

**LIBERTY CITY LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER DEMOCRATIC CLUB
OUTFRONT! PAC**

2008 PRIMARY ELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

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Office you are seeking: State Senate, 1st District

Community

Who advises you on LGBT issues?

My Campaign Manager, Renee Gilinger, my Campaign Chair, Laurie Fitzpatrick, and my many friends in the community, including two members of my Finance Committee.

Do you have or have you had any openly LGBT employees on your campaign staff or at your place of business?

Yes. My Campaign Manager, Renee Gilinger, is a long-time activist in the LGBT community.

Do you support the continued and/or expanded funding and support of LGBT community events, such as the various pride events sponsored by organizations in the Greater Philadelphia area?

Yes. The Pride Festivals events are some of my favorite in the city.

Civil Rights

For Federal Candidates: Do you support enactment of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (HR-3685) providing employment protections to gay, lesbian and bisexual but not transgender employees, or do you support a more inclusive bill similar to HR 2015 that includes transgender individuals in these protections from discrimination? Please explain your answer.

For Statewide Candidates: Do you support PA-HB-1400 or PA-SB-761 which would amend the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act to prohibit discrimination of gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals in employment, housing and public accommodation based on their sexual orientation or gender identity or gender expression?

Yes. I provided written testimony to the State Government Committee in support of this important legislation. In addition, I would support legislation that added the LGBT community to the State's Hate Crime law.

Do you support the City of Philadelphia's actions regarding the Boy Scouts of America Cradle of Liberty Council's occupancy of city-owned property, and would you support similar actions towards other groups or organizations determined to be in violation of the Fair Practices Ordinance

Yes. While I recognize that the Boy Scouts have provided important services and activities for the City's youth, I do not believe that any organization that actively discriminates for any reason should receive taxpayer subsidies.

As progressive political organizations, one of our principles is the support of reproductive freedom. What is your position on a women's right to choose? Do you support the continued enforcement of the Roe v. Wade decision?

Yes and I would strongly oppose any legislation negatively impacting a woman's right to choose. In fact, I volunteer as a patient escort for the Philadelphia Women's Center.

Do you support extending the right to marry to same-sex couples?

Yes. However, I also recognize that much of Pennsylvania's state legislature is conservative. Recognizing the political circumstances, I would also support civil unions, which should extend all rights and responsibilities that exist for heterosexual married couples to same-sex couples.

If you do not support same-sex marriage would you support extending **all** the rights and responsibilities that exist for heterosexual married couples to same-sex couples?

Many of the civil rights the LGBT community is pursuing are decided at the state level. What legislation would you introduce to promote the rights of the LGBT community? What other ways would you work to insure that LGBT Pennsylvanians are treated equally?

I would sponsor legislation that added actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity or expression to the State's Hate Crime law. In addition, I would sponsor legislation that would exempt committed same-sex couples to the state portion of the realty transfer tax.

Anti-Violence

What education, training, policies and procedures would you put in place to assure that members of the LGBT community are treated fairly with respect to the law and in a protective, respectful way during interactions with police officers throughout Pennsylvania (by both local and state police)?

To assure appropriate interactions, police officers, particularly new cadets, must be appropriately trained and educated about the specific needs and dangers that the LGBT community faces. I also strongly support the LGBT advisory committee.

Would you require reporting of acts of intimidation, aggression or violence which were thought to have been perpetrated based on a person's perceived or actual sexual orientation or gender identity? Specifically, what processes would you put in place to ensure active investigation, prosecution and punishment of such hate related crimes committed against people because of their perceived or actual sexual orientation or gender identity?

Yes. The first step must be to extend the State's Hate Crime legislation to include the LGBT community. In addition, we must not only educate the police, but also educate District Attorneys and the Attorney General. As such, I would support the creation of an LGBT advocate to communicate concerns with all levels of law enforcement.

Healthcare

How would you act to assure proper sensitivity training and education for public health professionals, administration and staff as related to treatment of members of the LGBT?

Education. Health professionals, like law enforcement officials, must be properly educated on the specific needs and concerns of the LGBT community.

Do you support funding for needle exchange programs?

Yes.

What public health education programs would you advocate to foster a more complete understanding of the unique health needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people?

