



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF THE WILKES-BARRE AREA

Citizen Education Fund **NONPARTISAN VOTERS GUIDE**

PRIMARY ELECTION

MAY 19, 2026

Poll Hours 7 A.M. to 8 P.M.

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(Information obtained from Vote411.org and from candidates.)

CAMPAIN

“A STEP AHEAD OF THE VOTE”

VOTING 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

Compilation of the Voters Guide was supported by the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania Citizen Education Fund. Contents may not be altered without League permission. 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 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, 2026. They are listed according to their party and then alphabetically.

Contents of this Guide should not 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.

YOU MAY TAKE THIS PUBLICATION INTO THE VOTING BOOTH WITH YOU.

GOVERNOR

DESCRIPTION OF OFFICE:

The Governor is the chief executive officer of the Commonwealth, executing the laws of the state through executive agencies. A Governor must be at least 30 years old and have been a US citizen and resident of the state for seven years preceding the election. S/he manages the financial affairs of the state and must annually present a balanced budget to the General Assembly. The Governor has extensive appointive powers, may recommend legislation, and signs or vetoes bills passed by both houses of the General Assembly (subject to 2/3 override). S/he is Commander-in-Chief of the state National Guard, except when they are called into the actual service of the United States. The Governor can grant reprieves, pardons, and paroles. The holder of this office may only be reelected once.

Term: 4 years

Base Salary: \$253,870

Vote for ONE.

DEMOCRAT

JOSH SHAPIRO

COUNTY: Montgomery

OCCUPATION: Governor of Pennsylvania

EDUCATION: University of Rochester, BA; Georgetown University Law Center, JD

QUALIFICATIONS: Governor of Pennsylvania, who is fighting every day to Get Stuff Done and protect real freedom in our

Commonwealth.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE: joshshapiro.org

Q: What are the most pressing issues facing Pennsylvania residents, and how would you address them?

A: I've met with Pennsylvanians on our farms, in our cities, and everywhere in between, and I've found that most people want the same key things: good schools, safe communities, good-paying jobs, and their freedoms protected. As Governor, I've worked hard to get stuff done on these pressing issues — cutting taxes seven times, securing over \$40 billion in private-sector investment, creating over 22,000 good-paying jobs, delivering historic public education funding, and improving public safety by supporting law enforcement and violence prevention programs — but there's more work to do, and I'm going to keep fighting to ensure all Pennsylvanians have the freedom to chart their own course and the opportunity to succeed here in our Commonwealth.

Q: What are your specific ideas on the funding for public schools, private schools, and cyber charter schools to comply with the Commonwealth Court's order?

A: I believe in our obligation to ensure our kids have access to a thorough and efficient public education. We've brought Democrats and Republicans together to invest a record amount in public education and created a new formula that drives that money out to the schools that need it most. With these investments, schools have served over 224 million free breakfasts, 3,000 more students are enrolled in career and technical education courses, the number

of new teacher certifications is increasing, regular attendance and graduation rates are up, and Consumer Affairs now ranks us as one of the top states for quality public education in the entire country. I'm committed to continuing to build on that progress and delivering for all Pennsylvanians.

Q: What do you see as the state's role regarding federal immigration policy?

A: I have been clear that our country needs comprehensive immigration reform in order to have a secure border, a more clear, efficient, orderly immigration process, a path to citizenship for people who have been living here lawfully, and to protect public safety. That is far from what we are seeing from Donald Trump – who has violated constitutional rights, acted outside the law, and brought chaos to communities across this country. As Governor, I have opposed many of those actions – including the Administration's desire to bring ICE detention centers to Pennsylvania – and I will continue to protect public safety in our Commonwealth while standing up to reckless federal policies that are harming our communities.

Q: What would you do to ensure Pennsylvania elections are accessible and secure?

A: Our elections are free, fair, safe, and secure – and I'm continuing to protect the security of our elections and our democracy in the face of threats from Donald Trump and his allies. I'm proud to have appointed Al Schmidt as Secretary of State – and since taking office, we've strengthened voting rights by implementing automatic voter registration, redesigning mail-in ballots to reduce errors and support county election workers, launching an easy-to-use online ballot request tool, and providing voter resources in multiple languages. I have always stood up for our democracy – and I am going to continue to protect our elections and the right to vote.

REPUBLICAN

STACY GARRITY

COUNTY: Bradford

OCCUPATION: Pennsylvania State Treasurer

EDUCATION: Bachelor's Degree in Finance, Bloomsburg University

QUALIFICATIONS: 30 year U.S. Army Reserve Veteran with three Combat Deployments (Col., Ret.) | Former VP at Global Tungsten & Powders

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE: garrityforpa.com

Q: What are the most pressing issues facing Pennsylvania residents, and how would you address them?

A: Pennsylvania families are being squeezed by higher energy bills, failing schools, rising crime, and a government that spends too much while delivering too little. My focus will be simple: make life affordable again, restore safe communities, and create real opportunity. That means unleashing Pennsylvania energy, cutting red tape on job creators, demanding accountability in education, protecting public safety, and bringing fiscal discipline back to Harrisburg. As Treasurer, I returned over \$1 billion to taxpayers. As Governor, I'll bring that same results-driven leadership to lower costs and put Pennsylvania families first.

Q: What are your specific ideas on the funding for public schools, private schools, and cyber charter schools to comply with the Commonwealth Court's order?

A: Every Pennsylvania child deserves access to a great education, no matter their ZIP code or the type of school that best fits their needs. We should absolutely support strong public schools, but families must also have meaningful choices, including charter schools, cyber charters, private schools, and scholarship opportunities. The focus should be on funding students and outcomes, not protecting systems that are failing too many kids. I will fight to ensure parents remain in the driver's seat, expand high-quality school choice options, and demand accountability so every education dollar is helping students succeed.

Q: What do you see as the state's role regarding federal immigration policy?

A: Immigration enforcement is primarily a federal responsibility, but Pennsylvania has an obligation to protect its communities and uphold the rule of law. As Governor, I will ensure state agencies fully cooperate with federal authorities when it comes to violent criminals, drug trafficking, and human trafficking. Pennsylvania should never be a sanctuary for those who break our laws. The state's role is to keep communities safe, prevent taxpayer resources from being misused, and partner with federal officials where public safety is at stake.

Q: What would you do to ensure Pennsylvania elections are accessible and secure?

A: Pennsylvanians deserve elections that are easy to participate in and impossible to doubt. I support strong voter ID requirements, accurate voter rolls, chain-of-custody protections for ballots, timely counting, and consistent standards across all 67 counties. We should expand access for eligible voters through clear rules, early preparation, and well-trained local election officials, while cracking down on fraud, noncitizen voting, and administrative loopholes. One illegal vote is one too many. My goal is simple: every legal vote counted, every illegal vote stopped, and every voter confident the system is fair.

PENNSYLVANIA LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

DESCRIPTION OF OFFICE:

The Lieutenant Governor will be elected jointly with the Governor in the General Election although candidates are nominated separately in the Primary. A Lieutenant Governor must be at least 30 years old and have been a US citizen and resident of the state for seven years preceding the election. S/he is President of the Senate, presiding over the Senate but having no vote unless the Senate is equally divided. S/he is Chair of the Board of Pardons and the PA Emergency Management Council. The PA Constitution provides that in case of the death, conviction or impeachment, failure to qualify, resignation, or other disability of the Governor, the powers, duties, and compensation of the office shall be transferred to the Lieutenant Governor for the remainder of the term or until the disability is removed. There are no term limits to this office.

Term: 4 years

Salary: \$213,248

Vote for ONE.

DEMOCRAT

AUSTIN DAVIS

COUNTY: Allegheny

OCCUPATION: Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania

EDUCATION: Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from the University of Pittsburgh

QUALIFICATIONS: From serving as a State Representative to now as the current Lieutenant Governor, Austin Davis is delivering real results for all Pennsylvanians and will continue working to move our Commonwealth forward.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE: davisforpa.com

Q: What are the most pressing issues facing Pennsylvania residents, and how would you address them?

