

# RECLAIM PHILADELPHIA

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I, James R. Roebuck, certify that the information provided on this questionnaire is accurate and the opinions stated here accurately reflect my own positions.

Please complete, sign and return this via email in both Word Doc and PDF format to [Kelly@reclaimphiladelphia.org](mailto:Kelly@reclaimphiladelphia.org) on or before January 2, 2020.

## INTRODUCTION

This is a two-part questionnaire. The first section includes ten questions that are intended to be richer questions with longer answers. They are intended to help the members of Reclaim Philadelphia understand how you view the world and the political issues that face Pennsylvania. As you might expect, these questions are big and broad. Please limit your answers to each question to no more than 250 words. The second section of questions are "yes" or "no" questions, which are NOT meant to be answered at length. Please only answer "yes" or "no" to these questions. There is space at the end of the questionnaire to clarify any response.

**PART I - LONGFORM QUESTIONS - Please respond in 250 words or less.**

1. What do you value most about the district you are running to represent and why do you want to represent it in Harrisburg as State Representative/State Senator?

I have lived in West Philadelphia all my life. I value the diversity and quality of life in the 188th District. Over the years that I have been State Representative, I have established strong, active relationships with numerous constituencies and have been a strong voice for their interests both in Philadelphia and in Harrisburg

2. Do you regard basic needs of Pennsylvanians, including food, housing, health care, and education, as human rights or as commodities most efficiently distributed by economic markets? How would this look in a truly just world? How would you begin to fight for that world in your first 100 days in office?

I have always worked for the basic needs of Pennsylvanians and my efforts will continue from the first day of my new term in office.

3. In recent years, Pennsylvania has had enormous trouble passing a budget. What are your budgetary priorities, what revenue sources would you seek, and how would you move these measures through the Republican-dominated legislature?

I will continue to fight to prioritize state funding for education, community economic development and job creation and better health. In the Education Committee, I have established a good working relationship with my Republican counterpart, and we have been successful in finding common ground on major issues.

I do believe, however, that we need to focus on electing Democrats to Republican seats, rather than fighting over safe Democratic seats.

4. Philadelphia remains the most impoverished major city and about 75% of our residents lack bachelor's degrees. What policies would you implement to ensure that decent, high-paying jobs created here are accessible to the majority of our population, not just the relatively well-educated and already well off?

I do not believe that our poverty problems will be resolved by solely emphasizing increasing the number of Philadelphia residents with college degrees. We need to make sure that students in high school get clear pathways to jobs. Many of these jobs can be gained through career and technical education which provide a solid foundation to build successful lives.

5. What policies would you introduce and/or sponsor to expand and strengthen the labor movement in Pennsylvania? How would you fortify existing unions in the event of a state or nationwide right-to-work law? How would you expand worker representation and power in sectors with low union density?

I have always been a strong supporter of labor and I will continue to be one in my next legislative term.

6. Philadelphia's immigrant communities are threatened by increased ICE deportation efforts, police brutality and misconduct, and discriminatory treatment by our criminal justice system. What will you do to ensure that Pennsylvania residents are safe from ICE?

We need to take a strong stand to protect immigrant communities and oppose increased ICE Deportation efforts and police brutality, misconduct discriminatory treatment in our criminal justice system. As state officials we need to work with our federal representatives to establish policies that will keep all residents safe from ICE.

7. What is your opinion on privatized infrastructure and/or public-private partnerships for development or maintenance of public infrastructure, such as roads and water works?

Given the rapidly deteriorating conditions of our public infrastructure it would be helpful to pool resources to reverse that process.

8. Pennsylvania faces a rental housing crisis. According to the 2017 American Community Survey, 22.3% of Pennsylvania homeowners are cost-burdened and 44.8% of Pennsylvania renters are cost-burdened. Given the housing crisis in Pennsylvania in general, and in Philadelphia in particular, what meaningful measures will you take and push for so that all residents have access to safe, affordable housing?

I support innovative programs that will create better housing options for Philadelphia residents and preserve economic diversity in city neighborhoods. The quality of life in my legislative district is affirmed by its diversity. Yet that quality is being threatened by the pressures of gentrification.

9. Given the reality of the climate crisis, do you support a Green New Deal (GND) for Pennsylvania? If so, please outline how you will craft this, what would be included, and how adaptation measures for communities most impacted will be centered.

