

Candidate Questionnaire for 2020 elections

Responses are included from

- two candidates for PA House District 23 (which includes CMU): current State Representative Dan Frankel and Green Party Candidate Jay Ting Walker
- Emily Skopov, Democratic Candidate for HD 28—the seat vacated by former Speaker Mike Turzai
- Democratic Candidate for HD 44 Michele Knoll

Some other candidates wrote to us indicating that they did not have time to complete the survey: Jessica Benham (Democratic candidate, HD 36), Robert Mercuri (Republican candidate, HD 28), and State Senator Jim Brewster (SD 45).

1. *How can our State legislature better facilitate the participation of students in government?*

HD 23 State Representative Dan Frankel (D-Squirrel Hill): Today's students will live with the consequence of the policies debated at every level of government. It's imperative that they feel welcomed and engaged by our leaders. I work closely with the leadership of all three universities in my district, to take every opportunity to provide such opportunities, with internships, shadow days and more. Just this month, I had a discussion with a CMU political science class, and I will continue to seek out similar collaborations.

HD 23 Green Party Candidate Jay Walker: Our legislature should work to better facilitate the participation of all residents because our system of democratic governance should include the opinion of everyone within a district. Student representatives should be included as key stakeholders in all decisions affecting education at all levels. There should also be a way to gauge student opinion that skips official student representatives. Students should be able to easily communicate their policy preferences to elected officials likely through a combination of application/texting service/forum. Students should also play a specific role in developing general policy through researching best practices from other states and countries. There are benefits to expertise but community input and ownership of governance is important to stress as well.

HD 28 Democratic Candidate Emily Skopov: We have to include students at every level of government: so many decisions on college student loan debt, K-12 curriculum, and public funding allocation concerning education are made at the local, state, and federal tiers of government. In addition to advocating the student position on these issues, especially when it comes to student debt, I also would be open to exploring the possibility of a Student Advisory Committee in the state legislature.

HD 44 Democratic Candidate Michele Knoll: Our State Legislature can help facilitate the participation of students in government by working towards fully funding education at the state level. When students are given opportunities to engage in civics and government at a young age. As a lifelong educator and Developmental Therapist, I understand the lasting impact that a great education can have on a child's life that will then continue into adulthood. These lessons when taught at a young age will help to facilitate participation of students long term by helping them to be able to engage in positive civil discourse and be an active participant in democracy by voting.

2. *Carnegie Mellon University has a diverse population which includes a large proportion of international students. How can Pennsylvania (and the State legislature) better support this diverse community of students at CMU and other universities?*

HD 23 State Representative Dan Frankel (D-Squirrel Hill): In 2018, I introduced a package of bills that would create Pennsylvania's first LGBTQ and disability-inclusive Hate Crimes law. We know that white supremacists and other dangerous groups seek out students, who may be away from home for the first time and vulnerable to both mistreatment and undue influence. That's why I included a bill that would make it easy for students to anonymously report hate crimes on campus and require schools to track those incidences. I have built an unprecedented coalition to get these bills passed in the coming session, and I am hopeful that we can get it done.

HD 23 Green Party Candidate Jay Walker: We need to have better language access for state resources and documents. We also need to make sure hate crimes are properly criminalized and taken more seriously through state legislation. I have more to learn about state policy that affects the international student population in particular. I think our district as a whole can do a much better job of including international students into our community. I've been speaking to many international students on the streets of Squirrel Hill who awkwardly tell me they can't vote and feel that they have no role in civic life. I tell every single one of them that even though they can't vote in the election they're still residents here and I'm running to represent them. They can't vote or donate to campaigns but they can still participate in public forums and are still represented in the district whether or not they have citizenship status just like how non voters are still being represented.

HD 28 Democratic Candidate Emily Skopov: I think we need to affect this sort of change in every aspect of our lives; we can't claim to be inclusive if we don't attempt to actually invite everyone in. In terms of legislation, the General Assembly, and Pennsylvania, I think we have to critically analyze our laws and new bills and actually ask ourselves if their language is 100% inclusive of the populations that make up our commonwealth.

HD 44 Democratic Candidate Michele Knoll: The Pennsylvania State Legislature has a responsibility to ensure that international students have the same rights as any other student attending a public or private university in our country. International Students should have the same access to campus resources, if not more access, than other students to aid them in campus participation whether it be in the classroom, or through extracurricular, multicultural activities.

3. *Multiple immigration policies from the federal government have been put out that harm international students. While the State legislature does not have jurisdiction over immigration policy, speaking out against harmful policies is still helpful. What are your views on reforming the country's immigration system?*

HD 23 State Representative Dan Frankel (D-Squirrel Hill): Before I ran for my first term, I served as president of the Jewish Family and Children's Services board. Then and now, that organization leads the state in helping to resettle refugees and help immigrant families thrive in the state of Pennsylvania. That experience continues to inform my experience in Harrisburg, where we have more opportunities to show our positions on immigration than you'd think. I helped create the Welcoming Caucus just this year to make sure that we don't miss any opportunity to create policies that support immigrants in our state. I was one of only 28 state representatives who opposed the "E-Verify" bill last year, because I felt that it unfairly punished undocumented workers instead of unscrupulous employers. I feel strongly that the state should pay for the healthcare of undocumented children -- to not do so is immoral. I support an immigration policy that is compassionate and recognizes the important contributions of immigrants to our county, state, and to District 23.