A: We're focused every day on building a good education for our kids, safer communities, economic opportunity, and protecting Pennsylvanians' rights and freedoms. I'm proud of the work the Governor and I have done to deliver real results for all Pennsylvanians on these critical issues – creating thousands of good-paying jobs, attracting over \$40 billion in private-sector investment, cutting taxes seven times, investing our schools, and supporting both community-based violence intervention programs and state and local law enforcement. I'm committed to fighting for all Pennsylvanians – and we are going to keep working to create

real opportunity for our families to get ahead and be able to live the American dream right here in our Commonwealth.

Q: What are your specific ideas on the funding for public schools, private schools, and cyber charter schools to comply with the Commonwealth Court's order?

A: Since taking office, we have increased K-12 funding by nearly 30 percent and implemented an adequacy formula to drive investments to schools in the most need. Governor Shapiro and I are making sure Pennsylvania students are set up to succeed everyday with safe, healthy learning environments — providing universal free school breakfast, hiring mental health counselors, and investing in school safety. We are building upon our cyber charter school reforms to ensure students have regular, engaged contact with teachers online — saving schools districts millions in the process. I know that when we invest in education, we invest in the future of our children, which is why we will keep building on these investments to support our students.

Q: What do you see as the state's role regarding federal immigration policy?

A: Keeping our communities safe is our number one priority – but the federal government and their recklessness across the country has manufactured fear and chaos, making that work harder. Here in Pennsylvania, Governor Shapiro and I have worked to invest in law enforcement and violence prevention programs to build trust and build safer communities – and while we have been clear that we need a secure border and comprehensive immigration reform, we do not need the Trump Administration's chaos in our Commonwealth. We will continue to stand up to it while we work to keep Pennsylvanians safe and move our Commonwealth forward.

Q: What would you do to ensure Pennsylvania elections are accessible and secure?

A: Pennsylvania's elections are free, fair, safe, and secure – and together with Governor Shapiro, we have defended the integrity of our elections and Pennsylvanians' right to vote so that all eligible voters can exercise that fundamental right. Since taking office, we have taken steps to strengthen voting rights and decrease voter errors here in the Commonwealth by implementing automatic voter registration, re-designing mail-in ballots, and working closely with local elections officials to support their work. While the federal government attacks the sanctity of our elections, Governor Shapiro and I will continue to stand up and protect our democracy and Pennsylvanians' freedom to make their voices heard and ensure their votes are counted.

REPUBLICAN

JASON RICHEY

COUNTY: Allegheny

OCCUPATION: Attorney

EDUCATION: Allegheny College, BA (Economics/Political Science Double Major); The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law, JD.

QUALIFICATIONS: Growing up in Aliquippa, I saw the impact of economic decline & learned the value of hard work. I became a 3-time NCAA Academic All-American at Allegheny College.

I worked in a steel mill through law school. Over a 30-year legal career, I've led high-stakes cases & teams across major industries. **CAMPAIGN WEBSITE:** richeyforpa.com

Q: What are the most pressing issues facing Pennsylvania residents, and how would you address them?

A: The most pressing issue facing Pennsylvanians is affordability. Families are struggling with rising energy costs, high taxes, and housing costs. Pennsylvania sits atop the Marcellus Shale, one of the largest natural gas reserves in the world, yet it has not been fully leveraged to benefit our citizens. I will expand responsible natural gas development, streamline permitting related to drilling and infrastructure, and position Pennsylvania as a world leading energy producer. This growth will lower energy costs and generate new

revenue to reduce taxes, especially property taxes to lower housing costs. By connecting energy policy to tax relief, we can create jobs and make Pennsylvania more affordable.

Q: What are your specific ideas on the funding for public schools, private schools, and cyber charter schools to comply with the Commonwealth Court's order?

A: A child's future should not be determined by their address. The Commonwealth Court's order is an opportunity to create a fair, student-centered funding system. I support increasing public school funding through a weighted formula that prioritizes low-income students, English learners, and special education needs. I also support expanding school choice through charter and cyber options, and by pursuing federal school choice opportunities alongside a Pennsylvania Scholarship Program that empowers parents with direct access to funding. Dollars should follow students, with clear accountability for results. No system should receive automatic funding without performance. Parents, not bureaucracies, should drive educational decisions.

Q: What do you see as the state's role regarding federal immigration policy?

A: The federal government sets immigration policy, but the state has a clear responsibility to protect public safety and enforce the law. Pennsylvania should not be a sanctuary for those who commit crimes or undermine public safety. State and local law enforcement should fully cooperate with federal authorities in identifying, detaining, and removing individuals who are in the country illegally and have committed violent crimes or other serious offenses. At the same time, we should ensure resources are focused on securing communities, supporting victims, and maintaining order. A safe immigration system requires clear rules, consistent enforcement, and no tolerance for criminal activity that puts Pennsylvania families at risk.

Q: What would you do to ensure Pennsylvania elections are accessible and secure?

A: Pennsylvanians deserve elections they can trust completely. I will help ensure both accessibility and security by supporting voter ID requirements, regular maintenance of voter rolls, and strict chain-of-custody standards for ballots. We should also establish uniform election administration rules across all 67 counties so every voter is treated equally. Every eligible voter must have a clear, accessible path to cast a ballot, including early voting, while every safeguard must ensure only legal votes are counted and results are accurate and timely. The standard is simple: it should be easy to vote and hard to cheat.

JOHN VENTRE

COUNTY: Westmoreland

OCCUPATION: Retired Executive

EDUCATION: AA in Criminal Justice

QUALIFICATIONS: I have 26 years of executive experience as a multistate security, public affairs, crisis mgmt., and claims director in 6 states. I have a 27-point plan to improve PA. My resume matches perfectly with the Lt Governor responsibilities: executive experience, crises mgmt and security director.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE: vote4ventre.com

Q: What are the most pressing issues facing Pennsylvania residents, and how would you address them?

A: Affordability: our Governor is spending 7% more than we take in and increased 40% over the past 5 years. Our businesses are bogged down in regulations. We need a DOSE department of state efficiency. We need to freeze hiring except for law enforcement and nurses. I also believe through efficiency, we can eliminate the fuel tax (2% of budget), freeze property taxes for seniors and eliminate property taxes for disabled vets.

Q: What are your specific ideas on the funding for public schools, private schools, and cyber charter schools to comply with the

Commonwealth Court's order?

A: The Judicial shouldn't be telling the State how to form policy. Overspending on education makes up 38% of the budget but results are ranked at # 39. We spend \$25K per student which ranks # 5 highest. We need to outsource like a business and have true ESA Arizona style school choice. We need to encourage as many students as possible to not go to public schools. Cyber funding should've been increases, not decreased by \$175M. Public school funding is a teachers union monopoly and needs to end.

Q: What do you see as the state's role regarding federal immigration policy?

A: I will support ICE and federal law. We have a legal system of immigration; all others overstaying their vacation, need to leave. There will be zero sanctuary counties or cities. We need to identify what careers are lacking candidates and import those individuals. Open borders was a deliberate attempt to destroy the fabric of America.

Q: What would you do to ensure Pennsylvania elections are accessible and secure?

A: Act 77 must be replaced by the SAVE Act. Elections must be secure. Europe tried mail in ballots and 64% of countries went back to voter ID. Satellite centers will be reduced to 30 days and open to observation or eliminated. Non-citizens will be issued green drivers licenses so there is no doubt regarding citizenship.

PENNSYLVANIA US REPRESENTATIVE

DESCRIPTION OF OFFICE:

The US Constitution requires that the House of Representatives be composed of Representatives from each state, elected in proportion to population. There are 435 members of the House of Representatives, with 17 Representatives allotted to Pennsylvania after the 2020 census. A US Representative must be at least 25 years old, have been a citizen of the United States for the past seven years, and be a resident of the state they seek to represent at the time of the election (though not necessarily the same district). The House of Representatives is responsible for introducing and voting on bills, resolutions and amendments, and for approving the budget. Representatives also serve on various policy committees. The House may send Articles of Impeachment of elected officials to the Senate and elects the President if there is a tie in the Electoral College.

