

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

2008 PRIMARY ELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

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Office you are seeking Representative in the General Assembly, 182nd District

Community

Who advises you on LGBT issues?

A variety of friends and neighbors, but in particular Ron Powers who manages health programs in the LGBT community. Ron and I have been friends and neighbors for 10 years and have served together on our condo board.

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

I currently have no paid campaign staff, but among my core supporters and contributors are many openly gay, lesbian, and bisexual neighbors. Almost everyone that volunteered with me at Outfest is gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

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?

LGBT community events make up a critical part of the celebration of diversity in our district and I would use my office and influence as State Representative to support their continuation and funding.

Civil Rights

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?

I completely support and will vote for HB 1400 so that it will be illegal to discriminate in employment, housing, and public accommodation based upon sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

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.

I support the City of Philadelphia's enforcement of their non-discrimination policy in the Fair Practices Ordinance which has led to the eviction notice to the Boy Scouts of America Cradle of Liberty Council. I would support similar enforcements. Discrimination cannot be taxpayer subsidized.

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?

I support a woman's right to choose unobstructed and unaltered, as defined by EMILY's List.

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

Yes. As a married woman I look forward to bringing my taxpayer funded certificate of marriage to Harrisburg and engaging in the education necessary to move legal same-sex marriage forward in Pennsylvania

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?

I support same-sex marriage.

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?

Members of the LGBT community are my neighbors, friends, and supporters. As law-abiding, tax-paying residents of the Commonwealth they deserve all of the same rights as hetero residents. My priority as a legislator is to approach all legislation and initiatives in an inclusive manner, remembering that all of my neighbors and constituents deserve consideration. As I work on the variety of legislation that the General Assembly considers, I will judge the fairness and inclusiveness of each, especially if it concerns rights descending from marriage. If the legislation does not allow for the inclusion of committed gay couples or LGBT community members, I will ensure that adjustments are made to make the legislation inclusive.

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)?

Philadelphia Police and Pennsylvania Troopers participate in sensitivity training and are aware of their department policies and procedures. The missing component is enforcement of policies, accountability, and transparency. The handling of the unfortunate, possibly criminal, death of Nizah Morris is a perfect example of this broken process. The greatest barrier to getting to the truth lies in the lack of transparency and accountability among the PPD leadership.

As an organizer for Washington Square West Town Watch and a frequent PDAC participant, I know that many of our local Police Officers have great respect for their work and their constituents. I believe that they take appropriate measures to be sensitive to the needs of all our residents. At the same time, I don't believe that citizens – especially LGBT community members – have enough access to the truth so that reactions can be fair and improvements can be made when needed to training, policies, and procedures.

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?

I would encourage reporting of acts of attempted or perpetrated hate crimes based on a person's perceived or actual sexual orientation or gender identify, but in the interest of privacy I would not require full reporting. In some cases, disclosure also may put a victim in danger and I would not want to discourage anyone from reporting a crime.

I would require full disclosure of any and all complaint data, complaint details, and accompanying evidence to a third party such as the PA Human Rights Commission. Also, the local and state police should have annual reviews of their training, policies, and procedures with changes based upon lessons learned from the most recent interactions.

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?

I support the current plan of the Department of Behavioral Health to flag health care providers as 'LGBT friendly' based upon their policies, practices, and experiences and would encourage the expansion of this idea. In the competitive health care market this will provide members of the LGBT community with some comfort and give providers the motivation to participate in training and to make necessary changes.

Do you support funding for needle exchange programs?

I support funding for needle exchange programs such as Prevention Point Philadelphia that combine harm reduction and support services. Their model is cost-effective, reduces the number of syringes on the street, prevents countless health complications, respects neighborhoods, and reduces a barrier to recovery.

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?

Medical schools are currently not required to address the unique health needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in their curriculum. Some schools do participate in training provided by medical professionals and social workers associated with organizations such as the Mazzoni Center. I would sponsor legislation that requires Pennsylvania medical schools to provide a minimum number of hours of training in these specific areas.

At the same time, I would encourage the expansion of identifying providers as "LGBT friendly" in directories so that providers would have a market-driven reason to comply and members of the LGBT community would have clear, comforting choices.

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

Yes, I support this low cost risk reduction solution.

