



2018 Pennsylvania CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate Name: Susan Boser

Running For: US House

District: Pennsylvania 15th District

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 have a background in working for nonprofit human services for approximately 20 years. My first job after college was as a cook in a group home for teenage boys with emotional and behavioral problems. Over the next several years, I was promoted a couple times while also pursuing a Master's in Counseling while working there. I earned my M.A.Ed. in Counseling in 1983 and became Director and Treatment Coordinator of the group home. I worked there until 1989. I then went to work for a drug and alcohol treatment facility. I earned a credential as a Certified Alcoholism Counselor and provided direct treatment for addiction for adults and adolescents, and also served as Family Services Coordinator. In 1994, I went to work for a home-based, crisis intervention program. The purpose of this program was to provide intensive, short-term services to support families in crisis that were at risk of losing their kids to placement. I worked as director of this program for three years.

This work put master's level counselors in the field with families, providing a much deeper understanding of the circumstances they faced. Nearly all the problems involved deep poverty, and a human service system that did not work well for them. I began partnering with a team led by a county commissioner to see if we could find ways to improve services. We learned that the issue was policy, and how it determined the structure of the funding, which determined the structure of the services. We also learned that we could not change with our current options. I made the decision to return to school to learn more about how policy worked, and how it might be used to create the social change needed at the local level. I entered a doctoral program, and in 2001 earned a Ph.D. from Cornell University in Human Service Studies, in the Department of Policy Analysis and Management.

For my research study at Cornell, I directed a project that sought to develop a mechanism for funding human services in a way that made better sense for rural counties. The study examined if it was feasible to use managed care strategies to put human services under local, collaborative control in a partnership of four rural counties – Allegany, Chemung, Steuben and Schuyler counties in the Appalachian region of south-central New York State. This project included a team of local government officials, human service providers, and people who used human services. Together, we designed a model for a nonprofit entity under local control that would be a funnel for Medicaid and other types of funding. We were successful in securing authorizing legislation from the New York State for a 2-year pilot project. The project received an award for leadership in innovation in health care from the Governor's Office.

I'm now a professor at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), continuing my research on how local government can combat social problems and teaching my students to take action and work for change. I've been an active volunteer as well, working with the Indiana County Sustainable Economic Development Task Force. I'm also on the Board of Directors for the Community Guidance Center and on the Steering Committee for the Food Co-Op of Indiana PA.

I realized that if I wanted to see the kind of change that requires US government support and funding, I need to take my passion and commitment to Washington and walk the halls of Congress, solving the problems with a willingness to listen and work together for PROGRESS FOR ALL.

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

Do you support or oppose the repeal of the Johnson Amendment (preventing nonprofits from participating in candidate endorsement and campaign financing)?

The Johnson Amendment, part of Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) appropriations bill, prohibits nonprofits that provide charitable services from endorsing or funding political campaigns in order to keep their tax-exempt status. Currently, there is an effort to block the IRS from enforcing this law, so that "churches" can use their charitable contributions to influence partisan political campaigns. I support the Johnson Amendment that is part of the FSGG bill and do not support the initiative to repeal or alter the amendment.

Do you support or oppose a universal charitable deduction, allowing all Americans to deduct their charitable gifts?

I support universal charitable deduction to allow all Americans to deduct their charitable gifts.

Do you support or oppose the continuation of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, allowing public sector employees to have their loans forgiven after 10 years of consecutive payment and fulltime work in the public sector?

I support the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

Do you support or oppose including a citizenship question on the 2020 census?

I oppose the citizenship question.

Do you support or oppose repeal of new unrelated business income tax (UBIT) on parking and transportation benefits offered by nonprofits?

I support the repeal of the unrelated business income tax on parking and transportation benefits for employees.

Additional comments about tax policies that affect nonprofits:

Nonprofits provide more than 700,000 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?

