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**Q1**

Candidate name

Jennifer O'Mara

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**Q2**

Office running for (governor, PA House, PA Senate)

PA House

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**Q3**

District

165

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**Q4**

Party affiliation

Democrat

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**Q5**

How have you or someone close to you benefited from nonprofit services?\*Nonprofits include groups like food banks, Habitat for Humanity, YMCAs, religious institutions, museums, libraries, childcare centers.

I attribute much of my foundational knowledge to nonprofit services because of how much we utilized them when I was young. Throughout the year, I was an active member of the Free Library of Philadelphia and we even spent the summer participating in their book challenges to win free lunches at Pizza Hut. We also were members of the local YMCA and the CYO. These programs truly enriched my childhood and helped to build my knowledge, team building skills, social skills and physical skills. I lived in inner city Philadelphia and this was pivotal for me and other children in my community. I know this is true in all communities and I truly value the breadth of benefits that nonprofits add to our communities.

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**Q6**

Nonprofits not only provide mandated services on behalf of state and federal government, but they positively contribute to the Commonwealth (providing 15% or 807,000 jobs), and by bringing in revenue from outside the state. What policies do you propose to promote continued job growth for nonprofit employers so they can continue addressing community needs?

As someone who has served on the board of one nonprofit organization and been employed by another, I know that there's often more work for an organization's limited staff than they can handle, and that too many non-profits do not have the funding to hire more staff. It's imperative that the state legislature find ways to provide additional funding to nonprofits that are doing critical and necessary work in our communities. This can be done by finding novel ways of generating more funds, including new or increased fees, allowing state residents to make small donations to statewide funds when they renew their driver's license, or by making funds available to the organizations that need them through the state's annual budget.

I also think we should work to do a better job to promote state grant programs and ensure that even the smallest nonprofits have the ability to apply for potential funds.

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**Q7**

Would you support increases in reimbursement rates\* for nonprofits providing contracted government health and human services? If not, please explain why.\*Some rates have not been increased for over a decade.

I would absolutely support increases in reimbursement rates for nonprofits that provide these essential services. Many of these providers are overburdened and need additional help to ensure they're able to provide their services effectively and efficiently.

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**Q8**

87% of nonprofits were negatively impacted by the pandemic - and continued to provide services to those most vulnerable. The state has yet to designate funding to support our work. Given the likelihood of a looming recession, what policies do you support to ensure financial support to these nonprofits so critical to your work?

In addition to opening new sources of funding for nonprofits, an additional tool that can help provide financial support to these organizations is loan forgiveness. While many nonprofits that borrowed PPP loans to help make ends meet during the COVID-19 pandemic have already had those loans forgiven, forgiving additional state-level loans to nonprofit organizations that are still struggling to recover from the impact of the pandemic is one additional policy option we should consider.

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**Q9**

Many nonprofits were created to address inequities in policy or programs.\* If elected, how would you go about identifying and addressing these inequities?\*Examples: Food banks exist to serve those who live in food deserts or have other limited access to food. Suicide hotlines exist to serve those who have no where else to turn when life no longer seems worth living.

During my time in the legislature, I have tried to identify these inequities by listening to my constituents about what they need help with, and then I've worked to find bipartisan ways to rectify these issues. In three cases, this has resulted in legislation that I authored or co-authored managing to pass in the legislature and become law. The first two of those bills created new sources of funding for the Veterans' Trust Fund; the second, the Hunger Free Campuses Act that passed as part of our state budget earlier this year, sets aside funding for the public colleges and universities in our state to help students who are struggling to afford food on top of their tuition. I'm proud of my track record of addressing these inequities, and I'll keep working on these issues as long as I'm in office.

During the pandemic, I also took the lead on organizing drive-through food drives to provide food to food banks in my district during COVID. They were so successful that the county government began organizing others across the county. The dozens of food drives that took place as a result of my district office's initiative provided much-needed food to dozens of food banks from all parts of the county during a truly trying time.

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**Q10**

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

\*Expanding access to healthcare, including mental and reproductive healthcare

\*Increased funding for public education

\*Worker's rights and creating good-paying jobs

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