Term: 2 years
Salary: \$174,000
Vote for ONE.

DISTRICT 8

DEMOCRAT

PAIGE COGNETTI

COUNTY: Lackawanna
OCCUPATION: Mayor of Scranton
EDUCATION: BA from University of Oregon, MBA from Harvard Business School
QUALIFICATIONS: I'm currently serving my third term as Mayor of Scranton. I previously worked for the PA Auditor General and served on the Scranton School Board.
CAMPAIGN WEBSITE: paigeforpa.com

Q: What are the most pressing issues facing your district and our country, and how would you address them?

A: Everything is too expensive – groceries, gas, utilities, healthcare – and Washington is making it worse. Instead of making things more affordable, DC politicians are letting costs skyrocket. Congress could end the tariffs tomorrow but instead continues to support a trade war against countries like Canada, while supporting a war in Iran that is raising gas costs. We need leaders who fight to make things easier for people, not harder. In Congress I will fight for our families

by breaking up the corporate monopolies that raise our costs, and stop broad tariffs that only help the big guys. I won't take a dime in corporate donations and don't answer to special interests, just to the people of Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Q: What do you see as the role of Congress in oversight of the executive branch?

A: The entire idea of our system of government is that no one is above the law and our leaders must maintain the public's trust. Rob Bresnahan, however, has broken that trust, voting time and time again for price-spiking policies and becoming one of Congress' most active stock traders while campaigning to ban that practice just a year and a half ago. As a leader, if you can't hold yourself to account, you simply can't be trusted to hold anyone else accountable either. In Congress I would fight to ban congressional stock trading, enact a no-budget, no-pay policy, and work to end dark money in politics.

Q: What role should Congress play regarding foreign policy and international relations?

A: Two of the most important responsibilities of our leaders in Washington are to maintain the security of the American people and to protect their interests overseas and domestically. Congress should be in the business of working alongside the President to maintain our military's position as the best in the world. Congress should also care that engagements with other nations, whether those are trade deals or military operations, are in the best interest of Americans here at home. That means stopping bad deals for Americans like NAFTA, and making sure we don't enter endless wars that risk the lives of our soldiers and cost us billions of dollars we could use here at home.

Q: What legislative changes, if any, are needed to make healthcare more accessible and affordable?

A: Our systems need reform. But the way to improve government programs isn't destroying them and waiting for the consequences. We need to reverse the cuts to Medicaid and the failure to renew the ACA subsidies in the so-called "One Big Beautiful Bill." That law is raising healthcare costs for tens of thousands of people in Northeastern Pennsylvania. For too long big pharmaceutical companies, insurance companies, and for-profit hospitals have made huge profits while families struggle to get care and pay their medical bills. We need leaders in DC that will stand up to them. In Congress I will fight to make healthcare more affordable and hold the big corporations, and the politicians they've bought to serve their interests, accountable.

REPUBLICAN

ROB BRESNAHAN, JR.

Candidate has not yet responded.

DISTRICT 9

DEMOCRAT

RACHEL WALLACE

Candidate has not yet responded.

REPUBLICAN

DAN MEUSER

COUNTY: Luzerne
OCCUPATION: Member of Congress
EDUCATION: Attended New York Maritime University (now SUNY Maritime College) in the Bronx, New York, from 1982 to 1983, and later graduated from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, in 1986 with a B.A. in Economics and Government Studies, and was in the Navy ROTC program.
QUALIFICATIONS: Joined Pride Mobility in 1988, helping grow it into a global leader, and later served as President of Pride USA for seven years. Served as Pennsylvania Secretary of Revenue from

2011 to 2015, transforming the agency into a taxpayer advocacy organization and improving its rating from a D to an A-.
CAMPAIGN WEBSITE: meuserforcongress.com

Q: What are the most pressing issues facing your district and our country, and how would you address them?

A: The most pressing issues facing Pennsylvania's 9th District and our country are Cost of Living, Healthcare Access and Prescription Drug Costs, and Public Safety, Immigration, and Community Stability. I am actively addressing these issues by advancing pro-growth policies that cut regulations, support small businesses, and extend key provisions of the Trump Tax Cuts to drive investment and job creation. I'm also expanding access to capital, strengthening community banks, and addressing debanking. When it comes to healthcare, I'm focused on lowering prescription drug costs and improving access, especially in rural areas. For public safety, I'm working to secure the border, combat fentanyl, and support law enforcement.

Q: What do you see as the role of Congress in oversight of the executive branch?

A: Oversight is a core responsibility of Congress, ensuring the federal government operates transparently, efficiently, and within the law. Congress must hold the executive branch accountable by safeguarding taxpayer dollars, preventing regulatory overreach, and ensuring agencies serve the American people, not political agendas. Strong oversight is critical to restoring trust and reining in unelected bureaucrats. It also means compelling aspects of the executive branch to focus on the issues most important to the American people. As Chairman of the Financial Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, I am working to expose fraud and scams, combat debanking, and ensure agencies protect consumers and enforce the law, not ideology.

Q: What role should Congress play regarding foreign policy and international relations?

A: Congress plays a critical role in shaping foreign policy by ensuring America's interests come first, including funding a strong national defense and setting clear global priorities. Decisions made abroad directly impact our economy, security, and energy costs at home. One of my top priorities is protecting national security by maintaining the strongest military in the world, focused on readiness, war-fighting capabilities, and mission effectiveness. Congress must ensure foreign engagement, whether aid, trade, or military involvement, is strategic and aligned with American interests. We must project strength abroad to deter adversaries, support our allies, and maintain stability while always putting America first.

Q: What legislative changes, if any, are needed to make healthcare more accessible and affordable?

A: To make healthcare more accessible and affordable, I'm working to lower prescription drug costs by introducing the Most Favored Patient Act to ensure Americans pay fair prices, not more than patients abroad. This approach expands access, lowers costs, and delivers practical, results-driven solutions for patients and families. At the same time, I am focused on addressing the challenges facing rural communities. Across Pennsylvania, families are seeing hospitals close, services reduced, and longer travel times just to receive care. That's why I supported the Rural Health Transformation Fund, delivering \$193 million to Pennsylvania this year to strengthen providers, workforce, and infrastructure.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE SENATOR

DESCRIPTION OF OFFICE:

The General Assembly is the legislative branch of government in Pennsylvania. It is composed of two houses: the Senate is the upper house, and the House of Representatives is the lower house. A majority vote in both houses is necessary to pass a law. The PA

Senate consists of 50 members, representing one district each, with an equal number of constituents. Senators must be at least 25 years old, have been a citizen and a resident of the state four years and a resident of their respective districts one year before their election, and shall reside in their respective districts during their terms of service. The Senate develops budget packages, makes taxation decisions, allocates spending, and passes laws (including redistricting in collaboration with the House of Representatives). In addition, the Senate tries officials impeached by the House and authorizes executive appointments. Senators serve on various policy committees that may propose legislation.

Term: 4 years

Salary: \$113,591

Vote for ONE.

DISTRICT 20

DEMOCRAT

JACKIE BAKER

COUNTY: Susquehanna

OCCUPATION: Teacher, Stay-at-home-mom

EDUCATION: High School diploma, Bachelor's of Science in Education, Master's Degree in Education

QUALIFICATIONS: PA Senate Candidate in 2020 and in 2022

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE: jackiebakerforpa.org

Q: What do you see as the most pressing issues facing residents of your district, and how would you address them?

A: Data centers are one of the biggest issues in my district. How data centers are operating in PA must have strict oversight by our elected officials, state and local. Data centers must NOT harm our communities by consuming copious amounts of water and electricity, contaminating our natural environment and resources, or by destroying lands across the commonwealth. We must set laws that keep data centers from being built in places that harm our air, water, or ecosystems. We must set laws that ensure data centers don't lead to an increase in energy costs for Pennsylvanians. As data centers use huge amounts of electricity, they should be required to generate their own renewable energy so that costs are not placed on local communities.