HD 23 Green Party Candidate Jay Walker: I am generally for a much less restrictive immigration system. I am completely opposed to a border wall. I don't think our immigration system should take into account the educational background of people or discriminate against those coming from a disadvantaged background. I am very interested in learning more about open borders policy proposals but I am not ready to commit to them yet. I believe that undocumented citizens should not be criminalized and should have a rapid path to citizenship. I fully believe we need to abolish ICE and CBP and have participated in many rallies against our country's horrendous system.

HD 28 Democratic Candidate Emily Skopov: We need to be aware of the contributions all immigrants make to this country and that we are a country by and for immigrants. If someone has entered the country undocumented, then we have to recognize the difficult situation they were probably in and advocate for some pathway to citizenship/documentation that allows them to stay and keep contributing to our country, which they most likely already do by paying taxes.

HD 44 Democratic Candidate Michele Knoll: As mentioned, the State Legislature does not have jurisdiction over federal immigration policy. However, as a lifelong Educator, I understand the need to fully fund our educational institutions at the State level while ensuring protections for our international students at the same time. It's clear that recent executive orders at the Federal level are restrictive and reflect backward thinking that won't serve our future. As State Representative, although I may not have a direct impact on those pieces of legislation, I promise to be an advocate at the State level to allow our state institutions to stand up for what is right in regards to international student's rights and continue to fund these institutions at the State level at the same time.

4. *Landlord-tenant issues are a concern for many students in Pittsburgh. In what ways do you think the State legislature can help address some of these issues?*

HD 23 State Representative Dan Frankel (D-Squirrel Hill): Extending the eviction moratorium is an emergency right now in our state. I support several bills that would do so, and would create a framework to help renters stay in their homes while they get on their feet. Even outside of our current crisis, I believe that anyone facing eviction should be provided legal representation if they cannot afford it on their own. Other cities that have instituted these policies have found that they pay for themselves eventually, because they cut down on frivolous filings and they facilitate more productive negotiations between renters and owners.

HD 23 Green Party Candidate Jay Walker: Pennsylvania is a state that's very landlord friendly. I think the state legislature needs to aggressively shift that power towards renters by passing laws to require landlords to have to notify tenants before they enter a unit, capping the security deposit at one months rent, and by capping fees. I think that landlords shouldn't be able to unilaterally decide not to renew a lease on somebody's home. Lastly I think our state should fund the right to counsel for evictions proceedings. So many renters are evicted because they had no legal representation and cannot navigate the system.

HD 28 Democratic Candidate Emily Skopov: I think that in the wake of the Covid19 pandemic we have to ensure that people are not evicted from their homes and the state legislature can work to pass those protections. I also think that we need a process in place that prevents landlords from raising rent in order to force tenants out. In addition, the state legislature could pass laws that require a mediation process between landlords and tenants to make sure that when rent increases are necessary, they are fair to all parties.

HD 44 Democratic Candidate Michele Knoll: The Pennsylvania State Legislature can impact several different aspects of how a landlord-tenant relationship is carried out in our

State, particularly as it relates to students in Pittsburgh. Legislation directly impacts what landlords are required to disclose about tenants, security deposit limits and returns, as well as eviction laws. Concerns with landlord-tenant issues are often difficult and nuanced, but better regulation of those seeking tenants in highly competitive markets would encourage more people to play fair when it comes to renting and seeking housing on college campuses.

5. *What solutions would you propose to increase affordable housing in our communities?*

HD 23 State Representative Dan Frankel (D-Squirrel Hill): We need to earmark a percentage of the Department of Community and Economic Development's (DCED) Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) Grants for affordable housing projects. Additionally, I support an increase in funding to the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Authority which has been an essential partner in financing a vital segment of affordable housing projects in Pittsburgh neighborhoods over the past 30 years. Most recently, Senator Costa and I secured financing for two affordable housing projects in and around the 23rd District: Disability inclusive Kraus Commons at the corner of Murray and Forward Aves and a major rehab of Riverview Towers on Browns Hill Road.

HD 23 Green Party Candidate Jay Walker: I believe strongly in the rapid expansion of social housing that is publicly funded and owned. One source of funding would be the Department of Community & Economic Development which features numerous grant and financing options that should be prioritized for high quality public housing. This housing should prioritize low income renters but should also be available to those with higher incomes (80% of AMI). Our state should also invest in rehabilitating existing homes while turning them over to community land trusts to help preserve affordability. I am also proud to say that I'm the only candidate running for this seat that does not take money from any developers.

HD 28 Democratic Candidate Emily Skopov: I support rent control for older units (built 15 years ago or more) but we must be cautious not to inhibit construction of new units. I think that legislation recently passed in Oregon is a strong model, which caps rent increases at 7% annually plus the rate of inflation. (In 2020, the increase was capped at 9.9%). I am concerned about ensuring that all people have adequate housing, and I am working to educate myself more on these issues so that if I am elected, I can support or propose legislation that is best for all Pennsylvanians.

