ID such as a driver's license, student ID or some other form of Federal or State government-issued ID. Some forms of non-photo ID are also acceptable, such as a firearm permit, current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, or government check. If you do not have any acceptable ID then you must be allowed to vote by provisional ballot.

**If you are not a new voter and are not voting at your polling place for the first time, you are NOT required to bring or provide identification.**

for all who appear in my current courtroom. Off the bench, I believe judges should be visible in the community. We are public servants and it is our duty to make sure the public understands how the court system functions.

**BRYAN NEFT (DEM)**  
Attorney

#### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

**County:** Allegheny  
**Mailing Address:** PO Box 13104  
Pittsburgh, PA 15243  
**Education:** Boston University School of Law J.D., May 1989 Note, Debt-Equity Exchange Programs in Developing Nations. University Of Pennsylvania B.A., May 1986 Major: Political Science Shady Side Academy H.S., June 1982

**Qualifications:** Bryan has spent more than 30 years litigating and trying cases, and counseling clients throughout Pennsylvania. Bryan also served for nearly 15 years in leadership roles with the Allegheny County Bar Association and Supreme court IOLTA board.

**Campaign Website:** <http://bryanneft.com>  
**Facebook:** <http://facebook.com/bryanneft>  
**Twitter:** <http://twitter.com/bryanneft>

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure that all individuals have equal access to justice?**

A. Access to Justice, to me, means ensuring that everyone who needs to utilize the courts has the ability to do so through legal services and other means designed to help them pursue claims or defenses.

My leadership and hard work in the Allegheny County Bar Association and Allegheny County Bar Foundation led The Pennsylvania Supreme Court to appoint me to The Pennsylvania IOLTA Board, its charitable arm that oversees state funding of legal services to those who cannot afford them. I was appointed chair of the board in 2014-15. In that role, we stretched every dollar to maximize the number of people who received free legal services because they could not afford them.

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure an equitable and fair court?**

A. As a leader in the Bar Association I have championed changes to the rules to prohibit judicial officers from engaging in bias and discrimination. The rules must be reviewed continuously to accommodate changing norms and existing loopholes. Rules governing equity and fairness, however, are ineffective if the judiciary is not educated or educated sufficiently on what those rules mean and how they should be implemented. I am a strong proponent of continuing education programs, particularly on bias, implicit bias and discrimination to ensure that courts are fair for all. I have and will continue to serve on the ACBA Gender Bias subcommittee. I, as a judge would be just as accessible to the practitioners and bar associations across the state.

#### REPUBLICAN

**MEGAN SULLIVAN (REP)**  
Attorney

#### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

**County:** Chester  
**Mailing Address:** PO Box 3425  
West Chester, PA 19380  
**Education:** Temple University Beasley School of Law, Juris Doctorate (cum laude) Saint Joseph's University (B.A.)  
**Qualifications:** 20 years criminal & civil law experience. Deputy Attorney General in PA Attorney General's Office & Supervisory District Attorney, protected victims including the most vulnerable members of our society as a child abuse prosecutor. Asst. General Counsel at West Chester University and civil litigator.

**Campaign Website:**  
<http://www.megsullivanforjudge.com>  
**Facebook:** <http://@megforjudge>

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure that all individuals have equal access to justice?**

A. I believe equal access to justice is

essential to maintaining trust in our courts and our justice system's legitimacy. I am committed to providing all individuals in my courtroom with equal access to justice by ensuring their voice is heard, their rights are protected, & that they are never subject to discrimination. I support efforts to enhance equal access to justice through legal aid programs that provide individuals with access to qualified attorneys. Providing interpreters for those individuals for whom English is a second language is also important. It is also important to give Individuals with disabilities full access to the courtroom. Everyone that comes before a judge should fully understand their constitutional rights.

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure an equitable and fair court?**

A. I have a deep respect for our Constitution and our system of justice. I have spent a large part of my 20-year career as an attorney helping others to navigate both the criminal and civil judicial system. I respect the system but understand why some fear it. Individuals who serve in the role of a judge must recognize that they are the arbiter of the rules and the process. This is a great power that requires objectivity, an innate sense of fairness, and humility. I possess these traits and am committed to delivering to all citizens a justice system that shows respect and fairness, as well as knowledgeable decision-making that takes into account the parties' perspectives and applies the law objectively.

#### PENNSYLVANIA JUDGE OF THE COMMONWEALTH COURT

##### JOB DESCRIPTION

The Commonwealth Court is one of Pennsylvania's two statewide intermediate appellate courts. This court, established in 1968, is unlike any other state court in the nation. Its jurisdiction generally is limited to legal matters involving state and local government and regulatory agencies. Litigation typically focuses on subjects such as banking, insurance, utility regulation, and laws affecting taxation, land use, elections, labor practices, and workers compensation. The Commonwealth Court also acts as a court of original jurisdiction, or a trial court, when lawsuits are filed by or against the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Court is made up of nine judges. The president judge is elected to a five-year term by his/her colleagues. Generally, appeals are heard by panels of three judges sitting in Philadelphia, Harrisburg, or Pittsburgh.

**Term:** 10 years

**Base Salary:** \$202,898

Vote for not more than TWO.

#### DEMOCRAT

**DAVID LEE SPURGEON (DEM)**

Judge - Court of Common Pleas

#### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

**County:** Allegheny  
**Education:** McKeesport Area Senior High Duquesne University - B.A. Duquesne University School of Law - Juris Doctor  
**Qualifications:** "Highly Recommended" by the Pennsylvania Bar Association; Endorsed by the PA Dem; Serving as a Judge since 2016; Appointed by the Governor and unanimously confirmed by the PA Senate; Adjunct Law Professor; National Judicial Fellow; Domestic Violence National Expert; former prosecutor family violence  
**Campaign Website:** <http://www.judgespurgeon4commonwealth.com>  
**Facebook:** <http://@judgespurgeon4commonwealthcourt>  
**Twitter:** <http://@davidspurgeon4j>

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure that all individuals have equal access to justice?**

A. As a judge, I use my position to promote systems change that ensure that all people have more accessibility to the courts. As a Judicial Fellow, I am using those resources to study the statistics over the year of the pandemic to understand whether the use of advanced technology communications

increased participation in the court process. Often times, people with limited resources face additional obstacles inherent with our established court processes. Further, we can ensure that everyone in our community has equal access to the court regardless of how you look, who you love, the language you speak and your socio-economic status. Off the bench, judges should participate in the community as a stakeholder to promote the above matters.