Q: What changes, if any, would you support to enable better access, ensure security, and support the processes of our elections?

A: Our right to vote must be protected at all costs for it is the foundation of democracy.

I support protecting and expanding access to voting, including protecting the right to vote by mail-in ballots and expanding the time a citizen has to register to vote. To make it easier for everyday citizens to vote, I support offering voter registration through more state and local agencies. Easy access to voting and increased voter turnout is crucial to true representation in our democracy. I oppose any measure that tries to restrict voting or registering to vote, as is the right of every U.S. citizen, no matter where we live, what we look like, or how much money we make.

Q: What are your thoughts on the state budget process? What changes, if any, would you support so that the budget is enacted in a timely manner?

A: It is unacceptable that the legislators in Harrisburg delayed the passing of the state budget by over four months last year. The delay was caused by a fight over the budget and how it's funded. The 2025-2026 budget was passed without creating any new revenue sources. PA faces a \$7-8 billion structural budget deficit in the coming years. With most of the PA budget being mandatory spending, we face the real risk of massive cuts to education, healthcare, transit, safety net programs, and the environment. The lack of revenue coming into our state budget must be addressed immediately.

Q: Should the state legislature enact laws concerning the impacts on water, energy, or land use from the development and operation

of data centers? Would state regulation of data center development and operation interfere with the authority of municipalities to establish ordinances under the MPC (Municipal Planning Code)?

A: Yes. The state government has a responsibility to provide oversight, regulations, and laws to protect the people of PA from pollution and high energy costs. Municipalities must be included in all plans.

REPUBLICAN

LISA BAKER

COUNTY: Luzerne

OCCUPATION: PA State Senator – 20th District

EDUCATION: Graduated from Dallas High School. Earned a bachelor's degree in government administration from Shippensburg University.

QUALIFICATIONS: Elected to five terms as state Senator. Held a senior position during the Ridge Administration. Named as highly effective state legislator. Chair of the powerful Senate Judiciary Committee. Endorsed by multiple advocacy groups.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE: bakerforsenate.com

Q: What do you see as the most pressing issues facing residents of your district, and how would you address them?

A: Education, healthcare, jobs, food security and costs, energy costs and reliability, public safety, criminal justice. My approach is to develop bipartisan legislation that is practical, affordable, and enforceable.

Q: What changes, if any, would you support to enable better access, ensure security, and support the processes of our elections?

A: I believe voting is a key right in our system of government. I authored the bill banning interference from private money like Zuckerbucks and creating a grant program to help counties operate elections. I support Voter ID as a security measure.

Q: What are your thoughts on the state budget process? What changes, if any, would you support so that the budget is enacted in a timely manner?

A: The most immediate remedy is to approve a constitutional amendment providing for a continuing budget when the deadline is not met. A budget crisis is never worth the service disruption and funding deficiencies that inevitably result.

Q: Should the state legislature enact laws concerning the impacts on water, energy, or land use from the development and operation of data centers? Would state regulation of data center development and operation interfere with the authority of municipalities to establish ordinances under the MPC (Municipal Planning Code)?

A: Several bills concerning data centers have been proposed in the General Assembly. I will oppose any legislation that diminishes local control, reduces transparency and accountability, or negatively affects water and electricity resources and rates. If a bill reaches the Senate floor for a final vote, I will evaluate it based on these principles. Given our reliance on technology and their importance in our national security, data centers are a necessity, but we must balance those demands with environmental protection and resource management and work with our local officials to ensure they are located appropriately, such as on abandoned coal land or brownfields.

TYLER MEYERS

COUNTY: Luzerne

OCCUPATION: Behavioral Specialist

EDUCATION: Bachelor's in Psychology and Philosophy

QUALIFICATIONS: United States Army Veteran

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE: meyersforpa.com

Q: What do you see as the most pressing issues facing residents of your district, and how would you address them?

A: The rising costs of energy, utilities, and data centers being forced

on us; ineffective forms of energy like solar farms destroying our landscape, and ridiculous taxes like the rain and death tax burdening us are issues I would focus on. I would champion bills that would help small businesses succeed and Pennsylvania to prosper with less regulations and taxes.

Education needs to be reformed in our Commonwealth. Parents have a right to be able to educate their child in the school setting of their choice. I believe in school choice and would work towards getting that accomplished. I would also be against men in women's sports/locker rooms and would make sure programs like Kooth teaching gender identity is not allowed in our schools anymore.

Q: What changes, if any, would you support to enable better access, ensure security, and support the processes of our elections?

A: I would sponsor legislation that would require voter rolls to be cleaned up before every election at the county level, require voter ID in all elections, repeal the unconstitutional Act 77 of no excuse mail-in voting, and rid ourselves of voting machines that were manufactured in a foreign country, opting for paper ballots instead. I would only be one senator, but one vote or sponsor of a bill that would perform any of these functions is a senator who is moving us in the right direction. I was opposed to the passing of Act 77 when it was done, and I would have held my Republican colleagues to the process they were aware of, which is to make it a ballot initiative to be voted on by the people.

Q: What are your thoughts on the state budget process? What changes, if any, would you support so that the budget is enacted in a timely manner?

A: The state budget has a deadline of June 30 and it's never completed on time which means agencies and our schools can suffer. Legislators need to work together earlier towards a timely solution to complete the budget. I would support the legislature not being paid until the budget is done.

Q: Should the state legislature enact laws concerning the impacts on water, energy, or land use from the development and operation of data centers? Would state regulation of data center development and operation interfere with the authority of municipalities to establish ordinances under the MPC (Municipal Planning Code)?

A: State legislators should block the development of data centers in reason entirely through a moratorium. We do not have the infrastructure to build, maintain, and operate them. The citizen population should not be forced to compete with obtaining resources like water, energy, and having to put up with the noise and physical pollution caused by these massive facilities that don't even generate job opportunities for us. It's not right to force municipalities to have their private property seized through eminent domain to force high-energy power lines, like we already see in Pike County, to carry the necessary energy to these data centers. I would support a moratorium.

DISTRICT 22

DEMOCRAT

MARTY FLYNN

Candidate has not yet responded.

JEFFREY LAKE

COUNTY: Lackawanna

OCCUPATION: Special Education Aide

EDUCATION: BS Psychology

QUALIFICATIONS: Practical Nurse, Mental Health Therapist, Nonprofit Founder

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE: jeffreylakeforpa.com

Q: What do you see as the most pressing issues facing residents of your district, and how would you address them?

A: The most pressing issues in our district are affordability, data centers, healthcare, and the lack of real investment in working

families. Too many people are being squeezed by rising housing costs, childcare costs, utility bills, and a healthcare system that is unaffordable and hard to navigate. I would fight for housing people can afford, free childcare, expanding mental health as a part of universal healthcare, higher wages, worker protections, and investments in public services and infrastructure that help families thrive. We also need to reject extractive development that harms our environment, future prospects, and quality of life, and instead invest in community-centered solutions that make NEPA stronger for the long term.

Q: What changes, if any, would you support to enable better access, ensure security, and support the processes of our elections?

A: I would support changes that make voting easier, more accessible, and more secure at the same time. That means protecting the right to vote, improving transparency, and making sure working people are not forced to choose between a paycheck and participating in democracy. I believe we should continue expanding access while strengthening trust in the process. That's why I support extending the voter registration period until election day. I will also fight for making Election Day a paid state holiday and support open primaries, so more voters have a real voice in choosing candidates. I also support stronger campaign-finance rules and disclosure so elections are decided by voters, not big money.

Q: What are your thoughts on the state budget process? What changes, if any, would you support so that the budget is enacted in a timely manner?

A: The budget process should be more transparent, more accountable, and more focused on delivering results for working people. Pennsylvania cannot afford endless budget games that leave schools, counties, human services, and local governments guessing. My priority is a budget that reflects our values: affordable housing, childcare, healthcare, education, transit, and support for the working people who keep this state running, while ensuring communities are not left waiting for basic funding. I would support allocating a portion of the budget for participatory budgeting, which gives communities more power in deciding how their tax dollars are spent.

