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Steel-City Stonewall Democrats

Working for Equality for ALL Pennsylvanians

2010 Commonwealth Candidate Questionnaire

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OFFICE SOUGHT: Governor

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1. Describe your familiarity with Pittsburgh's LGBT Community including any receptions, events, parades or other functions that you have attended that were sponsored by an LGBT organization.

As a member of Pittsburgh City Council, State Senator, and now as Auditor General, I have been open-minded about issues impacting the LGBT community. I was also honored to have been recommended for election by the Stonewall Democrats in 2008.

2. Pennsylvania's Hate Crimes Law does not currently include sexual orientation or gender identity as protected classes. Would you support an amendment to the law to include LGBT-bias hate crimes?

Yes. I will continue to support efforts to strengthen state laws to protect the LGBT community from violence. As a State Senator, I introduced an amendment to the Ethnic Intimidation Act to increase sentences for bias or hate crimes motivated by the victim's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity; such an amendment was later enacted into law. I also introduced legislation to require the Attorney General and the State Police to collect and report statistics on crimes motivated by the victim's sexual orientation or gender identity.

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3. Please discuss your views regarding state-level legislation to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression in employment, housing, and public accommodations. Do you support HB300? Would you support its equivalent in the PA Senate?

I will continue to support efforts to strengthen state anti-discrimination laws to protect the LGBT community, including through House Bill 300 and any equivalent in the State Senate. When I was a State Senator, I introduced, co-sponsored, and voted for many such bills. I also introduced my own legislation to amend the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act and the Pennsylvania Fair Educational Opportunities Act to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

4. Hospitals often refuse to discuss end-of-life issues with same-sex partners, GLBT senior citizens are often discriminated against by health providers who fail to recognize their relationships and transgender people may be afraid to call emergency services for fear of being ridiculed. Would you support government regulations and training that would stop this discrimination?

Yes.

5. Do you support domestic partner benefits for government and governmental agency employees?

Yes.

6. Discuss your thoughts on marriage equality for same-sex couples.

Same-sex couples in committed relationships should have the same basic legal rights as other families, such as tax benefits, access to hospital visitation, bereavement leave, health insurance, etc.

7. Discuss your thoughts on government's role in shaping school curricula for sex education that includes instruction on safe sex and the use of condoms and birth control.

I would be interested in discussing this issue with your organization and all stakeholders. I believe in local control of education, particularly with regard to sensitive issues such as this in which there are a variety of appropriate approaches that might differ from community to community.

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8. Would you support improving Pennsylvania's current anti-bullying law to specifically include bullying on the basis of real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity?

Yes. As Governor, I will continue my focus on school safety. Children cannot learn, and teachers cannot teach, in an unsafe or disruptive environment. Anti-bullying initiatives are an important component of school safety and society in general.

One of my goals as Auditor General was to use my professional background and experience as a safety engineer to develop and conduct audits to promote modern, safe, and healthy schools throughout the Commonwealth. Based on the results of a statewide survey, our department developed a school safety and security checklist that we began implementing with our cyclical school audits. We also conducted a special performance audit of the Department of Education's duties and responsibilities with regard to safe schools initiatives. We found that the Department of Education has adopted a hands-off, reactive approach to the task of addressing violence in Pennsylvania schools, impeding its ability to quickly identify dangerous schools and target limited state resources to assist schools that need the most help. In particular, the Department of Education was failing to enforce Act 26, which the General Assembly passed in 1995 and I voted for as a State Senator to address violence in Pennsylvania schools. As Governor, I will make sure that the Department of Education fully complies with the law and makes school safety, including anti-bullying initiatives, a priority.

9. Do you support state subsidization of needle exchanges as a way of reducing new Hepatitis & HIV infections?

I would be interested in discussing this issue with your organization and all stakeholders.

10. Currently, both locally and statewide, LGBT citizens are underrepresented on Boards and Commissions. Would you advocate on behalf of qualified LGBT citizens who are interested in appointments?

Yes. My administration will lead by example in hiring, appointing, and working with members of the LGBT community. I welcome and encourage the participation of every qualified Pennsylvanian at all levels of government. Our challenges are too big and numerous to exclude anyone from the efforts to face and overcome them. I am open-minded to suggestions for appointments to boards and commissions.

11. Another divisive issue confronting our country is the issue of abortion. Please discuss your position on abortion and any thoughts you have on the current abortion debate?

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I am a pro-life Democrat and support the current state law. Because I strongly believe that the right to life must also mean the right to a decent life for both mother and child, I have always placed a priority on strengthening health care, education, social services, and other important programs. I have also been a strong proponent of adoption. I have served on a statewide adoption task force, and I chair the annual Genesis-Riverside Run for Adoption in Pittsburgh. This event has played a major role in promoting adoption as an alternative to abortion. My wife Nancy and I are the proud parents of two adopted children, Luke and Sara.

12. What other endorsements have you received? Are you supported by any unions?

As this campaign proceeds, I will pursue and welcome the endorsement and financial support of any individual or organization that is interested in having a Governor with a demonstrated record of real reform. I have been grateful for the past support of individuals, community leaders, public officials, labor unions, veterans, and organizations that represent the interests of Pennsylvania workers, families, and taxpayers. I will continue to look to these groups for support for my campaign for Governor.