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure an equitable and fair court?**

A. Judges must continue to be active members of the community. In order to understand how the court is perceived, one must be accessible and engage in intentional dialogue to understand all the people that we serve. Judges must continue to be trained in explicit and implicit bias as it relates to all aspect of the existing court system, and be open to discussing and participating in the changes identified to make the courts more equitable and fair. I recently participated in a national panel to address the racial disparities that exist in the child welfare system. On the bench, we must continue to serve as a servant leader and hold ourselves as well as our colleagues accountable for inequities.

**LORI A. DUMAS (DEM)**  
Judge

#### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

**County:** Philadelphia  
**Mailing Address:** 1234 Market Street  
Box 40606  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
**Education:** North Carolina Central School of Law; Duke University; Executive Certificates from Cornell University, (D&I); University of Pennsylvania, Fels Institute of Government

**Qualifications:** Trial Court Judge since 2002; Jury and Non-jury experience; Presided in Family, Criminal and Civil Divisions; Former Corporate Executive, Non-Profit Leader; Adjunct Professor; National Leader in trauma informed courts; Led the creation of victim centered juvenile human trafficking court in Phila.

**Campaign Website:**

<http://www.judgedumas2021.com/>

**Facebook:** <http://www.facebook.com/Judgedumas2021/>

**Twitter:** <http://Twitter.com/JudgeDumas>

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure that all individuals have equal access to justice?**

A. As a judge, I must ensure that every person that comes before the Court has the opportunity to be heard. I must rule according to the law without losing sight of the ultimate goal of dispensing justice. I must remove any obstacle which prevents equal access to justice by any means necessary. As a citizen, I can involve myself with organizations and in activities which seek to educate people about the Court, its processes and procedures and to equip them with the knowledge and power to to be able to use the legal system as an advocate for

#### ELECTION DAY PROBLEMS

If your right to vote is challenged at the polls on Election Day and the problem cannot be resolved at the polling place, the judge of elections at the polling place should telephone the county Board of Elections. The problem could be resolved by phone if your name appears on the county records. If it does not and you want to try to resolve the problem, then you can go in person to the county Board of Elections where a judge from the Court of Common Pleas will be on duty to resolve election problems. Alternatively you can ask for and vote by provisional ballot. If it is later determined that you were eligible to vote your ballot will be counted. You will be given instructions on how to determine if your vote was counted.

**If you have any questions or need to report any problems, call 1-866-OUR-VOTE for assistance in English or Spanish or 1-888-API-VOTE for assistance in Asian languages.**

themselves and their interests.

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure an equitable and fair court?**

A. Judges set the tone in their courtrooms. They must model fairness, civility, patience and impartiality and demand it from those in their presence. In my courtroom, every voice will be heard and my decisions will be rooted in the law and cloaked in compassion and the urgency to do what is right. I must conduct a daily heart check to ensure that I am not bringing any biases with me that may interfere with my ability to render impartial decisions. I must call out injustice when it occurs...every time. In the community, I can educate others about their rights and the status of the law. I should regularly attend implicit bias trainings and require my staff to do the same, to ensure that fairness is not just a mantra but embedded in my core.

**SIERRA STREET (DEM)**

Judge, Court of Common Pleas

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**County:** Philadelphia

**Mailing Address:** 3241 W. Queen Lane Philadelphia, PA 19129

**Education:** Howard University B.A., 1995 Temple University Beasley School of Law J.D., 1999

**Qualifications:** Civil Division Complex Litigation Center Criminal Division Major Jury Trial Program Former Lead Supervising Judge, Philadelphia Indicting Grand Jury Program Former Staff Attorney, Defender Association of Philadelphia Former Chief Counsel, Friends Rehabilitation Program

**Campaign Website:**

<http://www.judgesierrastreet.com>

**Facebook:** <http://JudgeStreetforCommonwealthCourt>

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure that all individuals have equal access to justice?**

A. The greatest obstacle to justice is access to adequate representation for the indigent population and moderate to low income families. In my previous roles as an Assistant Public Defender, Family Court Hearing Officer and Chief Counsel at a nonprofit organization, I witnessed firsthand the lack of access to justice for many individuals and did my best to help fill in the gaps. As a judge, I can now make sure all parties have competent counsel/representation regardless of socio-economic status before proceeding in any matter that comes before me. Defendants should be able to participate in their own defense and pro se litigants should be provided proper guidance as they navigate the legal system.

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure an equitable and fair court?**

A. Additionally, I can make sure that everyone is treated fairly in court regardless of race, gender, orientation, etc. I am certainly sensitive to and keenly aware of unique issues faced by marginalized populations. As stewards of justice, judges should adhere to and apply the strictest rule of law while also championing inclusion and diversity. This will only strengthen our institutions.

**AMANDA GREEN HAWKINS (DEM)**

Director of the Civil and Human Rights Department, Assistant General Counsel United Steelworkers

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**County:** Allegheny County

**Mailing Address:** P.O. Box 4766 Pittsburgh, PA 15206

**Education:** Duke University, BA Northeastern University Law School, J.D.

**Qualifications:** 20 years of legal experience. I was elected and served two terms on Allegheny County Council.

**Campaign Website:**

<http://www.amandagreenhawkins.com>

**Facebook:** <http://Facebook.com/voteamandagreenhawkins/>

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure that all individuals have equal access to justice?**

A. I am running for Commonwealth

Court because I know the importance of checks and balances, and judicial integrity. I have the compassion and the experience to join the court providing a dedicated work ethic and clear comprehension of judicial process. "There should never be an attitude of 'less important' cases, each case deserves a complete meritorious review." I am one of 2000 nationally recognized labor attorneys. My career is not based on being a "rainmaker" for profits, but to guarantee worker's safety and dignitary. When individuals enter a courtroom they should feel confident the judges reflect their values and believe they have been heard. As a civil and Human Rights manager, this is what I do every day.