Q: Should the state legislature enact laws concerning the impacts on water, energy, or land use from the development and operation of data centers? Would state regulation of data center development and operation interfere with the authority of municipalities to establish ordinances under the MPC (Municipal Planning Code)?

A: I support strong state-level rules on data centers, especially regarding water use, energy demand, land use, air quality, and environmental impact. Pennsylvania should not let hyperscale AI data centers drain local water supplies, drive up utility costs, destroy our environment, or override community needs in the name of profit. I support a 3-year moratorium on hyperscale AI data centers, and state regulation should set strong baseline standards while still respecting local decision-making under the MPC. State rules should complement municipal authority, not erase it, while protecting residents first and requiring clear accountability from developers.

REPUBLICAN

SHARON SOLTIS SPARANO
Candidate has not yet responded.

DISTRICT 24

DEMOCRAT

CHRIS THOMAS

COUNTY: Montgomery
OCCUPATION: Self Employed
EDUCATION: Bachelor of Science in Geology, University of Akron; graduate school at Drexel University
QUALIFICATIONS: I was the ED for the Montgomery County Democratic Party for 3 years; I was a middle school math and

science teacher, and am currently a Volunteer Fire Fighter. I understand the meaning of service and am ready to do so in Harrisburg.

WEBSITE: christhomas.vote

Q: What do you see as the most pressing issues facing residents of your district, and how would you address them?

A: Cost of living is the top issue voters raise. Utilities, healthcare, groceries, gas, and childcare are cited as the top costs that folks are struggling to keep up with. There are common sense solutions we can deliver on like Pre-K for PA, Paid Family & Medical leave, banning surveillance pricing, holding utility companies accountable, bringing more power generation projects online, childcare tax incentives, staffing ratio standards, quality of care management, and supporting our farmers. Legislation exists but languishes in the Republican-led Senate. Flipping the chamber is the only way to tackle these issues.

Q: What changes, if any, would you support to enable better access, ensure security, and support the processes of our elections?

A: I am 100% against the attempts of the current administration in DC to federalize elections, make it harder to vote, and disfranchise entire groups of voters. States have a constitutional mandate to administer elections freely and fairly. I support Gov. Shapiro's attempts to protect voter's rights and privacy. I support our local Sheriff's commitment to protecting polling locations from outside interference. I support the need for every legally cast ballot to be counted and will work with election integrity partners to make sure that any citizen who wants to vote, can vote.

Q: What are your thoughts on the state budget process? What changes, if any, would you support so that the budget is enacted in a timely manner?

A: Simply put: Governor Shapiro and Democrats in the House pass responsible budgets in a timely manner and Senate Republicans play games with people's lives. It's time to flip the State Senate so legislators can focus on representing the needs of the people and not the needs of special interest groups.

Q: Should the state legislature enact laws concerning the impacts on water, energy, or land use from the development and operation of data centers? Would state regulation of data center development and operation interfere with the authority of municipalities to establish ordinances under the MPC (Municipal Planning Code)?

A: I believe the State Legislature should pass balanced, comprehensive guidance on how data centers use our natural resources and generate their own power, and ensure the greatest possible transparency and advanced planning so local communities are not only protected but benefit from cost mitigation and job creation.

REPUBLICAN

TRACY E. PENNYCUICK

COUNTY: Montgomery
OCCUPATION: State Senator
EDUCATION: University of Missouri, Bachelor of Science in Business Administration; Post University, Master of Public Administration; U.S. Army Command & General Staff College
QUALIFICATIONS: Currently serving as State Senator, Tracy is a 26-year U.S. Army combat veteran who enlisted as a combat medic and went on to serve 3 combat tours as a Black Hawk helicopter pilot. She's a small business owner, wife and mother who focuses on practical solutions and real results.
WEBSITE: tracypennycuick.com

Q: What do you see as the most pressing issues facing residents of your district, and how would you address them?

A: Families in Berks and Montgomery Counties are dealing with higher costs, public safety concerns, and real pressure on local infrastructure. My focus is on delivering bipartisan results:

supporting tax relief for families and small businesses to lower costs, opposing reckless policies that drive up energy cost, backing our first responders, funding our schools and technical education, and delivering projects that strengthen roads, water systems, and community infrastructure, including over \$75 million for public education, first responders, roads, economic development, open space preservation, and more. I will continue pushing for accountable government that protects taxpayers and delivers real results for you.

Q: What changes, if any, would you support to enable better access, ensure security, and support the processes of our elections?

A: It must be easy for all eligible voters to vote and very hard for anyone to cheat. Pennsylvania is one of the few states that does not require an ID to vote, and I support common sense voter ID legislation to strengthen election integrity. I have led efforts to pass a constitutional amendment so voters, not politicians, can decide. Pennsylvania already has multiple approved ID options, and free IDs could be available, so no eligible voter is turned away. We also need consistent statewide rules to ensure accurate voter rolls, stronger cyber security, and additional support and training available for all 67 counties. We can all agree that fair elections require clear and consistent rules.

Q: What are your thoughts on the state budget process? What changes, if any, would you support so that the budget is enacted in a timely manner?

A: As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I believe the budget should be transparent, fiscally responsible, and passed on time. Pennsylvania is required to balance its budget, and taxpayers deserve an honest accounting of what spending plans mean for them. We should set firm milestones before June 30, so negotiations don't rely on crisis mode. Options can include earlier public hearings, more detailed budget documents for legislators and the public, and stronger accountability that penalizes the politicians when a budget is not passed. We must avoid proposing budgets that depend on revenues that have not been passed into law and protect the state's long-term financial stability.

Q: Should the state legislature enact laws concerning the impacts on water, energy, or land use from the development and operation of data centers? Would state regulation of data center development and operation interfere with the authority of municipalities to establish ordinances under the MPC (Municipal Planning Code)?

A: From the products we order online to our smartphones and emails, data centers power the modern economy – and can bring high-paying construction jobs and investment. However, we must strike the right balance between growth and protecting ratepayers and local resources. While the state can set clear guardrails, I support a community's right to decide for itself, through local zoning, whether a data center is appropriate. As Chair of the Communications and Technology Committee, I've advocated for the creation of a dedicated power auction, so data centers pay their fair share, and I back policies, like bring-your-own-generation, to reduce the strain on local power and water systems.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DESCRIPTION OF OFFICE:

The General Assembly is the legislative branch of government in Pennsylvania. It is composed of two houses: the Senate is the upper house, and the House of Representatives is the lower house. A majority vote in both houses is necessary to pass a law. The PA House of Representatives consists of 203 members representing one district each, with an equal number of constituents. Representatives must be at least 21 years old, have been a citizen and a resident of the state four years and a resident of their respective districts one year before their election, and shall reside in their respective districts during their terms of service. The House develops budget packages, makes taxation decisions, allocates spending, and passes

laws (including redistricting in collaboration with the Senate). The House also has the exclusive authority to impeach public officials. Representatives also serve on various policy committees that may propose legislation.

Term: 2 years

Salary: \$113,591

Vote for ONE.

Note: On Democratic and Republican primary ballots, voters will also choose members of the State and County Committees. We do not list these candidates on Vote411. For information on these candidates, we suggest you contact your local Democratic or Republican Party committee.

DISTRICT 116

DEMOCRAT

No candidate filed.

REPUBLICAN

DANE WATRO

Candidate has not yet responded.

DISTRICT 117

DEMOCRAT

JEREMY BENSOTER

COUNTY: Luzerne

OCCUPATION: Director of IT

EDUCATION: Bachelor's in Computer Science

WEBSITE: jeremybensoter.com

Q: What do you see as the most pressing issues facing residents of your district, and how would you address them?

A: The current biggest issue facing the area is the push to build data centers without protections in place for communities, the environment, and the people that live here. The biggest thing that could be done would be to pass a moratorium so proper research and impact can be evaluated.