HD 44 Democratic Candidate Michele Knoll: Housing should be safe, accessible and affordable in the State of Pennsylvania. The minimum wage in Pennsylvania for an hour's work buys a family a gallon of milk and a loaf of bread, which is simply not enough and does not put shoes on your children's feet or help pay the electric bill. 10,000 heads of households in Allegheny County try to support their families on \$7.25,

our State's minimum wage. We need to raise the minimum wage in Pennsylvania. Our State Legislature is also capable of creating solutions that would allow for decreases in costs through incentives.

6. *According to a 2018 report, [29% of college students](#) in Southwestern Pennsylvania suffer from severe food insecurity, including 19% at Carnegie Mellon. What are the solutions that you would propose to combat collegiate food insecurity?*

HD 23 State Representative Dan Frankel (D-Squirrel Hill): Even before the hardships brought on by the Covid-19 crisis, we needed to increase the State Food Purchase Program line item for food assistance and earmark some portion of that funding for university populations. Last year, I fought alongside my Democratic colleagues to defend a second "general assistance" program, which provided a small amount of money to particularly needy Pennsylvanians for [sic] buy non-food items they needed, like menstrual products or transportation costs. Republicans voted to kill that program, and it's a high priority of mine to bring it back.

HD 23 Green Party Candidate Jay Walker: The Right to Food is recognized in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights which is a guiding document for me as a candidate and an activist. We need to eliminate hunger not only by making sure that we have a strong social safety net that's universally applied like a basic income but also by supporting unionization efforts so grad students can fight for more generous stipends to cover more of their expenses. I also think dining plans are exorbitant in universities across the state although I have yet to think of a solution from the state level. Ultimately I think these sorts of situations are allowed to continue because many of the decisions being made about our lives do not include us in the decision making in that's particularly true in major institutions like Carnegie Mellon.

HD 28 Democratic Candidate Emily Skopov: We have to ensure that colleges offer quality, encompassing meal plans at an affordable rate for all matriculated students. We also need to ensure colleges employ student advised and student led, with the full support of respective collegiate administrations, meal plan sharing programs that allow anonymous requests for meals.

HD 44 Democratic Candidate Michele Knoll: When students are sent off to college they should be able to focus on what matters most: their studies. We need to establish programs to address campus food insecurity so that no student will go hungry. As an Early Interventionist, who works with children with delays and disabilities, I've seen families living with the threat of homelessness and in a constant state of food insecurity. When I saw the lines for the food bank the first week of the Pandemic, I wasn't surprised. Many of my families in my practice weren't making it from paycheck to paycheck before the Pandemic. There is not a single student in our state that should

have to face these challenges, as State Representative I would fight to ensure that we combat collegiate food insecurity with common sense solutions and legislation that support giving students the resources they need to focus on their studies instead of where their next meal might be coming from.

7. *Most students rely on public transportation to commute. In the past, the State legislature has tried to decrease funding for the transit authority. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Port Authority started the process to remove bus stops as a means to improve timeliness. How will you work towards improving the frequency, routes, and timeliness of public transit in the region?*

HD 23 State Representative Dan Frankel (D-Squirrel Hill): While local governments manage transit agencies, the state is a major funder of public transportation, primarily through the gasoline tax. Given the increased fuel efficiency of newer combustion-oriented vehicles and the increasing popularity of electric powered vehicle, this tax is outdated and needs to be replaced by a tax on miles driven. In addition we should petition the federal government to allow PA to toll all of our Interstates and dedicate a portion of those toll revenues to mass transit. Another obvious funding opportunity would be charging the hundreds of townships and municipalities that use the Pennsylvania State Police to provide local policing in their communities a fee for this service. As it is, they pay nothing while Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Philadelphia and other large cities pay for their own local police. Those fees should be dedicated to mass transit.

HD 23 Green Party Candidate Jay Walker: I am fully supportive of public transit as the president of the Allegheny County Transit Council and as a longtime Pittsburghers for Public Transit Member. I also do not own a car and get around mostly by bus. I would fight aggressively for increased transit funding which is the key to improving frequency and routes. Timeliness issues on public transit are mostly caused by single occupancy vehicle travel causing traffic. I also support current legislation in Harrisburg to make it easier for counties to raise taxes to specifically fund transit. I am fully supportive of policies to reduce those sorts of trips such as congestion pricing. I am extremely aware of the Act 89 transit funding cliff that's coming up in the next session and am very frustrated that only the PA House Republicans have put forwards a plan and that it's not a very good one. I think we need dedicated transit funding that's connected to a vehicle miles travelled tax to replace declining gas tax revenues. I also think that we need to divert funding from highway expansions and new highway construction towards transit. Lastly we need to abolish the turnpike commission and fold it's role back into PennDOT. The turnpike commission has historically been a major source of bipartisan corruption in our state.

HD 28 Democratic Candidate Emily Skopov: I would be open to a comprehensive

review of our public transport systems and support legislation that would make our public transportation efficient.

HD 44 Democratic Candidate Michele Knoll: Public transportation is a public good and is vital in the well-being of the public. We need to ensure that public transportation is easily accessible, timely and frequent within our county. I took the bus to and from the University of Pittsburgh as an undergraduate student and understand the importance of bus service to university students. Transportation is vital to not only students getting from class to class or to the local grocery store, but also ensures that our community members are able to get to work on time, or get home to their children after a hard day's work. We must work at the State level to ensure that the transit authority has adequate funds to ensure that our students and community members can continue to operate on time.