In my two successful campaigns for Auditor General in 2004 and 2008, I was endorsed by nearly every major newspaper, union, and other organization that made an endorsement. I will aggressively pursue their support again.

In this campaign, we have announced the following endorsements so far:

- Henry Nicholas, President, National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees, AFSCME, AFL-CIO, and President, District 1199c of the national union, which represents 13,000 members in the Philadelphia area
- Pennsylvania Restaurant Association
- Pennsylvania Business Council, PEG PAC
- Armstrong County Democratic Committee
- Cambria County Democratic Committee
- Fulton County Democratic Committee
- Lackawanna County Democratic Committee
- Montour County Democratic Committee
- Schuylkill County Democratic Committee
- Warren County Democratic Committee
- Dennis Balbac, District Leader of Lebanon County Democratic Committee District 4, member of PennAg Democrats, and, like Jack, a Vietnam veteran
- Chris Benson, Executive Board Member, Lycoming County Democratic Committee; Executive Board Member and Corresponding Secretary, Pennsylvania Young Democrats; Immediate Past President, Lycoming County Young Democrats
- Jessie Bloom, Chair, Lycoming County Democratic Committee
- Diane Bowman, Chair, Dauphin County Democratic Committee

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- Jim Boylan, Democratic State Committeeman, Northumberland County
- Henry “Butch” Coira, Chair, Montour County Democratic Committee
- Robert Crampsie, Carbon County Controller
- Mary Jane Dellafiora, Democratic State Committeewoman, Indiana County
- Linda DiCindio, Democratic State Committeewoman, Schuylkill County
- Germaine Donahue, Chair, Sullivan County Democratic Committee and small business owner
- Charles M. Dries, Democratic State Committeeman, Schuylkill County
- Douglas Engelman, Executive Committee Member, Lycoming County Democratic Committee
- Ron Fairman, Acting Chair, Indiana County Democratic Committee
- Guy Ferguson, Chair, Bedford County Democratic Committee
- Richard Gahr, Executive Committee Member, Lycoming County Democratic Committee
- Rheon Gelvin, Chair, Fulton County Democratic Committee
- Charles Getz, Carbon County Commissioner
- Peggy Grove, Democratic State Committeewoman, Dauphin County Democratic Committee; Chair, Democratic State Committee South Central Caucus
- Zach Hause, Chair, Cameron County Democratic Committee; Director of Political Affairs, Pennsylvania College Democrats
- Sam Hoff, Treasurer, Lycoming County Democratic Committee
- Lu Inzana, Chair, Jefferson County Democratic Committee
- Frank Jacobs, Chair, Carbon County Democratic Committee
- Phil Jones, Cameron County Commissioner
- Chris Katella, President, Clarion University Young Democrats and Chair of Students for Wagner
- Ed Kleha, Chair, Schuylkill County Democratic Committee
- Barb Kline, Cambria County Treasurer
- Monica Kline, a leader of Lebanon County Democratic Committee District 4 and daughter of the late Lt. Gov. Ernie Kline
- Larry Kriess, Chair, Butler County Democratic Committee
- Greg Leathers, Chair, Greene County Democratic Committee
- Jeremy Melber, Jim Thorpe Borough Councilman, member of the Executive Board of the Carbon County Democratic Committee, and Vice President of the Jim Thorpe Democratic Club
- Bill Miller, Chair, Clarion County Democratic Committee
- Tim Nieman, a leader of Lebanon County Democratic Committee District 4
- Paul Niglio, Chair, Northumberland County Democratic Committee
- William O’Gurek, Chair, Carbon County Board of Commissioners
- Jay Purdy, Democratic State Committeeman, Dauphin County Democratic Committee; former Lower Paxton Township Supervisor
- Dick Schreckengost, Chair, Armstrong County Democratic Committee
- Ronald Sheehan, Carbon County Treasurer
- Chris Tarsa, Chair, Lebanon County Democratic Committee
- John Vatauk, Chair, Somerset County Democratic Committee; Vice Chair, Somerset County Board of Commissioners

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- Charlie Vizzini, veteran and Democratic State Committeeman, Cambria County
- H.B. Von Hause, Vice Chair, Cameron County Democratic Committee
- Helen Whiteford, Chair, Cambria County Democratic Committee
- Bob Will, former Somerset County Commissioner and Prothonotary
- Justin Yaich, President, Jim Thorpe Borough Council

In addition, I was the top vote-getter at the Democratic State Committee's endorsement meeting in February. I was honored to earn more than 50 percent of the vote, the majority of votes in 43 county caucuses, and twice the total of my nearest opponent.

13. Western Pennsylvania is currently served by many wonderful public health organizations such as PERSAD (www.persadcenter.org) and the Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force (www.patf.org) They save countless taxpayer dollars through their STD prevention programs and by providing services that keep people living with HIV/AIDS healthy and out of the hospital. Do you support increased state funding for public health organizations & programs.