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure an equitable and fair court?**

A. You must immerse yourself in service to your community. In 2020, I was selected by Mayor Peduto to serve on the Pittsburgh Community Task Force for Police Reform. I served on the Board of the Women's Law Project, and Pittsburgh United. When elected to Allegheny County Council, I was Chair of the Committee on Economic Development and Housing, I also served on the Budget and Finance Committee, and Committee on Government Reform. I understand the value of volunteer time. My experiences have prepared me to be fair and impartial. Everyday at work I fight for human rights and civil rights. Judges have an obligation to their community to be a humble and thoughtful judge. Equal justice for all requires an understanding of all citizens.

**REPUBLICAN**

**DREW CROMPTON (REP)**

Judge

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**County:** Cumberland

**Mailing Address:** PO Box 24 Harrisburg, PA 17108

**Education:** Phil-mont Christian Academy Dickinson College Widener School of Law

**Qualifications:** Currently a sitting Judge on the Commonwealth Court. I have authored over 100 opinions. They are balanced, well-reasoned and thoughtful. I am recommended by the Pa. Bar. I also serve on the Supreme Court Appellate Rules Committee. I have extensive Constitutional, statutory and regulatory experience.

**Campaign Website:**

<http://JudgeCrompton.com>

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure that all individuals have equal access to justice?**

A. As a sitting Judge I have done all in my power to treat every person that comes before me with respect and fairness. Judges must ensure those with modest means have equal access to justice. We are all created equal but as judges we must insist that all are treated equally or justice is being unfairly denied. Filing fees and other court costs must be waived for those who cannot afford them. Also, quality lawyers must be available to low income individuals free of cost for civil and criminal matters. Further as judges we must ensure that no one perceives that race or wealth or political connections are weighed when a decision is rendered. High ethical standards are vital to instill confidence in the Judiciary.

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure an equitable and fair court?**

A. Litigants must be convinced that the Judge's personal philosophy does not impede justice. I have also defended the powers of each branch of government since citizens want to be assured that the legislative, executive and judicial branches are not overstepping their constitutional boundaries. Further I try to be a judge that has common sense and treats every person with common decency. Judges must also remain connected to their communities and

**WRITE-IN VOTING**

Information for write-in voting will be available at the polling place.

not be overly isolated. People have more confidence in the Judiciary when they know Judges care about our the same things in our Commonwealth as they do. Judges must have a heightened sense of their words and actions in the courtroom. Both must be beyond reproach.

**STACY MARIE WALLACE (REP)**

Attorney

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**County:** McKean

**Mailing Address:** 5 Vista Circle Bradford, PA 16701

**Education:** B.A. Communications, University of Pittsburgh-Bradford ('01) J.D., Duquesne University School of Law ('04)

**Qualifications:** More than 16 years experience & Owner of Stacy Wallace Law, LLC Specially Appointed Family Law Master & SORNA Counsel Adjunct Professor, University of Pittsburgh-Bradford Clerkships at McKean County Court & PA Superior Court Certified Mediator-Conflict Resolution McKean County Bar Assoc., President

**Campaign Website:** <http://stacyforpa.com>

**Facebook:** <http://www.facebook.com/StacyforPA/>

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure that all individuals have equal access to justice?**

A. Throughout my career, my purpose has been to always seek justice. I was first inspired to enter the legal field by a pamphlet for Northwestern Legal Services, a legal aid organization of which I now serve on the board of directors. I've worked tirelessly to ensure that our state's most vulnerable individuals, including at-risk children and those with disabilities, have equal access to justice, and have done much of this work pro bono. If elected, I will continue to advocate for and engage with underserved communities. On the bench, I will be a steadfast defender of equal justice under the law in all matters and safeguard the rights of all citizens regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, or financial status.

**Q. What can you do, both on and off the bench, to ensure an equitable and fair court?**

A. The makeup of the Commonwealth Court should be a true reflection of Pennsylvania and the broad perspectives and values of our residents. I will use my grassroots upbringing from McKean County, diverse experience, and values to guide informed and thoughtful opinions that produce more equitable outcomes. Off the bench, I will continue to engage our citizens, restore their trust in our courts, and raise awareness of our judiciary's role and its moral and ethical foundations. Equitable courts start with having judges who value equality, fairness and a desire to serve others. As just one example of how I've done that in my personal life, I co-founded "Blessing Boxes of Bradford" which serves as small sidewalk food banks throughout McKean County.

**Ballot Question 1: PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT - ARTICLE III, SECTION 9**

**TERMINATION OR EXTENSION OF DISASTER EMERGENCY DECLARATIONS**

**Ballot Question:**

*Shall the Pennsylvania Constitution be amended to change existing law and increase the power of the General Assembly to unilaterally terminate or extend a disaster emergency declaration--and the powers of Commonwealth agencies to address the disaster regardless of its severity pursuant to that declaration--through passing a concurrent resolution by simple majority, thereby removing the existing check and balance of presenting a resolution to the Governor for approval or disapproval?*

**What this means (provided by LWVPA):**

If you vote YES, you agree to give the Legislature, by a simple majority vote, the

sole power to take away the Governor's existing authority to make disaster emergency declarations and coordinate with relevant Pennsylvania agencies.

If you vote NO, you disagree with giving the Legislature, by a simple majority vote, the sole power to take away the Governor's existing authority to make disaster emergency declarations and coordinate with relevant Pennsylvania agencies.

**Background on proposed amendment:**

This amendment arises from the conflict between the Governor and Legislature over the Governor's Covid-19 emergency declarations, including stay-at-home orders, school and business restrictions, etc. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that under current law, the Governor could veto the Legislature's concurrent resolution to end the Governor's emergency declaration. The Legislature then fell short of the two-thirds legislative vote required to overturn the veto.

**Background on legislative procedure:**

Currently, under Article III, Section 9, all bills and concurrent resolutions by the General Assembly must be presented to the Governor for his approval or veto. If approved by the Governor, the bills or concurrent resolutions, become law. If the Governor exercises a veto, the bills or concurrent resolutions do not become law unless two-thirds of the House and Senate vote to override the Governor's veto. The proposed amendment with respect to emergency disaster declarations would create a fourth exception to the customary legislative procedure of a two-thirds legislative vote to override a Governor's veto.