8. *What is your policy proposal to ensure every Pennsylvania resident has access to affordable health insurance?*

HD 23 State Representative Dan Frankel (D-Squirrel Hill): Healthcare is a right, and I look forward to the day that the federal government provides a plan to permanently separate workplaces from health care coverage, and to make sure that every single person is able to afford it. In the meantime, I am fighting to preserve and enhance the Affordable Care Act, by banning harmful insurance practices such as lifetime limits and exclusions based on pre-existing conditions. I also introduced a bill that would place Medicaid on the PA Healthcare Exchange, allowing all Pennsylvanians the opportunity to get high quality, affordable health insurance. This would drive down costs for the whole market, creating what is essentially a public option. Lastly, I introduced legislation that will keep pharmaceutical companies from price gouging, creating something like a state utility commission to place limits on how much can be paid for medications.

HD 23 Green Party Candidate Jay Walker: I support a statewide single payer plan as pushed by Healthcare for All PA and introduced in the last session by Rep. Pam Delissio. I also advocate aggressively for a national single payer healthcare system. In the meantime I support Put People First's demands for a statewide health care advocate to help Pennsylvanian residents negotiate with health insurance companies. Lastly I support expanding medicaid coverage to cover adult dental benefits in our state. I am proud to say I'm the only candidate running for this seat that has never taken money from health insurance giants.

HD 28 Democratic Candidate Emily Skopov: To stay a first world country and global leader, the U.S. must be able to deliver on something as fundamental to the well-being of its citizens as healthcare. As the COVID-19 pandemic has made abundantly clear, we must make improving our healthcare system a top priority, and this includes swiftly

moving to modernize our tele-medicine policies so that all folks who need to see a provider remotely can have that option when it is medically safe to do so. I'm committed to ensuring affordable, accessible, quality health care for all Pennsylvanians, and will be a strong advocate for women's healthcare, fighting to see that all women are empowered with the right and ability to access treatment and make all decisions about the health and future of their own bodies, just as I believe all men are entitled to that same right. Pennsylvanians must be trusted and respected enough to know what's best for themselves, rather than enabling the government to exercise serious overreach into the private lives of Americans. I am eager to work with others in the legislature to innovate ways by which Pennsylvania can exert pressure on insurers and Big Pharma to control the cost of pharmaceuticals, which is one of the largest health-related problems facing far too many in the Commonwealth. We also have to ensure mental health is taken just as seriously as physical health, especially when it comes to mental health care's cost. No one should ever have to forego medications due to cost, and we can put policies in place to end those situations. I will fight to maintain and increase the Medicaid expansion, and to protect those with preexisting conditions.

HD 44 Democratic Candidate Michele Knoll: A healthy community starts with clean air, clean water and access to quality healthcare. As a State Representative, I would not have the jurisdiction to support the Affordable Care Act, but I certainly support the principles of the legislation that could be carried out at the State level. We need to ensure that health insurance is easily available, affordable and that we work to continue to improve healthcare quality. We also need to protect individuals with pre-existing conditions to ensure that they are able to be covered. Governor Wolf is currently working on a Healthcare Reform Plan addressing affordability, access, equity and value. I hope to be able to contribute to this plan as a member of the General Assembly.

9. *A recent report by the Association of American Universities found 23.5% of undergraduate women and 9.3% of graduate women at CMU reported nonconsensual sexual contact. These numbers have changed little over the last four years. How will you work to ensure that our campuses are free of sexual violence?*

HD 23 State Representative Dan Frankel (D-Squirrel Hill): My legislation to require institutions of higher education to offer an online, anonymous reporting system for students passed as part of the budget process last year. We all know that the number of reported cases of sexual violence is just a glimpse of the problem -- many, many cases go unreported. My bill was designed to provide a non-threatening entry point for students who aren't ready to head to a police station and give a statement. This allows schools to get services to those students more quickly and to have a better sense of the problem of sexual violence on and off campus.

HD 23 Green Party Candidate Jay Walker: I am committed to helping CMU and other

campuses be free of sexual violence but I admit that I have a lot to learn about the issue. From what I know of from my experience at RPI often times people would report sexual violence and the victim would suffer more than the assailant. The Title IX offices would seek to protect the university rather than care for the victim and to seek justice for them if they decide that's what they want. It's too easy to get away with assault not just on our campuses but in our society. At the state level I can say that there's a culture of harassment in the state house. There have been multiple cases of sexual abuses in both chambers that have been able to continue. These cases are bipartisan and the recent examples of assailants were allowed to retire or lost elections preventing their return with no other accountability besides grandstanding to ask them to step down on their own which they refused to do. There is legislation in the legislature right now to make sure taxpayers don't pay to settle sexual assault or harassment cases for legislators but it has sat in committee without a vote. That's completely unacceptable. I am proud to be the only candidate in this race who has never donated to those with sexual assault allegations against them.

HD 28 Democratic Candidate Emily Skopov: Survivors of sexual assault and harassment have to be trusted enough that we investigate their allegations to the fullest extent of the law. Overwhelmingly, when survivors of sexual violence come out and tell their story, they aren't lying. Let's put our money where our mouth is and start supporting them in their truth.

