

2018 Pennsylvania CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate Name: Maria Collett

Running For: PA Senate

District: 12

Party Affiliation: Democrat

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 began my career as an attorney with the New Jersey Attorney General's Office, fighting for children victimized by abuse and neglect. I then became a registered nurse, where I've worked at the bedside in the areas of trauma, pediatric home health and long-term care. I have dedicated my life to being a voice for people in need and hope to continue doing so in Harrisburg. I recognize the incredible work that nonprofit organizations do in providing much needed services and opportunities to our communities. I have personally donated time and money to nonprofit organizations like:

GIFT OF LIFE HOUSE -- I run and raise money every year for this organization that helps organ transplant patients have a place to stay close to their families while they await, undergo, and recover from transplants. It's where my father stayed at the end of my mother's life. She was on the list for a liver but passed away before receiving one.

NATIONALITIES SERVICE CENTER -- In law school, I volunteered for this Philadelphia non-profit working on asylum cases to help victims of war crimes and domestic violence navigate the immigration process and legal system to gain asylum.

HCM FOUNDATION FOX CHASE AWAY CANCER CHARITY -- I run and raise money every year for this organization whose mission is to raise money and awareness for lifetime support of families who are significantly impacted by cancer. I run in honor of my husband who currently has cancer, for our family that is impacted by his diagnosis, and for all of the families and victims who are impacted by cancer.

MITZVAH CIRCLE FOUNDATION -- I recently had the opportunity to meet with the Executive Director of this local organization that provides necessities to families in need in my district and volunteer with them. I am excited to continue working with this group and amplifying their message.

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?

Charitable nonprofits play a vital role in employing and offering assistance to Pennsylvanians. I support the preservation of tax 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)?

I agree with PANO that payments or services in lieu of taxes should be fully voluntary and not be coerced by municipalities.

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

Yes. As a former attorney working with children victimized by abuse and neglect and as a registered nurse who has worked at the bedside in the areas of trauma, pediatric home health, and long-term care, I know how important nonprofits can be in filling gaps in much-needed services.

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?

I believe we need to encourage business development and make Pennsylvania more attractive to new businesses (including green and renewable energy, new technology and modern manufacturing), stabilize and nurture distressed communities, provide our children with the tools to be too successful in the ever-changing global economy, and provide struggling workers with continuing education efforts so that they can take better advantage of today's economy and prepare themselves for inevitable changes to come.

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

I support legislation such as "no budget, no pay" that would reduce the likelihood of an impasse. I also agree with PANO that we need to protect Pennsylvania's service recipients and service providers by assuring that funding for essential services that directly impact the health and safety of Pennsylvanians continue to be paid during a budget impasse.

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)?

I support regulatory changes that would increase efficiencies and simplify the relationship between non-profits and government. Some changes that would help fix broken and antiquated grant contracting systems might include: collaborative problem solving (through, for example, the creation of task forces, the appointment of nonprofit liaisons and/or the establishment of an independent department to focus on nonprofits) and standardizing and simplifying complex application and reporting requirements.

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

I believe that healthcare is a human right. As a nurse, finding a way to make affordable, high-quality healthcare a reality for all Pennsylvanians is one of my top priorities. If the federal government won't protect and improve the ACA then our state legislators must step up and ensure that the people of Pennsylvania have affordable coverage options. I will fight to protect important programs like Medicaid, Medicare, and CHIP, and I will make sure our legislators are doing everything in their power to fight the devastation of the opioid crisis.

Education funding and strong public schools are another top priority. Harrisburg must do better when it comes to making sure all of our children, regardless of where they live, have access to quality public education and the tools for a bright future. While I applaud Governor Wolf's 2018-2019 budget provision for an additional \$100M increase in general education, \$20M in special education, \$40M in Head Start and \$60M career/tech funding, these increases will only go so far. Pennsylvania's contribution to education funding is lower than average: 37% vs 45% for other states. This gap leaves local school districts largely reliant upon their local tax base to fund their schools and contributes to the disparate amounts spent per student in wealthy vs poorer districts. We must change this formula: it exacerbates education inequity across the Commonwealth. I will support a fair funding formula applied to all monies spent for education to bridge equity gaps across districts and support funding for proven strategies that impact early learning to close our

achievement gaps within districts. Further, skyrocketing higher education costs and student loan debt are preventing young adults from getting traction in life. We must do more to address these problems and ensure that our future generations have adequate pathways for success.

Finally, ensuring Pennsylvanians have access to clean, safe water is of particular concern to me and the residents of my District, many of whom are dealing with looming water safety, remediation, and public health concerns as a result of PFOS contamination at the Willow Grove Naval Air Station. Pennsylvanians have a constitutional right to "clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment." Right now, the DEP lacks the manpower and resources to enforce clean water standards. This is just one example of the danger presented by lack of adequate funding to our DEP. Our DEP needs the funding, staff, and tools to do its job and keep our environment and people safe.