Q: What changes, if any, would you support to enable better access, ensure security, and support the processes of our elections?

A: I would support legislation that would make in-person voting a two week event instead of a single day. I believe this would get more people to vote and calm the controversies around mail-in-voting.

Q: What are your thoughts on the state budget process? What changes, if any, would you support so that the budget is enacted in a timely manner?

A: I think passing an all-encompassing, single budget is a problem. I think if budgets were passed in smaller more meaningful chunks, it would allow them to be more precise and allow them to be more thoroughly vetted to ensure our tax dollars get spent effectively.

Q: Should the state legislature enact laws concerning the impacts on water, energy, or land use from the development and operation of data centers? Would state regulation of data center development and operation interfere with the authority of municipalities to establish ordinances under the MPC (Municipal Planning Code)?

A: It gets complicated when talking about whether or not the state legislature should handle this. On one hand, the state has more resources to enact real protections, however they aren't always fully in touch with the communities that they are protecting. I think providing protections at the state level, but allowing the local municipalities to override the state protections would be the best approach, so if the state protections fall short, there is a path for the municipality to protect itself.

REPUBLICAN

BILL JONES

COUNTY: Luzerne

OCCUPATION: Retired

EDUCATION: Bachelors -Misericordia University; MBA- Wilkes-University; Stonier Graduate School of Banking at the University of Delaware; Non-profit Executive Development programming at the University of Notre Dame.

QUALIFICATIONS: 15 years in the Banking Industry, plus 25 years of executive leadership in the non-profit sector including 13 years as President and CEO of the United Way of Wyoming Valley; served numerous Boards of Directors for other organizations. Currently on the Board of Trustees at Misericordia University.

WEBSITE: billjonesforpa.com

Q: What do you see as the most pressing issues facing residents of your district, and how would you address them?

A: While data center development is a very significant issue in a number of municipalities, the biggest concerns facing our district are the affordability of utilities, property and school taxes, access to good-paying jobs, school funding, and the condition of our roads and infrastructure. Families are feeling squeezed. We need to focus on lowering costs, supporting job growth in the private sector, and making smart, targeted infrastructure investments. Government must prioritize core responsibilities and deliver real relief to working families. That means cutting wasteful spending, reducing regulatory burdens, creating an environment where small businesses can thrive, and putting more money back into the pockets of the people who earn it.

Q: What changes, if any, would you support to enable better access, ensure security, and support the processes of our elections?

A: Our elections must be secure, transparent, and accessible to maintain public trust. I support commonsense measures like voter ID, improving the accuracy of voter rolls, and ensuring uniform standards across counties. This includes creating clear rules and consistent procedures so every voter is treated equally, regardless of where they live. Transparency should also extend to campaign financing so voters know who is funding candidates and influencing elections. Strong safeguards, accountability, and fair access are all essential to restoring confidence in our electoral process.

Q: What are your thoughts on the state budget process? What changes, if any, would you support so that the budget is enacted in a timely manner?

A: Pennsylvania's budget process too often relies on rushed negotiations and excessive spending. We need a more disciplined, transparent approach that prioritizes fiscal responsibility and timely passage. Lawmakers should be held accountable for getting a balanced budget done on time and, if the budget is late, lawmakers should not get paid. We need less posturing and partisanship, and more thoughtful engagement and responsible alternatives to move our state forward. Simply voting "no" without offering real solutions is not real leadership. Families, businesses, local governments, and our schools depend on predictability. Our budgeting process should reflect that responsibility.

Q: Should the state legislature enact laws concerning the impacts on water, energy, or land use from the development and operation of data centers? Would state regulation of data center development and operation interfere with the authority of municipalities to establish ordinances under the MPC (Municipal Planning Code)?

A: Yes, the state should enact laws that protect residents and supports municipalities. Data centers can strain water, energy, and land resources, and the state can help by creating clear definitions and offering baseline guidance and technical support to municipalities. That ensures consistency and better-informed decisions. The state should define these as heavy industrial projects that must go into industrial zones, State regulation should support, not override, local authority under the MPC. Municipalities best understand their

infrastructure, environment, and community needs. Any state action must complement, not preempt, local zoning power. The goal should be to empower communities, not take decision-making away from them.

JAMIE WALSH

Candidate has not yet responded.

DISTRICT 118

DEMOCRAT

JIM HADDOCK

COUNTY: Luzerne

OCCUPATION: State Representative

EDUCATION: Seton Catholic High School, Central Atlantic School of Banking

QUALIFICATIONS: Incumbent State Rep, Former Mayor and School Board Member

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE: friendsofjimhaddock.com

Q: What do you see as the most pressing issues facing residents of your district, and how would you address them?

A: I hear daily that prices have not gone down since day one. So we are all feeling the effects of unaffordability. My constituents are grateful that I have supported them with a record of voting to cut taxes seven times. Especially for working Pennsylvanians and our seniors. This year when working families file their taxes many will be able to qualify for the new Working Pennsylvanians tax credit that will provide 193 million in tax relief for working families. Likewise families will also be able to qualify for the Childcare Tax Credit. Seniors will be able to get the larger rent and property tax rebates.

Q: What changes, if any, would you support to enable better access, ensure security, and support the processes of our elections?

A: The right to vote is the foundation of our country. We must preserve every single current voting law that is on the books and we must work to expand them. In my tenure in the Legislature I have done just that. When the Luzerne County Manager tried to illegally remove drop boxes I spoke out against her actions and I supported sending a letter to the Attorney General who went on the record to tell her that if she did not restore the drop boxes in the county she could be subject to legal action. The County Manager quickly reversed her actions. I will always vote to protect and expand voting rights. For example, I strongly support opening Primary Elections to Independent voters.

Q: What are your thoughts on the state budget process? What changes, if any, would you support so that the budget is enacted in a timely manner?

A: I have been a vocal leader in Harrisburg expressing my displeasure of the budget process. I believe that the budget should be passed on time. So much so that I have signed onto HB 1682 that says the Governor, the entire State Senate and the entire State House, including myself, does not get paid as long as the budget is late. I have advocated in favor of this bill throughout the state. I give credit to Governor Shapiro this budget year for already meeting with leadership of both parties and starting budget talks earlier than prior years in order to help create a timely budget. I feel this is a great step in the right direction.

Q: Should the state legislature enact laws concerning the impacts on water, energy, or land use from the development and operation of data centers? Would state regulation of data center development and operation interfere with the authority of municipalities to establish ordinances under the MPC (Municipal Planning Code)?

A: Data centers are a pressing issue in Pennsylvania. We must do our part in regulating this industry because the state constitution grants the right to clean air and water. I voted for HB 1834 to insure that data centers pay all costs of water and power associated with their operations. The Pennsylvanian consumer should not bear any

costs for data centers. I voted on HB 2150 which requires annual reports on water and power usage. I also voted for HB 2151 which would create a model ordinance that a local government can use as a reference to help protect the local municipality. I call on the PA Senate to approve these house bills and send them to the governor's desk to become law.

I will not support removing local control or tie their hands.

REPUBLICAN

JOHN LOMBARDO

COUNTY: Luzerne

OCCUPATION: Firefighter/EMT

EDUCATION: Bachelors Degree - Penn State University

QUALIFICATIONS: Full-time Public Servant, Member of Luzerne County Council, familiar with budget practices, fiscal responsibility and contract negotiations

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE: electlombardo.com

Q: What do you see as the most pressing issues facing residents of your district, and how would you address them?

A: The most pressing issues for families and seniors in HD 118 are skyrocketing costs for groceries, energy bills, housing, and prescription drugs - making life harder. As a full-time firefighter/EMT and Luzerne County Councilman, I've worked with Democrats and Republicans to cut waste and deliver real relief. In Harrisburg, I will fight to lower energy costs by cutting red tape, holding utility companies accountable and by reviewing and ending costly programs - like was done with RGGI. We need to reduce prescription drug prices for seniors, protect local jobs and trades, and properly fund our schools without raising taxes on working families. I don't talk about problems - I run toward them.