**Other:** Only four states currently require a legislative vote to extend or terminate a governor's emergency declarations (Alaska, Kansas, Michigan, and Minnesota).

**Arguments FOR and AGAINST**

**Yes - For the Measure**

- Grants the legislature, with individuals elected by different districts from throughout the Commonwealth, the sole power to manage a disaster
- Limits an emergency declaration to 21 days (from 90) unless legislature extends by a simple majority
- Removes customary legislative procedural requirement of a two-thirds legislative vote to override a Governor's disaster declaration
- Provides sole authority to extend a declaration to lie with the Legislature; presently, this power rests with the Governor

**No - Against the Measure**

- Creates logistical and administrative hurdles of convening a 253-member legislature, every 21 days (and in disaster conditions)
- Reduces the power of the executive, elected by entire state, to act in an emergency
- Increases impact of partisan and regional influence of legislators
- Provides opportunities for possible delays that could worsen a disaster
- Weakens ability to access federal funding and support tied to declaring emergency disasters
- Promotes uncertainty of appropriate disaster response due to shortened timeframe

**Ballot Question 2: PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT – ARTICLE IV**

**DISASTER EMERGENCY DECLARATION AND MANAGEMENT**

**Ballot Question:**

*Shall the Pennsylvania Constitution be amended to change existing law so that: a disaster emergency declaration will expire automatically after 21 days, regardless of the severity of the emergency, unless the General Assembly takes action to extend the disaster emergency; the Governor may not declare a new disaster emergency to respond to the dangers facing the Commonwealth unless the General*

**Assembly passes a concurrent resolution; the General Assembly enacts new laws for disaster management?**

**What this means (provided by LWVPA):**

If you vote Yes, you agree to change existing law to limit any Governor's disaster emergency declaration - no matter the severity - to 21 days (from 90), unless, and until, the Legislature votes by a simple majority to extend the disaster emergency declaration; and take away the Governor's authority to act in emergency and disaster situations.

If you vote No, you disagree with changing the existing law that provides any Governor with the power to issue emergency declarations without a 21-day limitation or a simple majority vote by the legislature; and any Governor retains authority to act in emergency and disaster situations.

**Background on proposed amendment:**

This amendment arises from the conflict between the Governor and Legislature over the Governor's Covid-19 emergency declarations, including stay-at-home orders, school and business restrictions, etc. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that under current law, the Governor could veto the Legislature's concurrent resolution to end the Governor's emergency declaration. The Legislature then fell short of the two-thirds legislative vote required to overturn the veto. Current law sets an emergency declaration at 90 days and gives the Governor authority to act on, and manage, emergencies and disasters. The Legislature does have the ability to end the Governor's emergency declarations by passing a concurrent resolution to end the emergency declaration and if vetoed by the Governor, vote by two-thirds to override the Governor's veto.

**Other:** Only four states currently require a legislative vote to extend or terminate a governor's emergency declarations (Alaska, Kansas, Michigan, and Minnesota).

**Arguments FOR and AGAINST**

**Yes - For the Measure**

- Grants the legislature, with individuals elected by different districts from throughout the Commonwealth, the sole power to manage a disaster
- Limits an emergency declaration to 21 days (from 90) unless legislature extends by a simple majority
- Removes customary legislative procedural requirement of a two-thirds legislative vote to override a Governor's disaster declaration
- Provides sole authority to extend a declaration to lie with the Legislature; presently, this power rests with the Governor

**No - Against the Measure**

- Creates logistical and administrative hurdles of convening a 253-member legislature, every 21 days (and in disaster conditions)
- Reduces the power of the executive, elected by entire state, to act in an emergency
- Increases impact of partisan and regional influence of legislators
- Provides opportunities for possible delays that could worsen a disaster
- Weakens ability to access federal funding and support tied to declaring emergency disasters
- Promotes uncertainty of appropriate disaster response due to shortened timeframe

**Ballot Question 3: PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT – ARTICLE I**

**PROHIBITION AGAINST DENIAL OR ABRIDGEMENT OF EQUALITY OF RIGHTS BECAUSE OF RACE OR ETHNICITY**

**Ballot Question:**

*Shall the Pennsylvania Constitution be amended by adding a new section providing that equality of rights under the*

**law shall not be denied or abridged because of an individual's race or ethnicity?**

**What this means (provided by LWVPA):**

If you vote Yes, you agree that all levels of Pennsylvania government, entities, and institutions be prohibited from discriminating against individuals because of their race or ethnicity.

If you vote No, you disagree with changing Pennsylvania law since current state and federal laws, including the Pennsylvania Constitution and the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution, already provide protections against discrimination by all levels of Pennsylvania government, entities, and institutions.

**Background on proposed amendment:** This constitutional amendment was introduced in the wake of police brutality cases and protests as an amendment to a different constitutional amendment bill to restrict a Governor's emergency declaration powers (See Ballot Question 1).

Article 1, Section 26, of the Pennsylvania Constitution currently prohibits discrimination by the Pennsylvania government "against any person in the exercise of any civil right." This proposed amendment focuses on protecting individuals from racial and ethnic discrimination by Pennsylvania governmental entities. The PA Constitution and federal laws, such as the Equal Protection Clause, provide broad protections against discrimination. However, this amendment focuses on prohibiting discrimination against the individual under PA law solely for race and ethnicity. This is a state-specific change separate from federal law (Fourteenth Amendment). If passed, this law could add opportunity to bring "reverse discrimination" cases. Thus, if a Caucasian person felt they were discriminated against by a State-run operation or agency in hiring, admissions, or denied opportunities, they could sue under this new law.