HD 44 Democratic Candidate Michele Knoll: We must ensure that all students feel safe on campus, and the State Legislature needs to have a role in advancing protections against sexual violence. We must strengthen our protections against sexual harassment and violence at the state level on college campuses, in the work place and in society as a whole. It is important that our educational institutions supply resources for students that revolve around survivor-centered and trauma-informed restorative approaches to justice in an effort to create collective accountability.

10. *The tragic death of Antwon Rose Jr. sparked protests around the Commonwealth with calls for police reform. Recent killings of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd, among others, have placed even more emphasis on the need for such reform. What steps will you take to stop police brutality and reform policing in Pennsylvania?*

HD 23 State Representative Dan Frankel (D-Squirrel Hill): More than a year ago, in response to the incomprehensible murder of Antwon Rose, my colleagues Summer Lee and Ed Gainey introduced a bill that would change the "deadly use of force" threshold in Pennsylvania law. Currently, a police officer can shoot a fleeing person if that person is armed. The bill would also eliminate effectuation of an arrest as justification of deadly use of force. There are several other very good bills that would save lives that are currently being blocked by Republican leadership, including one banning chokeholds

and one that would appoint a special prosecutor to handle cases when police use deadly force.

These bills are not enough — dismantling the systemic racism that infuses our policing, justice and healthcare systems requires radical organizational and funding changes that must be instituted to, for instance, demilitarize our police departments and ensure that appropriate, trained mental health professionals are answering calls for help. Many of those changes will have to happen at the local level, and the PA Legislative Black Caucus is working to identify the best legislation to facilitate those local changes.

A glimmer of hope happened this summer, when we were able to pass two important bills: one would ensure that an officer's employment records follow them from job to job, and the other would require mental health evaluations and training in de-escalation and cultural literacy. These were modest but good pieces of legislation, and they passed because of the pressure put on the General Assembly by the thousands of Pennsylvanians who took to the streets and demanded it. We will continue to channel that public outpouring into action. Everyone deserves to feel safe and protected. Black Lives Matter.

HD 23 Green Party Candidate Jay Walker: I fully support the demands of Civil Saturdays and of the Allegheny County Black Activist/Organizer Collective. I commit to these policies:

- Amend Section 508 (Statutes covering use of force) (Civil Saturday)
- Allow cities to challenge arbiter rulings by amending Act 111 making it easier for cities to fire police officers
- Ban cooperation between police departments and foreign militaries (Deadly Exchange)
- Get police out of schools statewide
- Ban private police departments
- Ban No Knock Warrants statewide
- End partnership with ICE
- End cash bail
- Increase funding for public defenders
- Decriminalize sex work
- Decriminalize all drugs
- Legalize recreational marijuana, expunge records, where would money go?
- Ban private prisons
- Cut funding for the state police which are draining public transit funding
- Require civilian police review boards on the county level statewide (if you can do that)

- I refuse to punish universities that are sanctuaries for immigrants or that have active BDS movements

HD 28 Democratic Candidate Emily Skopov: In terms of criminal justice, Pennsylvania can start by actively looking at how we can reform, which starts by passing legislation like HB1664 introduced by Representative Lee (D-District 34). While I believe we can support police officers and still say and believe that Black Lives Matter, we need to hold police officers who egregiously fail their oath to protect and serve are held accountable.

HD 44 Democratic Candidate Michele Knoll: The tragic death of these individuals has prompted calls for police reform. We are relying on the aforementioned group to solve more problems than they are able to within their roles. We need to help our police, our schools, and our healthcare workers by supporting them with professionals that can resolve violence before it starts. I believe we need to provide police with psychologists, social workers who are skilled in conflict resolution, people who have worked in mental health, and people who have knowledge of individuals with disabilities, not replace the police.

11. *What steps would you propose towards combating climate change and ensuring access to clean air and water to all Pennsylvanians?*

HD 23 State Representative Dan Frankel (D-Squirrel Hill): I voted against a bill last year to provide tax credits to future petrochemical facilities in Pennsylvania, at a cost of \$22 million per plant per year, just as I voted against the \$1.6 billion state incentive package in 2012 that supported the current Beaver County cracker plant. I have consistently pushed for more regulation of industrial polluters, which would require a sharp increase in funding for the Department of Environmental Policy. I also believe that these polluters should be paying for the resources they are using and damaging, along with paying their fair share in taxes. If we can ensure that funds from fees, fines and taxes are properly corralled, we can use them to quickly build up our renewable energy industry so that it is in place to replace environmentally harmful energy sources.

HD 23 Green Party Candidate Jay Walker: The most important issue I'm running on is combating climate change and the number one solution I propose is to ban fracking. I would start with an immediate moratorium on new drilling. I would aggressively phase out existing drilling by enacting a severe severance tax to choke the industry out. At the same time we need to make a rapid transition to renewable energy. To do this we need to end all subsidies for fossil fuels and instead subsidize the development, manufacturing, and installation of renewable energy systems. We also need to invest heavily in energy efficiency through publicly funded home weatherization programs which have been shown to be effective in England and other parts of the world. Lastly we need to make sure that this transition is just not only by ensuring that fossil fuel jobs

are replaced by unionized renewable energy jobs but also by making sure that the employees being phased out can choose to retrain for the new jobs or to take a payout to retire. This will be way more than financially worth it in the long run not only to reduce the financial impacts of climate change but also by reducing the costs of health impacts from fossil fuel extraction and consumption. We would also save on environmental clean up for abandoned wells which are a massive unaccounted for cost. These costs are being piled on more and more as wells are bought up by companies that promptly go bankrupt to dump the liability for plugging unplugged wells onto our commonwealth. We also need to enter RGGI while also enacting a statewide carbon tax to account for externalities that are not included in the cost of greenhouse gas heavy practices.