Q: What changes, if any, would you support to enable better access, ensure security, and support the processes of our elections?

A: It must be easy for eligible voters to make their voice heard and our elections must be secure. As a county councilman, I've worked across party lines to improve the security of our election process here in Luzerne County. Voter identification is required in many countries around the world, this is just common sense, which is why it has the support of over 70% of voters in our country. Let's put politics aside and get it done in Pennsylvania.

I'd also work to streamline state election laws that make it more difficult to administer elections locally, such as unrealistic deadlines for requesting mail in ballots, and antiquated systems like SURE. I have witnessed the issues with these specific items first hand as a member of county govt.

Q: What are your thoughts on the state budget process? What changes, if any, would you support so that the budget is enacted in a timely manner?

A: The budget process in Harrisburg is broken. Our Constitution requires a balanced budget to be passed by June 30. Outside of an election year, this just doesn't happen. The only way I see to fix the problem is to pass legislation to hold the politicians' pay until a budget is passed. During each budget standoff, residents struggle due to an unwillingness to negotiate in good faith while at the same time the politicians continue to be paid and collect per diems. Let's make the budget process more transparent and get it back on track. As a councilman, I've passed on-time, balanced budgets by working with both parties and focusing on priorities. I'll bring this same approach to Harrisburg.

Q: Should the state legislature enact laws concerning the impacts on water, energy, or land use from the development and operation of data centers? Would state regulation of data center development and operation interfere with the authority of municipalities to establish ordinances under the MPC (Municipal Planning Code)?

A: First, I believe it's important to keep these decisions local and to enable each community to have the power to decide how best to regulate these data centers. Second, in the current era of technology

with the expanding use of cell phones, online shopping and banking, social media, AI and more, we need the ability to keep those functions safe and secure. I'll support smart state guidelines that protect our resources and keep energy costs down for families. I'll also support ways to use mine-scarred land and old industrial sites while ensuring they do not strain our water, energy grid, or local roads at the expense of residents.

DISTRICT 119

DEMOCRAT

LAUREN MCCURDY

Candidate has not yet responded.

REPUBLICAN

ALEC RYNCAVAGE

Candidate has not yet responded.

DISTRICT 120

DEMOCRAT

FERN LEARD

COUNTY: Luzerne

OCCUPATION: Community Advocate

EDUCATION: Fern Leard's education is rooted in real-world experience, including years of healthcare advocacy, policy engagement, and grassroots organizing. She has worked directly with members of Congress, local officials, and community leaders to advance legislation and develop practical policy solutions.

QUALIFICATIONS: Fern Leard is a healthcare advocate and community organizer and a full time caregiver to her special needs twins. She collaborates with policymakers, organizes residents, expands healthcare access, and develops solutions to affordability and infrastructure challenges.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE: votefern4pa.com

Q: What do you see as the most pressing issues facing residents of your district, and how would you address them?

A: The most pressing issues facing residents of our district are rising utility costs tied to massive data center development, an affordability crisis where hard work is not keeping up with costs, property taxes that are pushing people out of their homes, and a political system dominated by big money.

I will fight to stop ratepayers from footing the bill for corporate data centers, strengthen consumer protections and price gouging laws, and lower everyday costs for working families. I will push for real property tax relief by increasing state investment in education and protecting seniors and homeowners. I will also refuse corporate PAC money and advance transparency and ethics reforms so government works for people, not powerful interests.

Q: What changes, if any, would you support to enable better access, ensure security, and support the processes of our elections?

A: I support improving access to voting while maintaining strong election security and public confidence. I support expanded early voting, secure mail in voting with clear tracking, and adequate funding for counties to administer elections efficiently. I believe poll workers should be properly trained and supported, and that voting locations should be accessible and fairly distributed. I also support modernizing election infrastructure, including updated equipment and cybersecurity protections. At the same time, I oppose unnecessary barriers that make it harder for eligible voters to participate. Elections should be secure, transparent, and accessible so every eligible voter can cast a ballot and trust the results.

Q: What are your thoughts on the state budget process? What changes, if any, would you support so that the budget is enacted in a timely manner?

A: The state budget process is too often delayed, creating uncertainty for schools, municipalities, and service providers that rely on predictable funding. When budgets are late, communities are forced to make decisions without knowing what resources they will receive. I support stronger transparency requirements, earlier public negotiations, and firm deadlines that encourage on time passage. Lawmakers should be required to publicly post proposals and hold open discussions so residents understand what is being negotiated. I also support limiting last minute omnibus deals that reduce accountability. A timely, transparent budget process helps communities plan and ensures funding reaches people when they need it.

Q: Should the state legislature enact laws concerning the impacts on water, energy, or land use from the development and operation of data centers? Would state regulation of data center development and operation interfere with the authority of municipalities to establish ordinances under the MPC (Municipal Planning Code)?

A: Yes. The state legislature should establish baseline protections for water use, energy demand, and land impacts from data centers, especially given their regional strain on infrastructure and natural resources. State standards can ensure transparency, environmental safeguards, and fair cost allocation so residents are not subsidizing private developments. These laws should be written to complement, not override, municipal authority under the MPC. Local governments must retain the ability to adopt stronger zoning, setbacks, and operational requirements based on community needs. A floor, not a ceiling, protects both statewide interests and local control.

JOANNA BRYN SMITH

COUNTY: Luzerne

OCCUPATION: Public Interest Attorney

EDUCATION: Bishop O'Reilly High School, 2005, H.S.D.; St. Joseph's University, 2009, B.A Philosophy and Fine and Performing Arts (Magna Cum Laude); City University of New York School of Law, 2013, J.D. (Magna Cum Laude)

QUALIFICATIONS: Served as a Luzerne County Councilperson 2024-current; authored Election Worker Protection Ordinance, lobbied for Responsible Contractor Ordinance, authored Anti-Discrimination Ordinance, authored Protect Our Neighbors Act: To Ensure County Resources are not utilized for ICE and only for the County.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE: paforjbs.com

Q: What do you see as the most pressing issues facing residents of your district, and how would you address them?

A: The two biggest issues facing my district are affordability and education. I believe every Pennsylvanian should be able to earn a good education and a living wage. As we see more inflation and shrinkflation, it's more important than ever to ensure Pennsylvania workers are able to earn a living wage. Companies must be held accountable to the communities they employ and also pay their fair share in taxes.

The first step towards a better education for our children is fully funding education at the state level. Fully funding education eases the tax burden on local homeowners while providing better facilities and more teachers for our children. I support fully funding education to keep costs more affordable and to support future generations.

Q: What changes, if any, would you support to enable better access, ensure security, and support the processes of our elections?

A: We must make our elections more accessible for everyone, making election day a holiday so that everyone may vote. Professionally, I work with some of our most vulnerable, who often have trouble making it to the polls or participating in mail-in balloting. To make elections more accessible, I believe we must make election day a holiday, offer ballot drop box locations for everyone and even placing additional drop boxes. I also support setting clear expectations at the state level for localities

to ensure that proofread ballots are sent out, collected, and counted in a timely manner. While I believe localities should administer their own elections, it is appropriate for the state to set clear standards and expectations for them.

Q: What are your thoughts on the state budget process? What changes, if any, would you support so that the budget is enacted in a timely manner?

A: The Senate and the House have four months to negotiate, change, collaborate and pass the Governor's budget. The budget process should be completed by June 30. If it is not, no Senator and no Representative should be able to go home or be paid until the budget is passed. Every school district, municipality, and Pennsylvanian who depends on state funding is put in harm's way when the legislature fails to pass a budget on time. Our budget is more than just numbers on a sheet; it is a family's ability to pay their mortgage, it is an employee's ability to purchase groceries. These numbers affect real people with real consequences. As your Representative, I would take this responsibility seriously and prioritize the budget over politics.

Q: Should the state legislature enact laws concerning the impacts on water, energy, or land use from the development and operation of data centers? Would state regulation of data center development and operation interfere with the authority of municipalities to establish ordinances under the MPC (Municipal Planning Code)?