The language of this amendment does not outright ban racial and ethnic considerations by all levels of Pennsylvania government, entities, and institutions. However, it could be construed that the specific prohibition against individual racial and ethnic discrimination could open the door to elimination, or the support of, race and ethnic-conscious considerations by State-run agencies or operations for under-represented groups under Pennsylvania Law. Any interpretation of this law would be decided by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. However, if passed, any resulting consequences, good or bad, would likely be upheld because this is an amendment ballot question voted on by the Pennsylvania voters. In 2014, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a Michigan ballot initiative which resulted in a ban on race considerations in state-run schools because the case was not about the merits of race-conscious policies. Rather, as Justice Kennedy stressed in the controlling opinion, it is about "whether, and in what manner, voters in the States may choose to prohibit the consideration of racial preferences in governmental decisions..."

**Arguments FOR and AGAINST**

**Yes - For the Measure**

- Promotes states' rights - independent of the U.S. Constitution and federal laws
- Specifies the prohibition against individual racial and ethnic discrimination under PA law
- Could eliminate preferential treatment to under-represented groups by all levels of PA government, entities, and institutions
- Prohibits future legislation that is inconsistent with this law on protecting individuals from racial and ethnic discrimination by all levels of PA government, entities, and institutions

**No - Against the Measure**

- Adds opportunities to bring "reverse discrimination" cases (i.e., a Caucasian can

claim race discrimination by all levels of PA government, entities, and institutions)  
 - Provides potential opportunity for all levels of PA government, entities, and institutions to no longer consider race and ethnicity in hiring, admissions, contracting, and access to other opportunities  
 - Existing law in the PA Constitution already forbids discrimination “against any person in the exercise of any civil right”

**Ballot Question 4: STATEWIDE REFERENDUM – ACT 2020-91**

**MAKING MUNICIPAL FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES COMPANIES ELIGIBLE FOR LOANS**

**Ballot Question:**

*Do you favor expanding the use of the indebtedness authorized under the referendum for loans to volunteer fire companies, volunteer ambulance services and volunteer rescue squads under 35 PA.C.S. §7378.1 (related to referendum for additional indebtedness) to include loans to municipal fire departments or companies that provide services through paid personnel and emergency medical services companies for the purpose of establishing and modernizing facilities to house apparatus equipment, ambulances and rescue vehicles, and for purchasing apparatus equipment, ambulances and rescue vehicles, protective and communications equipment and any other accessory equipment necessary for the proper performance of the duties of the fire companies and emergency medical services companies?*

**What this means (provided by LWVPA):**

If you vote YES, you support expanding PA's loan program to paid municipal, as well as volunteer, fire and emergency medical services companies.

If you vote NO, you support keeping PA's loan program available to volunteer fire and emergency medical service companies and not to paid municipal fire and emergency medical services companies.

**Background:** This constitutional amendment was referred to the ballot as an exception to the normal procedure for passing constitutional amendments. “When a major emergency threatens or is about to threaten the state” the General Assembly may refer a constitutional amendment to the ballot with a two-thirds vote of each chamber. Specifically, here, the General Assembly determined there is a need for paid municipal fire departments and emergency medical service companies to update their facilities and equipment. Under current PA law, only volunteer fire and EMS companies are authorized to apply for loans from this program. The loan program's fund for volunteer companies was last approved by PA voters at \$50,000,000 in 2002. If approved, this new law would allow paid municipal fire and emergency medical service companies to also obtain loans from the program. The State Fire Commissioner administers these loans under specified codes and regulations. This bill does not expand the amount of money in the funds nor the purposes for which the loans can be used, it only addresses expanding the eligible pool of loan applicants.

**Arguments FOR and AGAINST**

**Yes - For the Measure**

- Provides opportunities for paid municipal fire and EMS companies to apply for loans to upgrade and replace equipment and facilities
- Increases potential for budget flexibility for municipalities to shift facility and equipment costs to personnel and other costs
- Promotes paid municipalities to upgrade and/or replace fire and EMS equipment and facilities

**No - Against the Measure**

- Increases applicant pool, and thus, the acceptance rate, for loans to upgrade and

replace existing equipment and facilities for volunteer companies while not increasing the overall fixed amount of funds  
 - Potentially increases already existing budget constraints and recruitment of volunteer fire and EMS companies  
 - Expands existing oversight and demands on the State Fire Commissioner that administers and grants loans

**JUDGE FOR THE COURT OF LUZERNE COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS**

**DEMOCRAT**

**JAMES BOBECK**

**Party:** Democrat, Cross-filed Judicial Candidate  
**Kingston**  
**Age:** 41  
**Education:** Villanova University, Boston College Law School  
**Occupation:** Administrative Law Judge and Attorney  
**Qualifications for this office:** 11+ years as Judge. Presided over 10,000 cases; Wrote new County ethics laws as Legislator: First County Council Chair; Over 18 years legal experience; Youth coach and community volunteer

**Q. Why do you feel that you are a good candidate for the above office?**

A. I am the only candidate who has written, argued, and enforced the law. I answered Luzerne County's call to serve working voluntarily 40+ hours/week to establish our new government. I've been your child's coach and community volunteer. I am ready on Day 1 having been a Judge for over 11 years. I have a humble hunger to serve and keep our families and community safe. I respectfully ask for your vote.

**LAURA DENNIS**

**Party:** Democrat  
**West Pittston**  
**Education:** Wyoming Area, University of Pittsburgh, B.A. Widener University, J.D. Two summer programs: University of Geneva, Switzerland  
 UCLA, Certification in Design  
 PA Real Estate Academy  
**Occupation:** Attorney  
**Qualifications for this office:** Experienced Litigator, Both jury and bench trials in every type of legal proceeding. Private practice experience in family, civil, criminal, and juvenile courts; Arbitrator and Special Master in Divorce; Adjunct Professor

**Q. Why do you feel that you are a good candidate for the above office?**

A. A Court of Common Pleas Judge should be seasoned in the practice of law, know what it means to represent clients, have compassion, listen, and have experience with the practices and procedures in the courtroom with Judges and juries. I am the only candidate with that experience.

**ALEXANDRA KOKURA KRAVITZ**

**Party:** Democrat, Cross-filed Judicial Candidate  
**Dupont**  
**Age:** 38  
**Education:** Lehigh University, Widener Law School  
**Occupation:** Magisterial District Judge  
**Qualifications for this office:**

As an elected Magisterial District Judge in Luzerne County, I have presided over 40,000 cases, including criminal, civil and domestic violence cases. I have served as a special master in family court, presiding over hundreds of custody and child support matters.

