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Q1

Candidate name

Paul Takac

Q2

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

PA House

Q3

District

82

Q4

Party affiliation

Democratic

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.

When I was ten years old my mother died of cancer and soon after my father went on disability and began a decades-long battle with alcohol. As a young teenager I was extremely fortunate to have access to a Boys and Girls Club in our town. When out of school, I spent virtually all of my time there for several years. I have vivid memories of the spaces and people there, especially the staff. It was a refuge and a positive, safe space during a time when I really needed it.

As an adult, my wife and I have been active in several local nonprofit organizations, including volunteering with the State College Area Food Bank and serving as treasurer and race administrator for our local ski team (a 501(c)3 non-profit organization). We have also maintained a family membership at our local YMCA for over 20 years.

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?

Nonprofit organizations have traditionally played a key role in meeting critical community needs and are often better positioned to provide those services than governmental agencies. I believe that state and local governments should make it as easy as possible to engage, fund, and administer partnership programs with nonprofit organizations. This is especially true in light of the challenges caused by the pandemic, rising levels of poverty, and community and family stress, as well as the opportunities offered by increased federal and state pandemic and social service funding.

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.

Yes, I would support increases in reimbursement rates for nonprofits providing contracted services. After speaking with several local nonprofit organizations, it is clear that one of the most significant challenges they face is recruiting and retaining the professional staff needed to run their organizations. And in many cases, the salary and benefits they can offer are not only inadequate and insufficient, but not commensurate with the education, training, and experience of their employees. For example, I have spoken with several experienced nonprofit workers who have been forced to leave their professional careers and get a job in retail simply in order to support themselves and their families. Increasing reimbursement rates will help nonprofit boards and administrators begin to address these challenges and also offer the highest quality services and hopefully expand them to more people and communities in need.

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?

It is important to make federal and state COVID relief funding, including emergency response resources, available to nonprofits to address the negative impacts of the pandemic on the communities they serve. Those payments should also be expedited and processes simplified to the greatest extent possible. I know of several small, rural volunteer ambulance companies who struggled with meeting and completing the federal application forms for state-administered emergency relief funds, and as a result many simply missed out on those funds. I believe that the Commonwealth has an obligation to remove as many barriers as possible for nonprofits to access and use the funding they are eligible for.

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.

I believe that one of the keys to my success in business and local government has been my willingness to seek out expertise, ask good questions, and then listen closely to the answers and act accordingly. I also deeply believe in the need to strive for justice and equity, while fully understanding and appreciating the historical, structural, and political barriers that have disproportionately affected so many communities. In terms of identifying inequities, it is crucial to listen to those communities and those on the frontlines serving them, which in many cases are nonprofit organizations. However it is important to note that openness and dedication to listening is not passive but an active, ongoing commitment, as is the responsibility to act accordingly to address those inequities.

Q10

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

My primary priorities as a state legislator are ensuring full and fair funding for public education (K12, higher education, and post-secondary workforce development), support for working families (including access to affordable healthcare, a living wage, and removing barriers to employment such as childcare and eldercare), protecting rights (including reproductive, LGBTQ+, and voting rights), and making long overdue investments in the environment and workforce to support the transition to a sustainable clean-energy economy.