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

I support a state healthcare plan that covers hormonal medical intervention and other gender identity health services to state employees. More globally, I support universal, single-payer health coverage which is the most efficient way to provide services including sex reassignment surgery and other gender identity health services to all Pennsylvanians.

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?

My goal, now and in the future, is to prevent abuse and neglect by providing children and youth with safe environments and people. Since most local funding for family and foster services comes from the State, it is very appropriate that the State attach requirements regarding the diversity of services to be provided. As State Representative I would propose that requirements be attached to funding which specify that programs be available to support all youth, including LGBT youth. In particular I would encourage the continuation and expansion of service models such as the family counseling services provided by Mazzoni Center which helps families to work through changes associated with having LGBT family members, as well as providing safe community houses such as Bethel Home.

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

Yes. I believe that foster and adoptive parents should be judged on the quality of the home and homelife they can provide, not on sexual orientation or gender identity.

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

Yes.

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

Yes. In particular I would act to expand Philadelphia's policy of providing shelter services based upon the gender with which someone identifies.

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?

The Philadelphia School District has a habit of inconsistent adherence which has led to the underreporting of violence and discrimination in the schools. Since some Principals have been negligent in reporting all incidents, the teachers and students need an independent source to report problems. The current hotline, 215-400-STOP is staffed and managed by the School District. As State Representative, I would encourage the School Reform Commission to expand the scope of the hotline to include discrimination and to move its management to a third party. The goal is to address complaints as they come in, as well as to collect data on which schools and which school management is underreporting and/or not adhering to policies such as Policy 102.

As someone who lives happily among LGBT community members, it is always disappointing to be reminded of the intolerance and discrimination that exists in some people. It is the School District's responsibility to prepare students for life outside of the classroom and that includes meeting people of different colors, abilities, and sexual orientations. The acknowledgement of Gay History Month and other 'dedicated' months is a way for the schools to start conversations about diversity. I am confident that the complaining parents were a small group and that the uproar would have died down. Unfortunately, the School District's decision to remove any mention of any diversity month celebration halts learning and conversation.

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?

I believe that funding should be available at the state level to meet the youth support needs of the LGBT community as determined by each local community. The funding needs to be flexible because a service model that works in one community (i.e. The Attic) may not be appropriate in a smaller, more rural community.

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?
As mentioned earlier, The Philadelphia School District has a habit of inconsistent adherence to policy which has led to the underreporting of violence and discrimination in the schools. LGBT youth need support in order to feel safe in school and to encourage incident reporting. Without incident reporting, neither the victims nor the perpetrators can get the assistance they may need.

The continued growth of Gay-Straight Alliances (GSA) in all of the public schools is key to providing support and encouragement. As State Representative I would look for ways to

support the activities of the GSAs. Also, I would encourage the School Reform Commission to move management of its violence reporting hotline to a third party. The goal is to address complaints as they come in, as well as to collect data so that training and intervention can be faster and more targeted.

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?

Members of the Senior LGBT community are less likely to have immediate family in their lives. As the general population ages, children and close relatives are the support system that Senior Citizens need in order to remain healthy and safe in their homes. It is most pivotal to fill the role that family would provide in a Senior Citizen's everyday life – providing safe transportation, managing prescriptions, adjusting housing to accommodate physical limitations, etc.

The United Way of SEPA has a community impact plan and a network of services designed to provide in-home health and homemaking services to Senior Citizens. As State Representative I would look to expand the current model of the United Way of SEPA to insure that it is both sensitive to and available to members of the Senior LGBT community. Then I would encourage through funding motivation and advocacy the expansion of such a model throughout the Commonwealth.

Economic Development

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

As State Representative, I would support a requirement that state departments have specific recruitment plans involving the LGBT community. Departments need to recruit so that their hired ranks represent the diversity of the Commonwealth.

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?

As State Representative, I would look to measure the current participation of LGBT owned and operated businesses in state-related economic opportunities. This would require a commissioned study in conjunction with a state-wide LGBT group in order to baseline participation and understand the barriers and patterns. The results of this study would guide my proposals for increasing participating.

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?

Absolutely. In Pennsylvania the LGBT community needs to be recognized as a vital part of our diverse population.