

2018 Pennsylvania CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate Name: Judith Higgins

Running For: PA Senate

District: 28

Party Affiliation: Democratic

Charitable nonprofits include groups like food banks, Habitat for Humanity, YMCAs, religious institutions, hospitals, museums, libraries, child care centers, and many more. What has been your personal experience with nonprofits (ex: as a board member, employee, volunteer, or donor)? How do these experiences shape your policy positions?

I am a regular donor to the Food Bank, both financial and food items, which is one of my priorities. I believe that no one, adult or child, should be hungry and unable to find a source of food. I am a strong supporter of nonprofits as they provide a strong bridge for communities. This is particularly important when the fabric of our society seems to have so many weak points.

What is your position on the following tax issues that affect charitable nonprofits:

Do you support preserving state and local sales and real-estate tax exemptions for charitable nonprofits?

Support continuing the exemptions for charitable nonprofits.

Do you believe that nonprofits should be required to provide Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOTS) or Services in Lieu of Taxes (SILOTS)?

If the nonprofit can contribute, it will benefit the community, particularly the schools. I do not believe it should be required, however.

Would you support additional state tax revenues dedicated to fund nonprofits providing contracted government health and human services?

Yes, because there are not sufficient health and human services options, typically, in any locale.

Additional comments about tax policies that affect nonprofits:

Nonprofits provide more than 720,000 jobs in Pennsylvania (15% of the state's workforce). What policies would you propose to promote continued job growth for private employers, including both nonprofit and for-profit business?

Forgiving a portion of school loans in exchange for working for nonprofits. Providing educational assistance to those individuals seeking to enter these fields and ensuring that certification opportunities are presented in a manner that ensures a quality workforce but does not create unusual or discriminatory barriers.

Would you favor legislation that would reduce the likelihood of a budget impasse in future years? If so, what type of legislation?

I would suggest that any budget that is late will also result in payments to legislators be frozen. Payroll for the entire legislature may encourage more conciliatory working conditions.

Would you support regulatory changes that increase efficiencies and nonprofit-government partnerships. (Proposed regulatory changes could include reducing redundancies across state agencies - e.g. common pre-award processes, budget templates, use of a single audit, reporting template and central depository vault)?

It would be a common-sense decision, in my opinion, to simplify budget and reporting templates. Saving time, frustration and duplication is needed for all of us. For example, the forms used to file for campaign reporting, in my opinion, are complicated and confusing, resulting in another challenge to anyone contemplating running for office.

If elected, what would be your top three policy priorities?

1. Education
2. Jobs
3. Property tax reform