**Q. Why do you feel that you are a good candidate for the above office?**

I have a proven judicial record as an elected judge presiding over cases for the last eight years. I have been trusted and tested to make fair and impartial decisions that affect our residents, our families, our businesses and the safety of our community. I am a life-long resident of Luzerne County. I care about our community. I hope to bring my extensive judicial experience and knowledge of law to serve everyone in Luzerne County.

**REPUBLICAN**

**STEFANIE SALAVANTIS**

**Party:** Republican  
**Kingston**  
**Age:** 38  
**Education:** Dallas High School, Temple University, Thomas M. Cooley Law School  
**Occupation:** Attorney  
**Qualifications for this office:**  
 Prior to becoming District Attorney, I was an insurance defense attorney and handled hundreds of civil cases and represented private clients in civil and family law. As District Attorney for 9 years, I oversaw nearly 5,000 cases annually.

**Q. Why do you feel that you are a good candidate for the above office?**

A. Not only do I have experience in civil and family law, I have also been District Attorney for over 9 years, making tough decisions daily on the thousands of cases involved in the criminal justice system while remaining fair to all parties. I worked closely with the 29 ADAs and law enforcement throughout Luzerne County on all criminal cases, but also with the judges to improve the efficiency in our system.

**TARAH TOOHL**

**Party:** Republican, Cross-filed  
**Drums**  
**Age:** 41  
**Education:** Dickinson Law (Penn State), Bachelor's: Northeastern University.  
**Occupation:** State Representative/ Attorney  
**Qualifications for Office:** I have worked in criminal law at the Dauphin County District Attorney's Office. I have worked on many pro bono and reduced fee cases for families who could not afford a lawyer. I have specialized in divorce, custody, and adoption cases.

**Q. Why do you feel you are a good candidate for this office?**

A. I have written the law, practiced in courtrooms, and advocated for others. I have a proven record of being a hardworking champion for children and will make an excellent Family Court Judge. I have had the honor of representing my constituents as a lawmaker. On the Judiciary Committee, I have successfully improved Pennsylvania laws to keep families safe and protect vulnerable populations. I understand the law and can apply the law fairly and impartially.

**LUZERNE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**DEMOCRAT**

**JIMMY SABATINO**

**Party:** Democratic  
**Drums**  
**Age:** 40  
**Education:** Bishop Hafey High School, Drexel University  
**Occupation:** Sabatino and his siblings, Donald and Jenna, own and operate the three Vesuvio's locations across Luzerne County.  
**Qualifications for this office:**  
 Volunteer: United Way, Commission on Economic Opportunity, and Catholic Social Services; Luzerne County Democratic Party First District Chair since 2019. Action Together NEPA advisory council; Hazleton Rotary Club

**Q. Why do you feel that you are a good candidate for the above office?**

A. I am from a family of Italian immigrants who taught us the value of taking care of the community. All of our community's families should have the opportunities to succeed like mine has.

My policy priorities are rebuilding County infrastructure, improving outdoor spaces, property tax reform and ways to increase County revenue, and food insecurity. Instead of trying to dismantle the county government, we should make our local government more efficient and beneficial to all County residents.

**SHEILA SAIDMAN**

**Party:** Democrat  
**Kingston**  
**Age:** 71  
**Education:** University of Pittsburgh School

of Law

**Occupation:** Attorney

**Qualifications for this office:**

I have strengths in communication, negotiation, and reading and reviewing contracts. I have an appreciation and understanding of the manner by which Luzerne County is governed—the Home Rule Charter. Being an incumbent, I have “no learning curve.” I am prepared beginning Day One.

**Q. Why do you feel that you are a good candidate for the above office?**

A. As a current member of Luzerne County Council, I have developed leadership skills. Further, I am aware of many significant issues confronting LCC. However, fiscal responsibility continues to be our number one priority. Keeping spending in check while still providing valuable and essential services for the residents of the county always remain our chief concerns. These issues are always a delicate balancing act for council.

**MARYANN VELEZ**

**Party:** Democrat

**Duryea**

**Age:** 47

**Education:** Bachelor’s in Health Science; Bachelor’s in Psychology

**Occupation:** Unemployed; United NEPA Alliance: CEO/President/Cofounder (Volunteer Based Organization) (17)

**Qualifications for this office:**

Strong leadership skills, intelligent, compassionate, dedicated, hard working, common sense and a profound focus on creating a strong economy.

**Q. Why do you feel that you are a good candidate for the above office?**

A. My commitment to the community is unparalleled. I understand the economic struggles many families are currently facing. Understanding the amount of work that needs to be done in our county in order to lift every citizen up, remove the burden of hardship off their shoulders, is what fuels my passion to fight harder every day! I will fight for every citizen - We will win this fight together!

**MATTHEW VOUGH**

**Party:** Democrat

**Pittston**

**Age:** 28

**Education:** Marketing Degree from the University of Scranton (2014)

**Occupation:** Business Analyst at Keystone Automotive Operations

**Qualifications for this office:**

During my first term in office, I learned how to help people be better. I am proud of the work I have done, especially the creation of the County Cares Commission

**Q. Why do you feel that you are a good candidate for the above office?**

A. My initiatives during my first term in office were fiscal responsibility and community-first. I feel like I have done a great job of executing on those initiatives. The county deficit has continued to decrease without cutting services and I am most proud of starting the County Cares Commission. If I am lucky enough to be re-elected, I will continue my community first approach to improve the lives of all residents.

**JANE WALSH WAITKUS**

**Party:** Democratic

**Mountain Top**

**Education:** Masters Degrees from University of District of Columbia, and University of Scranton

**Occupation:** Retired

**Qualifications for this office:** Former Member County Council, chair, Real Estate Cmte. Paid off \$75 million dollars in county debt during previous term of office. Municipal Experience-Former President, Laflin Borough Council, chaired Roads Committee.

**Q. Why do you feel that you are a good candidate for the above office?**

A. Experience in balancing municipal and county budgets. Began the County Council Real Estate Cmte, generated revenue by identifying unneeded properties owned by

the county, and advertising these properties for sale to the public. Generated revenue and returned these properties to the tax rolls. Consensus builder, able to discuss issues and different viewpoints with fellow council members, and thus get the job done. Always striving to reduce taxes, especially for seniors.