Yes. In particular, investments in health prevention programs save both lives and taxpayer funds in the long run.

I am currently conducting a first-ever special performance audit of the Pennsylvania Department of Health's Office of HIV/AIDS. The report, which will include recommendations to improve the ability of the office to fulfill its mission, is projected to be released to the public this spring. I look forward to discussing the substance of the report at that time. Generally, I believe that the state must develop and implement a multi-dimensional, coordinated strategy to prevent disease and change high-risk behaviors, as well as provide resources and direction for sustaining preventive behavior and avoiding infection by the HIV virus.

14. Our members are not one-issue voters. Many of us are also deeply concerned about issues such as healthcare, economic opportunity, education, foreign policy, and the environment. Please take this opportunity to provide a brief overview of what your legislative priorities will be if elected.

The first priority of the next Governor must be to assess the fiscal condition of state government and develop a comprehensive plan to maintain vital government services without raising taxes. My experience as Auditor General makes me uniquely suited for this important task. I know firsthand where the waste, fraud, and abuse are in government programs from the thousands of audits that I have conducted. I will implement my recommendations for saving money in state government programs in order to invest in education, health care, job creation/retention, and the environment. My priorities in these particular areas are as follows:

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- Education: Throughout my career, I have fought to provide public schools with the resources needed to provide our children with the best possible education. As Governor, I will continue to improve the system of funding public education in the Commonwealth in a fiscally responsible way. I am also very concerned about the high school dropout rate. I believe that one of the best things that we can do for our young people is to make sure that they stay in school. It also benefits our state as a whole. Studies have shown that states with higher graduation rates have lower crime rates and lower expenditures for corrections, social services, and welfare programs.

One of my top priorities as Governor is to create a HOPE (Helping Our Pupils to Excel) Scholarship program to make higher education affordable for Pennsylvania students who attend Pennsylvania colleges and universities. Students who graduate from high school with at least a 3.0 grade point average would have their tuition paid for at a state-owned university. Students choosing to attend a state-related institution (Penn State, Pitt, Temple, and Lincoln universities), a private institution, a community college, or a vocational-technical school would receive a scholarship valued at the average cost of a state-owned university. The program would be funded by excess profits from table games at Pennsylvania casinos.

As discussed in my answer to Question #8 above, I will continue my focus on school safety, including anti-bullying initiatives.

- Health Care: It is my hope that comprehensive health care reform will soon finally be achieved at the federal level. Yet state government will have an important role in health care reform regardless. I will work to provide access to affordable, quality health care for all Pennsylvania residents. I will make it a priority to expand the adultBasic program and other programs that serve the most vulnerable Pennsylvanians, such as the Children's Health Insurance Program, in a fiscally responsible way.
- Jobs: I will work with the private sector to create and maintain high quality, family-sustaining jobs to grow our economy. I will use my experience as Auditor General to fix the state's economic development programs and hold the recipients of state assistance accountable for creating and retaining the jobs promised. I will also use my experience to bring transparency and competition to the state's own awarding of contracts for goods and services. Finally, as further discussed below, I will maximize the state's new Marcellus Shale energy resources to create jobs and reduce the cost of natural gas in an environmentally responsible way.
- Environment: The new Marcellus Shale energy resources give the Commonwealth an unparalleled opportunity in the coming years to create tens of thousands of good paying, high quality jobs to our communities and bring in much-needed revenues to state government. However, while I am committed to

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maximizing these new resources, I am equally committed to ensuring that it is done in an environmentally responsible way. As Governor, I will make sure that the industry understands that these resources belong to all Pennsylvanians, that we – not outsiders – intend to reap the benefits, and that we will not tolerate any harm to our precious environment. I will insist that the costs of the increased government oversight necessary to build and monitor this new industry be borne by the industry itself.

I will also make the Pennsylvania Turnpike the first multi-fuel highway in the country, with the infrastructure to support vehicles powered by electricity, natural gas, gasoline, and diesel. This will help us get off oil and, at the same time, stimulate the green economy. I will partner with the governors of our neighboring states in this important effort.

In addition, the next Governor must immediately begin to restore the public's faith in state government. Repairing the culture of corruption in Harrisburg will take a Governor with a record of integrity and a commitment to reform. I was the first statewide official to condemn bonuses in state government and to propose banning them. I have long fought to reduce the size of the General Assembly and to give the people the power to reform their government through a constitutional convention. I have worked with law enforcement to investigate, prosecute, and punish those who steal from the taxpayers. Quite simply, being Auditor General is about leading the fight for transparency, accountability, and reform in all areas of state government. I will continue to do so as Governor.

Finally, as Governor, I will continue to stand up for working men and women, as I have throughout my career. After graduating from high school, I worked at Duquesne Light Company as a meter reader, draftsman, and payroll clerk, and was a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. I am proud to be an honorary member of the union today and to have received significant support from organized labor as a candidate and elected official. As Auditor General, I have fought to protect the rights of the men and women of organized labor, uncovering violations of the prevailing wage, unemployment, and workers' compensation laws, as well as violations of the fundamental right to form and join a union.

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Signature of Candidate: _____

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