HD 28 Democratic Candidate Emily Skopov: Let's get real: climate change is happening, and we're running out of time. It is affecting all Pennsylvanians, Americans, and the rest of the world. We as a state and country cannot afford to keep committing to nonaction on this issue. We cannot keep letting lazy policymakers reduce climate change to a political choice between jobs and the environment. I believe we can do better than the lazy and uncreative policymaking we've been handed so far. We need to welcome alternative energy producers to our state just as we have the oil and gas industry, in that way becoming less dependent on fossil fuels, saving our natural resources, and beginning the process of reducing the harm to our environment.

HD 44 Democratic Candidate Michele Knoll: In the same 10 years we've been fracking in Pennsylvania we have been decreasing the funding for the Department of Environmental Protection. Already, the impacts of climate change are being felt across Pennsylvania, and we are paying the price. I am committed to reducing the climate risks and fighting for clean air and water for all of our State's residents. Landslides, subsidence, storm water runoff, and waste water treatment plants are all things confronting these small, often cash strapped communities. Since landslides are an issue in my district, funding the remediation of landslides will be a priority for me. This year alone, in the 44th district, there have been at least 6 slides closing busy routes and threatening homes. This is an issue exasperated by climate change as we see heavier rain falls so I would like to work with other legislators to address these environmental issues and help build a path forward for our future.

12. *In recent events at University of Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania State University, it was reported that universities engaged in a fear campaign to dissuade graduate students from voting to form a union. What are your views on the PLRA and collective bargaining rights for graduate students at public universities in Pennsylvania?*

HD 23 State Representative Dan Frankel (D-Squirrel Hill): I feel strongly that unions are absolutely vital to our ability to keep a healthy workforce. I support the effort of grad students at public university in Pennsylvania to unionize.

HD 23 Green Party Candidate Jay Walker: I think Pennsylvania as a whole is not friendly to workers. Having said that, I think the PLRB has made reasonable rulings in the GSOC case at the University of Pittsburgh as well as with the Pitt Faculty Union. I believe that graduate students at public and private universities should have the right to form unions and collectively bargain. I am disgusted by the law firm the University of Pittsburgh has hired to union bust their own graduate students. I have supported GSOC at rallies and have attended their events. I also spoke to their efforts in my candidate forum last week.

HD 28 Democratic Candidate Emily Skopov: I understand the vital role any union labor plays in our region, and while in office will be a check against political forces that try to chip away at unions; they have to be able to do essential work, like enabling collective bargaining, in their practices. The right to collective bargaining should be extended to graduate students at public universities in PA.

HD 44 Democratic Candidate Michele Knoll: I have 9,000 union members in my district, and I am committed to making sure every union member in Pennsylvania has the right to participate in collective bargaining. My mother was a member of APSCUF at Slippery Rock University and PSEA as a classroom teacher, and I as an educator paid dues to the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers, I directly understand the importance of collective bargaining and union rights for those in our public universities. I stand with the graduate students in our State and will always stand with unions in PA.

13. *At least nine states (excluding Pennsylvania) have implemented science and technology policy fellowship programs to recruit graduating researchers to help devise science-driven policy. What advisory mechanism will you implement to ensure that scientific expertise has a central role within your policy process?*

HD 23 State Representative Dan Frankel (D-Squirrel Hill): While I am not familiar with this program, it does make enormous sense to incorporate grad students into policy design, evaluation and advocacy. We live in an era where many elected officials have discounted the value and veracity of scientific evidence and data, in favor of conspiracy theories and fringe “experts” that fit their politically motivated narrative.

HD 23 Green Party Candidate Jay Walker: This is a topic I can say I am not well versed in. This would be a program I would support in Pennsylvania. I think scientific expertise has a crucial role to play in policy development and “listen to the scientists” is something that I live by. I think science should drive policy rather than the other way around. I think researchers in whatever field is being discussed are important stakeholders when developing policy (and not only when they are corporate labs that are major campaign donors).

HD 28 Democratic Candidate Emily Skopov: I think lawmakers have to consult with experts, especially when legislation requires a command of scientific knowledge, when writing bills in general. If elected, I want to ensure all of my constituents that my decisions will be researched and leave no stone unturned. That includes consulting with scientists if that's what it requires. I want my policy and decision making to be fully informed and with the appropriate counsel.

HD 44 Democratic Candidate Michele Knoll: From the start of my campaign, especially during the last several months as we have been experiencing an unprecedented pandemic, I have been steadfast in my commitment to rely heavily on fact-based, scientific evidence to arrive at conclusions for all of our campaign decisions. As an Early Interventionist working with young children with delays and disabilities, I rely on scientific evidence and research in my practice to promote evidence practices for the welfare and education of the children I visit. I plan to do the same when I arrive in Harrisburg. Having graduate students in Harrisburg that are willing to dedicate themselves to ensuring that policy is fact-based and resounding in scientific evidence would be one of the best assets we could have as we are working to govern. As a State Representative, I would ensure that I have a legislative team that is dedicated to making sure our policy decisions are grounded in research and data - just as I have during this campaign.