## REPUBLICAN

**CARL G. BIENIAS III**

**Party:** Republican

**Age:** 33 years old

**Education:** Hanover Area School District; Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration with a minor in Political Science from King’s College; Law Degree from Widener University School of Law

**Occupation:** Attorney

**Qualifications for this office:**

Licensed to practice law before Supreme Court of Pennsylvania and United States District Court for Middle District of Pennsylvania.

**Q. Why do you feel that you are a good candidate for the above office?**

A. Born and raised in Luzerne county, and a first-time candidate for public office, I would provide a fresh voice with new ideas for the citizens of the county. If elected, I will focus on low taxes, fiscal responsibility and would not take the salary given to members of county council. A strong supporter of law enforcement, I would also work with the District Attorney’s office to keep Luzerne county safe.

**MARTIN DARTOE**

Failed to respond

**RONALD KNAPP**

**Age:** 55

**Education:** Allied Medical & Technical Institute; I have years of experience dealing with multiple banks.

**Occupation:** Landlord of an Apartment Complex; Disabled.

**Qualifications for this office:**

Education in Computer operations. Many years of spreadsheet formula computation. Enlisted in the 365th Engineering Unit of Schuylkill Haven, PA as an Administrative Assistant Specialist for 3.5 years. “Honorably Discharged.”

**Q. Why do you feel that you are a good candidate for the above office?**

A. Active in Luzerne County Council meetings for the past two years. Advocating for residences and taxpayers. Voicing conservative platforms at meeting both in Council Chambers as well as teleconference and Microsoft Teams. I have a perspective on the Home Rule Charter, learned in its Legislative design. As Administration Specialist I was proficient in all Medical and personnel files and records. Also fluent in Microsoft Excel in keeping the books for expenses for the Duplex I own.

**KEVIN LESCOVAGE**

**West Pittston**

**Occupation:** Sales Rep.

**Education:** Penn State 2 years Business

**Qualifications:** 7 years served West Pittston Council; 4 years served WWSA Board; Understanding of Business and Construction.

**Q. Why do you feel that you are a good candidate for the above office?**

A. I feel I bring experience and most importantly common sense to the table. I’m also willing to research any topic that I do not have an answer for. I believe an open mind will go a long way!

**JOHN LOMBARDO**

**Party:** Republican

**Pittston**

**Age:** 27

**Education:** Graduate of Pittston Area High School, Bachelors Degree: Political Science/Media Studies, Penn State University

**Occupation:** Firefighter/EMT for the City of Pittston

**Qualifications for this office:** Full-time public servant with knowledge of Municipal Services and Intergovernmental Collaboration, Experience in Conflict Resolution Negotiation, Experience with

Budget/Finance of Governmental Agencies, Lifelong Advocate for Good Governance in Communities

**Q. Why do you feel that you are a good candidate for the above office?**

A. Our residents deserve competent, fair minded leaders who will work together with our county agencies and local municipalities to make a positive impact on those we serve. I will encourage collaboration so we can revitalize our towns, preserve local history and govern in a fiscally responsible way. Luzerne County is a great place to live. Together we can make it a great place to stay!

**CHRIS PERRY**

**Party:** Republican

**Mountain Top**

**Age:** 71

**Education:** Graduate of Bloomsburg University

**Occupation:** Retired Biology teacher and Athletic Director at Hazleton Area High School ( 36 years )

Retired Army National Guard (25 years)

**Qualifications for this office:**

Current member of County Council, council vice chairman, chairman of the Authorities, Boards and Commissions committee, member of both the Real Estate and County Cares Committees

**Q. Why do you feel that you are a good candidate for the above office?**

A. Having been elected to County Council in 2016, I have gained a great deal of knowledge of the operation of our county government. I will continue to move the county forward by supporting fiscally responsible budgets (highest bond rating ever), strong economic development policies (North Pointe and Hazleton Creek Properties) and always improving public safety ( 25 million dollar 911 project which will be completed by the end of 2021).

**BRIAN THORNTON**

**Party:** Republican

**West Pittston**

**Age:** 61

**Education:** Lehigh University Graduate - Bachelor of Science Mechanical Engineering

**Occupation:** Financial Advisor (28 Years)

**Qualifications for this office:**

11 Years West Pittston Borough Councilman - 6 of Those, Council President; 8 Years Infrastructure Project Manager; 28 Years Financial Advisor; Landbank Authority Board Member (Blighted Properties); Interviewer/Hirer of Municipal Employees; Collective Bargaining Negotiator; Westside COG Founding Member

**Q. Why do you feel that you are a good candidate for the above office?**

A. Overall, the county charter is well crafted. However, some sections are ambiguous and possibly conflict with Pennsylvania State Law potentially exposing our county and our taxpayers to costly litigation. Amending the charter may be beneficial to all.

I would like to examine and compare our county budget with budgets of neighboring counties with similar demographics, possibly revealing unnecessary or inefficient spending. Automatic budget increases each year need to be examined and possibly recalculated.

**MICHAEL G VACENDAK**

**Party:** Republican

**Laflin**

**Education:** Advanced Real Estate Studies, Certified Residential Specialist; Graduate of Residential Institute of Realtors.

**Occupation:** Certified Residential Appraiser

**Qualifications for this office:** Thirty (30) + years Appraising Land and Real Estate, not limited to Purchase/Sale, Tax appeal. Elected Republican County Committee, representing Laflin Borough-Ward 1; Army Veteran.

Notary public, reappointed 30+ years.

**Q. Why do you feel that you are a good candidate for the above office?**

A. To make myself available to Citizens of Luzerne County that question real estate tax. Becoming a council member who would take a special interest in the betterment of the life of children to work with other interest groups to benefit citizens.

Encourage county residences to provide theirs believes to county council suggest citizens to be involved in government.