In Pennsylvania's 15th Congressional District, the unemployment rates are higher, and the average family income lower than state averages. Human services in the rural areas provide help when families go through difficult times. Since I worked in human services for 20 years, I know first-hand how vital these services are including effective drug and alcohol prevention and treatment programs. To ensure that families have access, I will find ways to secure adequate funding of these initiatives so non-profit agencies and services can continue their mission of helping those in need.

People need jobs, and the ability to earn a decent living. To attract and keep businesses, we need an educated/skilled workforce, good infrastructure including high-speed internet, and sensible plans that will help small businesses.

To prepare educated and skilled workers, local public schools and vocational programs need more federal funding. Additional federal funding would reduce the local tax burden for our citizens in rural areas while providing public schools the resources they need to educate our children.

As you drive along the highways or over the bridges in central/western Pennsylvania, you can't help but notice the deteriorating conditions of our infrastructure. It is time to repair the decaying infrastructures in Pennsylvania and build modern public transportation systems. I will advocate for funding for these much-needed projects. These ventures will provide good-paying jobs for many Pennsylvanians and help to stimulate the local economy in the short term. In the long term, well-maintained, modern roads and bridges will allow businesses of all types easier access to goods and materials as well as clients and customers.

For education, businesses and non-profit agencies to flourish, they need high-speed broad-band internet services. Many rural areas do not have access to the internet, so are falling behind in this digital age. I will advocate for cooperatives to provide internet service to these neglected areas.

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

My 3 top priorities are: JOBS AND ECONOMY, HIGH-SPEED INTERNET, AFFORDABLE QUALITY HEALTHCARE.

JOBS AND ECONOMY: As my first priority, I am committed to legislation that will advance the economy in a direction that will help families and individuals in rural areas grow and flourish. This will include advocating for job creation, high-speed broadband internet in rural areas and net neutrality, strategies to promote small businesses, creating business opportunities through renewable energy, infrastructure maintenance and development, and agricultural cooperatives.

The actions taken by Congress over the past 10 years are leaving rural areas in Pennsylvania behind. While seeking to attract large businesses to locate plants in our district is useful, it cannot be our only strategy, and it cannot come at the cost of significant tax breaks. I believe rural Pennsylvania needs a representative in Congress who will help small businesses, including the renewable energy sector, to secure regulatory relief so they can flourish. I am one of the leaders of the Sustainable Economic Development Task Force of Indiana County. The County Commissioner's Office initiated the Task Force. Their goal is to support economic development through renewable energy and other sustainable practices. Based on the results of this group, I would expand opportunities in rural Pennsylvania for businesses to grow this rapidly developing sector. I also support agricultural cooperatives.

HIGH-SPEED INTERNET: Currently, the FCC reports that approximately 800,000 Pennsylvania residents do not have access to high speed internet. This holds rural areas back; for business to be successful, for job seekers to effectively search for employment, and for our next generation to thrive, they must have access to broadband internet. This includes access to information, online education and training, and the ability to conduct business through the internet, to access email, use video conferencing, or telecommute. I will work tirelessly to expand affordable access to high speed internet services throughout rural areas.

AFFORDABLE QUALITY HEALTHCARE: I will work to improve the Affordable Care Act, and in time, seek to replace it with Medicare for All. Access to adequate healthcare is a right and, like most other advanced nations, the U.S. should eventually transition to a 'Medicare for all' system. However, I also understand that we currently have an extensive and complex medical system and reforming it will take time and care. Per capita, health care costs in the United States are more than double the average of other western, industrialized nations, but our health outcomes are among the worst. Our system for paying for access to good quality health care must change. I will craft and support policies that will advance the health and well-being of the people in our great nation.

I have listened to your concerns and will continue to be here for you. You can count on me to work tirelessly for you and your family! I am deeply committed to policies and funding that will allow us to work together to revitalize our local economies and provide a good life for our children and their families ... PROGRESS FOR ALL!