14. *Our neighboring states of Ohio, West Virginia, Maryland, Connecticut, and New York have implemented policies promoting Open Educational Resources at all levels of education. What is your position on this issue?*

HD 23 State Representative Dan Frankel (D-Squirrel Hill): I wholeheartedly support policies to promote Open Education Resources, and can think of scores of ways those policies will pay us back down the road.

HD 23 Green Party Candidate Jay Walker: This is the first time I'm hearing about this issue. A quick search makes it pretty clear that I would definitely support this. Educational materials should be available to all and shouldn't be locked behind a paywall. I would imagine that textbook companies are big campaign donors in Pennsylvania since our state is so easily manipulated by corporate money due to our extremely lax campaign finance and gift giving laws.

HD 28 Democratic Candidate Emily Skopov: As a graduate of public schools myself, and the daughter/niece/daughter-in-law/granddaughter of public school teachers, I have always understood the value of ensuring that our public education system is as strong and adaptable as possible. While I believe the public schools in my district are the best in the state and should be the standard for everywhere else, I am definitely open to

allowing PA students access to Open Educational Resources.

HD 44 Democratic Candidate Michele Knoll: OER's can serve as a great benefit to students financially and could contribute to a small relief of the student debt burden that is currently weighing on students. OER's can lead to expanded access to learning, quick circulation and can quickly adapt. That being said, these benefits do not come without challenges, as they are increasingly burdensome on faculty and can sometimes create copyright concerns. As a lifelong educator, I know that we need to fund education at the state level in order to combat the need for OER's in the classroom. Fully funding education at the state level will ensure that all children in Pennsylvania will have access to a quality education, the same resources and adequate supplies for their classrooms. Another concern that has been exasperated this year by COVID-19, is the technology gap experienced by many students in Pennsylvania. So accessing OER's for teachers and students can also be a hurdle we'll need to overcome.

15. *In Pennsylvania, the average cost of childcare is only [slightly lower](#) than the average cost of attendance at a public college. Many students with children are unable to afford childcare, often having to decide between their education or caring for their children. What steps will you take to provide access to affordable childcare for everyone?*

HD 23 State Representative Dan Frankel (D-Squirrel Hill): First, we can expand the Child Care Works program, which provides subsidies to help low income families pay for childcare. Currently, a family of four has to bring in less than \$52,400 a year to be eligible. When we raise the minimum wage, this threshold will suddenly toss thousands of families from the program, erasing any gains that their higher wages could have made. Additionally, we need universal pre-k, which would both prepare children for a good start in school but also provide high quality childcare while parents work or go to school.

HD 23 Green Party Candidate Jay Walker: I support universal childcare that is publicly funded.

HD 28 Democratic Candidate Emily Skopov: Parenting is an unpaid, full time job for a lot of Pennsylvanians, so it's no wonder childcare has become a necessity for so many families. Childcare is so fundamentally important to our society and ultimately, our economy and families' economic mobility. We have to ensure that affordable childcare is an option for those who need it, and I would be open to exploring innovative ways as a legislator to ensure this is a reality for all Pennsylvanians.

HD 44 Democratic Candidate Michele Knoll: Families in Pennsylvania are already struggling to make ends meet. As I mentioned before, the current minimum wage in Pennsylvania is only \$7.25. When I am sent to Harrisburg I will advocate for working

families in order to ensure that they not only have access to affordable childcare, but I will fight to ensure that these options for care are quality options. In my time as an Early Interventionist, I too often witnessed difficult decisions being made in the home by mothers and fathers that were trying to make ends meet. The type of care their children receive should not be dependent upon how much money is left in their paycheck after bills every month. We must do better and work to lower the cost of childcare in Pennsylvania.

16. *What steps will you take to ensure access to paid family leave for the birth or adoption of a child to everyone employed in Pennsylvania?*

HD 23 State Representative Dan Frankel (D-Squirrel Hill): I am an original cosponsor to the Family Care Act, a bipartisan bill that would create a statewide Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program. Under this legislation, workers would make a small payroll contribution to support the program. Then, when an employee needs time to care for a child or any close family member or themselves, they could do so without the fear of losing their jobs or their income. This program is well tested — already enacted in several other states — and the bill is unusually well-positioned to move in our divided General Assembly.

HD 23 Green Party Candidate Jay Walker: I support legislation to require all employers public and private to guarantee paid family leave for the birth or adoption of a child.

HD 28 Democratic Candidate Emily Skopov: Similar to childcare, we have to ensure employees in Pennsylvania are giving their employees enough PAID time off to start their families and be there for their children who are just experiencing the world around them for the first time. We need legislation that makes this a reality.

HD 44 Democratic Candidate Michele Knoll: The decision to stay home with your child or elderly parent should never have to come at the expense of losing your job. Unfortunately, this is a reality that far too many families in Pennsylvania are facing when it comes to paid family leave. The issue of paid family leave, or even paid sick leave have been exacerbated by the most recent COVID-19 pandemic and has proven that paid leave can save lives and lead to lifelong advantages to a child when they have a parent at home. When sent to Harrisburg, I promise to fight for those that are caretakers, new parents or fighting an illness so that they can ensure their job is still there when they are ready to return to work.

