



## **RI Democratic Women's Caucus Special Election 2021 Candidate Questionnaire**

***Geena Pham*** (*Woman, she/her*)

State Senate District 3

### **Campaign Websites:**

|                                                                                                                                               |
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| <a href="https://www.phamforri.com">https://www.phamforri.com</a>                                                                             |
| <a href="https://www.facebook.com/PhamForRI">https://www.facebook.com/PhamForRI</a>                                                           |
| <a href="https://twitter.com/PhamForRI">https://twitter.com/PhamForRI</a>                                                                     |
| <a href="https://secure.actblue.com/donate/friends-of-pham-1">https://secure.actblue.com/donate/friends-of-pham-1</a>                         |
| <a href="https://actionnetwork.org/forms/sign-up-to-volunteer-with-geena">https://actionnetwork.org/forms/sign-up-to-volunteer-with-geena</a> |

### **Questionnaire:**

- **Why do you believe you are the best candidate for this office?:**

I am the best candidate for this office because I am the only candidate with the lived experience, progressive platform, and political courage that this moment calls for.

I don't need to study the impact of fully-funded after-school programs because I know their impact. They're what connected me with adult role models, got me a job in high school, and set me on the path I'm on today. The housing crisis is not an abstract idea to me. I grew up in public housing, and I know that safe, stable, healthy housing keeps our communities safe. I don't need to "consider" the repeal of LEOBOR. I've felt race-based violence, and I know we must unconditionally repeal LEOBOR and prosecute police brutality.

I am the only candidate who has publicly signed the Green New Deal and No Fossil Fuel Money pledges, the only candidate to publicly pledge not to take corporate PAC and lobbyist money, and the only candidate to publicly support Medicare for All.

I am the only candidate who has indicated that they would vote for Senate leadership positions based on the candidates, and not based on how my party tells me to vote.

- **What are your top goals if you are elected?:**

My top priorities are a Green New Deal, fixing Providence public schools, racial justice, ending gun violence and safer neighborhoods, and reproductive rights. None of these are simple issues with simple answers, and I encourage you to read my full platform on my website ([phamforri.com](http://phamforri.com)) for more specific policy points. Some points I would like to highlight are:

- 100% renewable energy as quickly as possible
- Replace lead pipes, abate lead paint, and clean up pollution in the Port of Providence
- Invest in non-car infrastructure like the Pedestrian Bridge and the East Bay Bike Path, as well as fast & frequent public transit
- Fix Providence school buildings now and stop kicking the can down the road

- End the requirement that Providence teachers to reapply for their current positions every year
- Establish a Promise Program to retain teachers, especially teachers of color, in Providence schools
- Fully fund after-school programs that are truly enriching, not just supervisory
- Employ counselors over police officers in schools
- Fully repeal LEOBOR and prosecute policy brutality
- Ban assault weapons and high-capacity magazines and close permitting loopholes
- End restrictions on biased counseling and waiting periods before abortions
- Require that all insurance plans cover abortion

All of my priorities are connected to each other. Cleaning up pollution is about reproductive health. Planned parenthood enables educational opportunities. Counselors over cops in schools is racial justice. Repealing LEOBOR means safer communities. Quality schools and fully-funded after-school programs are gun violence prevention. Reducing gun deaths must include mental healthcare. Universal healthcare reduces income inequality. Labor rights are essential to win living wages. Good-paying union jobs are a foundation of the Green New Deal. Replacing lead pipes and abating lead paint helps children succeed in school.

The next Senator from District 3 needs to recognize that none of these issues exist in isolation and must craft and advocate thoughtful policy that recognizes these connections.

- **What are the major obstacles you face?:**

As an AAPI woman, I face being an invisible voice. I've always been seen as a foreigner, regardless of where I've lived in this country, including in the mostly BIPOC neighborhood in the mostly white town I grow up in, and even in a diverse city like Providence. Since I announced my run, some pundits have questioned whether an Asian-American candidate can win a "wealthy, white" district like this one. Those people forget that SD3 is in the top third of racially-diverse Senate districts, that it has a high degree of income diversity, that it has the highest number of Asian-Americans of any Senate district in the state, and that people don't only vote for candidates of their same race or income level. I'm going to overcome this obstacle simply by getting elected as the first Asian-American person in the RI General Assembly. I'm going to do that by talking to as many voters as I can. What I've been hearing while canvassing so far is that voters are concerned about the environment, racial justice, public schools, neighborhood safety, and reproductive rights, not the fact that I'm an Asian-American woman.

- **How will you work with the RI Democratic Women's Caucus if you are elected?:**

My political beliefs are informed by my lived experience, my progressive values, and my time as a teacher. My policy platform is the result of those beliefs, but I did not come up with any part of my platform by myself. It was activists and organizers, including people in the RIDWC, who made Medicare for All, the Green New Deal, and a \$15 minimum wage mean something to people. That makes me accountable to and dependent on the broad movement for justice that the RIDWC is a part of. There will no doubt arise new policies in the near future for us to popularize and fight for. My responsibilities would include communicating regularly and strategizing collaboratively with the caucus and using my available powers as a Senator to advance our goals.

- **The RI Democratic Women's Caucus is committed to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion, and actively anti-racist policies and practices. How you have shown your commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and active anti-racism?:**

Last year, I led the creation of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee for staff members in my school district. The committee surveyed the district's existing anti-racism and DEI policies, reevaluated all curricula, and established DEI programs for students. I also served as the advisor for the Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) and BIPOC Student Union. This year I spoke at the 1000 Paper Cranes Project Asian Visibility Rally and Vigil in Providence. I spoke about my experiences as an AAPI teacher as well as the general obstacles I've faced as an AAPI woman. I feel strongly about the need for solidarity and support between Asian and Black and brown communities, which is why I have participated in Black Lives Matter protests over the past several years.

- **Do you support reproductive choice?:**  
Yes
- **Do you support LGBTQ+ rights and liberation?:**  
Yes
- **Do you support single payer universal healthcare?:**  
Yes
- **Do you support diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and actively anti-racist policies and practices?:**  
Yes
- **Do you commit to opposing leadership who work against Caucus goals, including those identified above?:**  
Yes

- **Please add any other thoughts or clarifying information you feel important to your answers:**

I refuse to vote for any candidate for the Senate Presidency or Senate leadership positions who will work against the Caucus's and my goals. That includes any candidate who is personally anti-choice, anti-LGBTQ+, or pro-gun. I am not being supporting by any such politicians, so I don't think they should expect me to support them.

At the same time, I am committed to working with anyone, regardless of party or ideology, to pass the legislation that we urgently need to pass.