A: The State must enact laws to ensure that Data Centers do not negatively impact or exploit the localities hosting them. Data centers will impact our natural resources and the demands on our local power grids, but there is still so much we don't know. We need laws that restrict and mitigate these impacts to keep communities safe. While I am not opposed to building data centers, we have to get it right. Legislation could guarantee Data Center projects receive the much-needed carefulness, planning, and oversight they require. State leaders must treat municipalities as allies in this growth, but we all share a responsibility to our neighbors to ensure new industries, including Data Centers, will not cause harm to our local neighborhoods.

REPUBLICAN

BRENDA PUGH

COUNTY: Luzerne

OCCUPATION: State Representative

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE: brendaforpa.com

Q: What do you see as the most pressing issues facing residents of your district, and how would you address them?

A: The biggest issues I hear about are cost of living, energy prices, taxes, public safety, and protecting local jobs. I've focused on common sense ways to make life more affordable, including legislation that I introduced to remove the burden from residents and businesses on the unfair and unfunded rain tax mandate, working to lower energy costs, supporting job creators and our workers, and backing first responders. I will keep fighting for practical solutions that help families, seniors, and workers here at home and across the Commonwealth.

Q: What changes, if any, would you support to enable better access, ensure security, and support the processes of our elections?

A: Pennsylvanians deserve and should expect their elections to be secure, transparent, and easily accessible for all eligible voters to participate in. I support clear rules, accurate voter rolls, timely ballot processing, and consistent standards across all 67 counties. We should protect access for lawful voters while making sure election laws are followed fairly and uniformly. I support common sense legislation that would require all voters to show ID when voting. Requiring ID at the polls prevents fraud and will begin to rebuild confidence in our electoral system. I also introduced legislation moving the date for the mail ballots out to a reasonable time frame to ensure there is enough time for every vote to count.

Q: What are your thoughts on the state budget process? What changes, if any, would you support so that the budget is enacted in a timely manner?

A: Pennsylvania's budget process needs more accountability, transparency and urgency. I introduced bipartisan legislation to require lawmakers to remain in session if a state budget is not enacted by July 31 - providing an additional month for the budget to be worked out. Families, schools, counties, and nonprofits should not be left waiting because Harrisburg cannot do its job on time. We need a budget process that is timely, disciplined, and responsible and the general public deserves to be upset with their elected officials when this does not happen.

Q: Should the state legislature enact laws concerning the impacts on water, energy, or land use from the development and operation of data centers? Would state regulation of data center development and operation interfere with the authority of municipalities to establish ordinances under the MPC (Municipal Planning Code)?

A: As a wife & mother, I understand the importance of growth and investment for our region, and I also know we have a responsibility to protect residents and our natural resources. That's why as State Representative, I supported legislation mandating large data center projects to submit advanced reporting prior to construction. Large facilities use significant amounts of water, and local communities should have access to planning, transparency, and protections to ensure that development doesn't negatively impact them. As a crucial component of this process, I also believe local governments must continue to have a strong voice in these decisions as outlined in the current code.

DISTRICT 121

DEMOCRAT

JESSICA MCCLAY

COUNTY: Luzerne

OCCUPATION: Insurance Adjuster

EDUCATION: Bachelors in Education

QUALIFICATIONS: Wilkes-Barre City Council since 2024

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE: mcclayforpa.com

Q: What do you see as the most pressing issues facing residents of your district, and how would you address them?

A: My constituents are struggling financially to meet their basic needs like paying for housing, utility bills, groceries, prescription drugs, and health care premiums. I want to lower these costs, so my constituents are able to afford to live here.

Q: What changes, if any, would you support to enable better access, ensure security, and support the processes of our elections?

A: Luzerne County has had a unique history of having election procedure mistakes as a result of mismanagement of resources and materials like having enough access to ballots and having incorrect names on the ballot. I believe that improving our local infrastructure to prevent future mistakes and protecting access to mail in ballots is essential to our democracy.

Q: What are your thoughts on the state budget process? What changes, if any, would you support so that the budget is enacted in a timely manner?

A: While it is incredibly unfortunate that the state budget took months to negotiate, the state desperately needed new education funding for our public schools. I think the issue our state has is that we do not have enough revenue for our state to fund our critical programs and this resulted in the budget fight. To prevent future budget fights over deficits, we should increase small businesses in the state to provide more tax revenue and lower our budget deficit so we have enough money to fund these programs.

Q: Should the state legislature enact laws concerning the impacts on water, energy, or land use from the development and operation

of data centers? Would state regulation of data center development and operation interfere with the authority of municipalities to establish ordinances under the MPC (Municipal Planning Code)?

A: Yes, I believe we should have some restrictions on data center development like mandating data centers pay for their their own electricity and report the amount of water usage to local municipalities and the state government. I believe the state can enact regulations on data centers without undercutting the municipalities ability to regulate data center by allowing the state government to enact model ordinances for municipalities to base their regulations off of.

MICHAEL STADULIS

COUNTY: Luzerne

OCCUPATION: Retired EMT-Paramedic

EDUCATION: High School Diploma; some college coursework

QUALIFICATIONS: I am a retired EMT-Paramedic with over 30 years of service. I've seen how rising costs, underfunded schools, and limited healthcare access impact working families. I am running to lower costs, strengthen our schools, and make healthcare more affordable.

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE: michaelstadulis4sr.netlify.app

Q: What do you see as the most pressing issues facing residents of your district, and how would you address them?

A: Residents are feeling the strain of rising costs, underfunded schools, and barriers to affordable healthcare. Families are struggling to keep up with everyday expenses like housing, groceries, and utility bills. I would work to lower costs by reducing utility expenses through policies that stabilize energy rates, increase oversight of providers, and expand energy efficiency programs. I would also support efforts to make food more affordable by strengthening local agriculture, improving access to grocery stores, and ensuring families can access available support. At the same time, I will fight for fair school funding and expand access to affordable healthcare so families can thrive.

Q: What changes, if any, would you support to enable better access, ensure security, and support the processes of our elections?

A: We must ensure elections are both accessible and secure so every eligible voter can participate with confidence. I strongly support expanding access to secure ballot drop boxes and mail-in voting, and instituting true early voting while maintaining clear, consistent rules so voters understand the process. We should invest in modern election infrastructure, strengthen cybersecurity protections, and provide robust training for election workers to ensure elections run smoothly and fairly. Improving voter education with clear, timely information is also critical. Protecting access, strengthening security, and building public trust must go hand in hand.

Q: What are your thoughts on the state budget process? What changes, if any, would you support so that the budget is enacted in a timely manner?

A: The state budget process should be more transparent, predictable, and timely. Late budgets create uncertainty for schools, local governments, and nonprofits that rely on state funding. I support earlier, more open negotiations with clear benchmarks and deadlines to keep the process on track. Increasing transparency so the public understands how decisions are made will help build trust. The goal should be to pass a responsible, balanced budget on time that reflects the needs of communities across the state.

Q: Should the state legislature enact laws concerning the impacts on water, energy, or land use from the development and operation of data centers? Would state regulation of data center development and operation interfere with the authority of municipalities to establish ordinances under the MPC (Municipal Planning Code)?

A: As data centers expand, the state must take a proactive role in addressing their impacts on water, energy, and land use. I support strong, enforceable standards to protect water resources, require energy efficiency, and ensure responsible siting that does not harm

communities or open space. These projects can place significant strain on local infrastructure and natural resources, and that must be addressed upfront. At the same time, municipalities must retain their authority under the Municipal Planning Code. State policy should set firm environmental protections while preserving local control. Growth cannot come at the expense of our environment or public health.

REPUBLICAN

MICHAEL HAROSTOCK
Candidate has not yet responded.

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE WILKES-BARRE AREA

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Additional Resources:

National and statewide online voters guide: vote411.org

League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania: palwv.org

League of Women Voters of the Wilkes-Barre Area Voter Information: lwvwba.org/voterinfo.html