I support a Green New Deal (GND) for Pennsylvania. I've always had a strong pro-environmental record receiving a 100% rating on evaluations and the strong endorsement of environmental groups.

10. What measures can be taken by the Pennsylvania legislature to put an end to overpolicing, militarization of police, police brutality, and lack of police accountability, especially in black and brown communities that are unfairly and disproportionately targeted? How would you support these measures?

We stand at the point of the institution of a new police administration in the City of Philadelphia. Hopefully we have learned from our past mistakes and we can look to new leadership to ensure that positive change is made.

**PART II - YES OR NO QUESTIONS**

1. Will you support legislation to provide universal child and elder care for Pennsylvanians?  
**YES [ X ] NO [ ]**
2. Will you support legislation for single-payer health care that covers all individuals, regardless of documentation status? **YES [ X ] NO [ ]**
3. The average student loan debt in Pennsylvania is \$33,935, one of the highest in the country. Will you support legislation to make the PASSHE system and Commonwealth colleges tuition and fee free and provide cost of living stipends to students who are residents of Pennsylvania? **YES [ X ] NO [ ]**
4. Do you support a moratorium on all new charter schools? **YES [ X ] NO [ ]**
5. Do you support the use of public school vouchers to pay for private school tuition?  
**YES [ ] NO [ X ]**
6. Should all state educational revenue streams be funneled through the Fair Funding Formula for our public schools? **YES [ X ] NO [ ]**
7. Do you support the Keystone Opportunity Zone program? **YES [ X ] NO [ ]**
8. Do you support tax breaks to lure or retain businesses? **YES [ X ] NO [ ]**
9. Do you support the use of eminent domain by corporations and businesses?  
**YES [ ] NO [ X ]**
10. Do you support a ban on fracking in Pennsylvania? **YES [ X ] NO [ ]**
11. Will you support legislation to mandate that pensions increase each year to match with the average increase in cost of living expenses? **YES [ X ] NO [ ]**
12. Will you commit to introducing/sponsoring legislation to expand Medicaid to fully fund medically assisted treatment, mental health, and community-based programs to support people struggling with addictions and their families in Philadelphia?  
**YES [ X ] NO [ ]**
13. Do you support the permanent loss of a distribution license as the penalty for overproduction and overprescription of opioids? **YES [ X ] NO [ ]**
14. Will you support legislation to ensure that medically assisted treatment is readily available to people who are incarcerated? **YES [ X ] NO [ ]**
15. Will you commit to supporting safe-consumption sites in Pennsylvania?  
**YES [ X ] NO [ ]**

16. From the moment a landlord files a claim in landlord-tenant court, a tenant is saddled with an eviction record that makes it nearly impossible to obtain safe and decent housing. This is true regardless of the outcome of an eviction claim. Will you support legislation to:
- a. Expunge all eviction records that do not result in a judgment against the tenant?  
**YES [ X ] NO [ ]**
  - b. Seal all open eviction cases upon satisfaction of the judgment?  
**YES [ X ] NO [ ]**
  - c. Expunge all eviction records five (5) years from the day of filing?  
**YES [ X ] NO [ ]**
17. Will you support legislation to create a state-wide tenant bill of rights, including but not limited to a right to legal counsel, full funding for tenant legal aid, and just cause eviction laws? **YES [ X ] NO [ ]**
18. Will you support legislation to enact rent control in Pennsylvania, limiting yearly increases in rent to 3% (including in the case of vacancies). **YES [ X ] NO [ ]**
19. Do you commit to enshrining in law employment and discrimination protections for the LGBTQIA+ and immigrant communities? **YES [ X ] NO [ ]**
20. Will you support an end to the death penalty in all cases? **YES [ ] NO [ X ]**
21. Will you support an end to all felony disenfranchisement in Pennsylvania, in accordance with the laws in Maine and Vermont? **YES [ X ] NO [ ]**
22. Will you support the decriminalization of sex work, for both sex workers and patrons?  
**YES [ X ] NO [ ]**
23. Will you commit to protecting reproductive rights, by supporting an end to the Hyde Amendment? **YES [ X ] NO [ ]**

**PART III - ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATION**

If there's anything else our membership should know about you or if you feel the need to provide additional information about any of your above responses, do so here. Please keep your response to a total of 100 words or less.

I am grateful for the support I received from RECLAIM Philadelphia in the 2018 election.

I trust that my legislative actions have justified your support and I look forward to working with you in the 2020-2022 legislative term.