I support the expansion of sexual education in schools to deal with sexual orientation and gender identity. In addition, I believe schools should recognize Gay History month and we must continue to support Pride events that provide access and education to members of the general public.

Would you support condom distribution in Pennsylvania's jails, detention centers, correctional facilities or prisons?

Yes.

Would you support a state healthcare plan that offers sex reassignment surgery and other gender identity health coverage to state employees?

Yes. However, health coverage for state employees is derived from complex negotiations between the Administration and the unions. As a State Senator, I will not have (and should not have) direct say over these negotiations. Having said that, I would happily support any effort the Governor would make to include this coverage.

Family

Would you support a statewide bill that requires companies that obtain state contracts to offer domestic partnership benefits to their employees?

Yes.

LGBT youth are sometimes rejected by their biological families or their foster families because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. How would you devise and implement a statewide plan for the child welfare system to address the particular issues and needs of the youth and their foster families?

Foster families must be educated about the unique needs of LGBT youth. Ideally, the State would implement an education program for all foster parents. However, recognizing the difficulty of implementing such a program, I believe that willing families should be identified and appropriately trained.

Do you think LGBT adults should be encouraged to become foster/adoptive parents to children in Pennsylvania who need homes?

Absolutely.

Will you act to offer domestic violence shelter services to gay men?

Yes. I also believe that current providers should be educated in the specific needs and problems that gay men face in abusive relationships.

Will you act to offer programs in homeless shelters to address the unique needs of transgendered people?

Yes. Separate sleeping quarters should be provided for transgender individuals and providers should be educated on why such accommodations are important.

Youth

The Philadelphia School District has in place Policy 102 which prohibits discrimination against faculty and students on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Currently this policy is not enforced uniformly across the district. What steps would you take to help insure uniform implementation of Policy 102? What was your response to the uproar regarding including, "Gay History Month," on the official School District calendar?

Specific problems should be brought to the District's attention immediately so that they may properly address the issue. In addition, I would support an LGBT advocate in the District to act as a liaison between LGBT youth, teachers, school district officials and parents.

I believe the uproar was inappropriate but the only way to address this issue long-term is through education. Children and their parents must have access to information to dissuade long-term prejudices.

Do you support reality and community-based school sex education, HIV/AIDS education and prevention programs that are an alternative to abstinence only education? If yes, would it include the following? (Please check all that apply).

- A) Birth Control *Yes.*
- B) Safer Sex education *Yes.*
- C) Condom distribution *Yes.*
- D) Different sexual orientations *Yes.*
- E) Gender identity *Yes.*

Would you introduce legislation to provide statewide financial support of community centers such as the Attic or other organizations serving youth?

Yes. In the meantime, I will do what I can to provide appropriate funding to these organizations on an ad hoc basis.

Studies show that LGBT students experience more harassment and violence at school than straight students. LGBT students are more likely to cut school or drop out because they are afraid for their safety. How would you propose to address the violence against LGBT youth?

Education. Again, the importance of having a specific individual for LGBT youth to contact to discuss these problems is vital. In addition, school administrators and teachers must also be better educated on the issues facing LGBT youth.

Seniors

Would you create establishing programs and services to address the unique needs of LGBT Senior Citizens? If so, what type of services do you envision, and how would you propose to fund and implement these services?

Yes. I would support funding for either a center dedicated specifically for LGBT seniors or programs for LGBT seniors in the William Way Community Center or another senior center. I would also support funding for housing for LGBT seniors.

Economic Development

Would you support a requirement that all state departments have specific recruitment plans for members of the LGBT community?

Yes but I also believe stronger inclusionary policies should be created not only for the LGBT community but also for minorities and women.

How would you work to assure that LGBT owned and operated businesses receive equal opportunities in business development, lending practices or government grants for economic revitalization?

There are several programs designed to encourage minority and female entrepreneurship. These programs should be extended to include the LGBT business community.

Do you support state departments and quasi-agencies including the LGBT community in their diversity hiring plans including media advertising and job fairs within the community?

Yes.

Please return by Friday February 22nd via e-mail to matt@libertycity.org

Or via mail to:

Liberty City Lesbian and Gay Democratic Club

C/o Matthew Woodcock

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