17. *In 2018, Pittsburgh saw one of the deadliest mass shootings in the country, which led to calls for regulating access to firearms and passage of multiple City Ordinances restricting the use of assault weapons. What are your thoughts on how we can best ensure safer communities for all?*

HD 23 State Representative Dan Frankel (D-Squirrel Hill): Just before the tragedy in the Tree of Life, we saw our first success as advocates for gun policy reform in decades: We passed into law a bill that would disarm domestic abusers. While I feel strongly that the 2018 bill has saved lives and continues to do so, we have a great deal more to do. As co-chair of the PA SAFE Caucus, this issue has been a top priority for me for since my first election.

Then, when my friends and neighbors were murdered by a hate-driven gunman with a weapon of war, I saw up close the years of trauma that follow such an attack.

After Republicans blocked our many attempts to vote on universal background checks, minimum age requirements, temporary removal of weapons from individuals in crisis, and bans on assault-style weapons, I introduced legislation to remove pre-emption language in our code so that municipalities and counties could make their own rules when it comes to guns.

HD 23 Green Party Candidate Jay Walker: Here was my response to a similar question that I was asked in 2018. I stand by these answers today. (Source)

To address mass shootings, I would support legislation proposed by State Senator Wayne Fontana to ban military style assault weapons and large magazines. I would support legislation to require background checks for all private gun sales and not just handguns. I would vote against legislation that preempts local gun control ordinances. I also oppose stand your ground legislation and arming teachers or school guards. I support CeaseFirePA's advocacy on this issue.

The recent shooting was an antisemitic hate crime which requires solutions beyond improved gun control. Our state under reports and under convicts hate crimes making it harder for us to catch bigots sooner. We need to treat documented hate very seriously. Our hate crimes law should also be expanded to protect LGBTQIA+ people and people with disabilities.

Mass shootings in our state make up a small portion of gun homicides. Pennsylvanians killed by guns are disproportionately black and disproportionately live in low income communities. Addressing a legacy of poverty and systemic racism will take a lot more than simple legislative fixes. We need to end the war on drugs and treat addiction as a public health issue by decriminalizing drugs and utilizing harm reduction strategies. We also need to drastically reform our criminal justice system and eliminate the school to prison pipeline. In addition, we need to address our state's massive income inequality by raising the minimum wage, enacting a statewide single payer health care system, and using a fair funding formula to bring quality education to all Pennsylvanians.

HD 28 Democratic Candidate Emily Skopov: We can make our residents and communities safer while respecting the 2nd amendment. Through long overdue, common sense reforms supported by the majority of Pennsylvanians, including gun owners. I support universal background checks on all gun sales in Pennsylvania and Extreme Risk Protection Orders, especially in light of the strong evidence that these kinds of policies significantly decrease the number of suicides by gun. I will strongly advocate for increased public education around this issue and explore all possible options to identify and resolve the root causes of gun violence.

HD 44 Democratic Candidate Michele Knoll: My candidacy is currently endorsed by Mom's Demand Action and CeaseFire as I firmly believe that we need to take better steps towards regulating firearms. I fully intend to support Extreme Protection Orders to temporarily block weapon sales that pose a potential risk. I also support the expansion of universal background checks, and firmly believe that we need to ensure that before anyone has access to a firearm that they go through a distinct universal background check, just as I did as an educator on a regular basis. I am also an advocate of legislation for Safe Storage of firearms which will reduce the incidence of suicide by gun violence.

18. *If there is any issue not covered above that you would like to discuss, please feel free to use this opportunity to do so.*

HD 23 State Representative Dan Frankel (D-Squirrel Hill): I am most known for my longstanding effort to pass the LGBTQ Civil Rights bill, which would include sexual orientation and gender identity or expression in the types of discrimination banned statewide in the workplace, education, housing and public accommodation. We are closer than we've ever been to getting this important bill across the finish line.

At CMU, my office has worked closely with a group of faculty and students to advocate for a change in the Allegheny County Plumbing code that would allow your school provide adequate all-gender bathrooms to accommodate people of all stripes who feel safer and more comfortable using those facilities.

I also have to mention that reproductive rights are more tenuous than they have ever been. I founded the Women's Health Caucus more than 15 years ago when Republicans attempted to remove funds for family planning during budget negotiations. Since then I've worked alongside other legislators and advocates to fend off attempt after attempt to take away abortion rights. I will continue to fight for pregnant people to make these private decisions for themselves.

HD 23 Green Party Candidate Jay Walker: I talked about a lot of universal programs but not as much about how they would be funded. I am advocating for a fair share tax

that would tax income from wealth at a different rate than income from wages which would create a functional progressive income tax that skirts around our state constitutions uniformity clause. I also support closing the delaware loophole and reversing cuts to our corporate taxes. All three of these policies would raise revenue needed to pay for the policies that would provide basic human rights to Pennsylvanians.

I support women's reproductive health and the right to have access to an abortion. I'm proud to say I'm the only candidate in this race to have never donated to any candidates who vote against a woman's right to choose.

I am in favor of aggressively tightening up on Harrisburg corruption with low campaign finance limits and by enacting a gift ban. I trust March on Harrisburg on corruption issues.