### GREGORY S. WOLOVICH, JR.

**Party:** Republican

**Hanover Twp.**

**Age:** 28

**Education:** King's College '14 B.S. in Accounting

**Occupation:** Assistant Manager, Wilkes-Barre Wegmans

**Qualifications for this office:**

Knowledge in the field of Accounting from my education at King's College as well as business management experience, decision making and effective communication skills from my career at Wegmans all tie directly into the qualifications needed to lead the county.

**Q. Why do you feel that you are a good candidate for the above office?**

A. I have a passion for our home county that goes unmatched. I have met many community officials, leaders as well as many of you, discussing the importance of backing our first responders and being fiscally responsible with our tax dollars. Maintaining an affordable cost of living and providing for the safety and well being of our residents will be my top priority as your representative. I am a candidate of the people, for the people.

## LUZERNE COUNTY CONTROLLER

### DEMOCRAT

### MICHELLE BEDNAR

**Party:** Democratic

**Wapwallopen, PA**

**Age:** 55

**Education:** Luzerne County Community College, AS.

Corporate Trust Operations Certificate

**Occupation:** Current Luzerne County Controller

25+ years' experience in finance/accounting /investment securities

5 years, Elected Tax Collector

**Qualifications for this office:** Our office has performed many audits, without outsourcing and under budget.

As a servant leader, I employ diplomacy, innovation, and an eagerness to learn.

**Q. Why do you feel that you are a good candidate for the above office?**

A. Having successfully served as Controller for nearly 8 years, I understand the critical nature of this position.

Under my direction, the office has completed multiple, diverse audits without outsourcing, thus saving taxpayers money.

I am intricately aware of the operations of Luzerne County and this experience is invaluable in this position. My unquestioned

independence allows our office to perform audits in a professional manner, with no hidden agendas.

### REPUBLICAN

### WALTER L GRIFFITH JR.

**Party:** Republican

**Trucksville**

**Age:** 66

**Education:** Wyoming Valley West graduate; Associate Degree training at LCCC in Automotive Repair.

**Occupation:** Retired, Rutter Auto Service, 30 Years; currently employed at Motorworld Mile One Automotive

**Qualifications for this office:** Currently a member of Luzerne County Council, Business owner, 30 years; Elected in 2010 Luzerne County Controller so I am very familiar with the operation of this office.

**Q. Why do you feel that you are a good candidate for the above office?**

A. I have demonstrated over the past 10 years that I will, and have been a "Voice for the People", and the office of County Controller is vital to the oversight of the financial and managerial duties of our government, for the people of Luzerne County. I have been active on Luzerne County Council, as well as the drafting of our Home Rule Charter and will not require any training to perform the role of County Controller.

## THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE WILKES-BARRE AREA

P.O. Box 1480 | Wilkes-Barre, PA 18703-1480 | 570-675-3429 | lwvwba.org

**Board of Directors:**

Kathryn O'Neill, President; Dr. Mischelle Anthony; Kevin Bransford; Marueen Collins, Esq.; Nancy Frey; Cap. Rhonda Lambert, USAF (Ret); Audrey Serniak; Dr. Christine Sheridan; Dr. Ernie Trujillo; Molly Tuzinski Wright

Director Emeritus: Christine McLaughlin, Esq.; James Nawrocki

The League of Women Voters of the Wilkes-Barre Area is a nonpartisan organization which has as its purpose the promotion of political responsibility through informed and active participation in government. Membership is open to any person who subscribes to the purpose and policy of the League. While the League of Women Voters has made every effort to ensure that the information provided to us by the candidate is typed properly in this guide and it will not be liable for damages arising out of error, deletion or omission.

President: Kathryn O'Neill | Editor: Molly Tuzinski-Wright | Design & Layout: Rachele Smith, Blasi Printing Corp.  
Prepared by: The League of Women Voters of The Wilkes-Barre Area and The League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania.

Special Thanks to the Citizens' Voice for publishing the Voters' Guide. The Voter's Guide is a member supported publication.

**ON-LINE VOTERS GUIDE**

The Vote411 Online Voters Guide is available at [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org). Links to this guide as well as links to Vote411 and other useful information for voters can be found on the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania homepage: [www.palwv.org](http://www.palwv.org).

## JOIN US IN OUR MISSION TO EDUCATE AND ENCOURAGE ALL CITIZENS TO VOTE AND MAKE INFORMED VOTING CHOICES.

*Consider joining the League of Women Voter's of the Wilkes-Barre Area*

### WHO WE ARE

As an all-volunteer organization, we work diligently to promote citizen participation in our democracy by educating our community about voting and the democratic process. We encourage citizens to have a voice in their government by simply going to the polls to vote for the candidates who reflect THEIR views on how government should operate.

**Voting truly is a simple act that can have profound effects on our county and how it operates.**

Our nonpartisan status allows us to work effectively on voter education. The community knows that candidate meetings and our Voter's Guide will present information without bias. We are respected in our community because citizens know that we are fair in our presentations.

We never support political candidates or parties, nor do we do things that would appear to support one over another.

**Our Wilkes-Barre League focuses on voter education. Our members include men and women.**

### WHAT'S IN A NAME? OUR HISTORY!

The Wilkes-Barre League of Women Voters was established in 1944. The League of Women Voters of the United States was founded in 1920 -- six months before the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified.

**This amendment gave women the right to full voting rights after a 72-year hard-fought struggle.**

The amendment was ratified on August 26, 1920. On November 2 of that year more than eight million women across the United States voted in elections for the first time. The League of Women Voters was created to help newly enfranchised women learn how to register to vote, how to vote, how to learn about their candidates, and how to learn about the workings of their governments.

**The League of Women Voters is nonexclusionary -- all are welcome to join and participate in our programs.**

Our name honors our rich history and those women who paved the way for all of us by working tirelessly to gain the right for disenfranchised women to vote so many years ago.

### WHAT WE DO:

- Voter Registration Drives
- Candidate Forums - before Primary and General Elections
- Annual Breakfasts with Legislators
- Annual Publication of a Government Directory
- Publication of a Voter's Guide before each Primary and General Election
- Annual Meeting Dinner
- Annual Holiday Dinner

LEARN MORE: [LWVWBA.ORG](http://LWVWBA.ORG)

CONTACT US: P. O. BOX 1480 , WILKES-BARRE, PA 18703-1480 570.675.3429