

## 2010 Sample Questions for Debates or Voters' Guides

### US Congress suggested by LWVUS

1. What do you believe the federal government should do to control global climate change?
2. What should be done by the federal government to reduce our use of and dependence on fossil fuels and spur the use of clean energy?
3. In this time of high unemployment, what are the most important things that should be done to improve our nation's economy?
4. What should the federal government do about the growing economic disparity between the middle class and the well-to-do?
5. Please explain why you do or do not believe that the federal government should ensure that every American has health coverage.
6. Do you support maintaining the Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE) as an independent body to ensure that Members of the House of Representatives obey the ethics rules?
7. What do you think is the proper role of corporations in American elections?
8. Do you support requiring full disclosure of all political expenditures, and why?
9. What measures would you support to provide voting representation in the U.S. Congress for American citizens living in the District of Columbia?
10. How will you balance the continuing costs of military actions with the costs of domestic needs?
11. What are the most important steps toward assuring the short and long term security of Americans at home and abroad?
12. What are the best ways to ensure that nuclear weapons are never used?
13. What should the federal government do to create the world's best educational system for all children in America?
14. What are the most important things Congress can do to ensure implementation of the Open Government Directive, which calls for a more transparent, participatory and collaborative government?

When can the Nation's Capitol establish guide lines for the implementation of alternative energy fuels in the buildings and vehicles to serve as a example of to the rest of the Country?

### PA Governor and General Assembly

#### Representative Government

1. What is your opinion of the legislative reforms recommended by the Bonusgate Grand Jury? Do you have other recommendations for reform? What would you do to promote such reforms?
2. What suggestions do you have to improve the ethics of members of the General Assembly? Would the proposed Commission on Public Integrity serve this function? Why or why not?
3. How might the budget procedure be improved so that Pennsylvania could reach agreement by the deadline or sooner?
4. How could the cost of operating the General Assembly be reduced?
5. Right now funding for personnel and other office resources seems to be based on seniority. Do you favor equalizing allocation of office staff for legislators?
6. Pennsylvania is one of only 11 states that do not cap contributions to candidates for public office? How do you believe campaign finances influence decision making in Harrisburg? Do you think a limit should be placed on contributions to candidates for public office including judges? Do you recommend any additional reforms to our campaign finance system?
7. Do you think candidates for governor should be able to select their running mates for the office of lieutenant governor? What is your opinion of suggestions that the office of lieutenant governor be abolished?

8. How would you define “judicial independence? What measures do you recommend to ensure judicial independence?
9. What is your opinion of our current system of electing judges?
10. Every session there are many amendments to the PA Constitution are proposed? Do you think it is time to convene a constitutional convention?
11. Do you support amending the Pa Constitution to change the system for reapportionment and redistricting? What changes would you recommend?
12. Do you think the PA Constitution should be amended to remove the requirement that voters give an excuse in order to cast an absentee ballot?
13. What measures do you propose to increase voter participation? Would you favor allowing eligible citizens to both register and cast a ballot on the day of a primary or election?
14. In this election cycle there were many successful challenges filed against candidates in the primary and minor party candidates seeking to get on the ballot in the General Election? Do you think the criteria for removing names from nominating petitions is fair? What about the requirement that minor party candidates collect many more signatures than major party candidates?
15. What changes if any would you recommend to the administration of elections in Pennsylvania to ensure uniformity in election procedures across the state?

## Social Policy

### Death Penalty

1. Pennsylvania has one of the largest numbers of people on death row in the nation, with over 220 presently condemned to death. This is a huge expense for taxpayers, much larger than the cost of life sentences, and furthermore the State Bar Association has declared that the death penalty is applied unfairly along racial and economic grounds. What measures would you propose to deal with this situation?

### Transportation

1. What measures do you support to solve Pennsylvania’s transportation funding problems?
2. What is your opinion of proposals to get the private sector more involved in building roads, bridges and transit systems as part of a long term solution to Pennsylvania transportation funding problems? What other measures do you recommend?

### Fiscal Policy/Taxation

3. Do you think the current system of taxation in Pennsylvania is fair? What changes if any would you recommend?
4. Do you have ideas for reducing reliance on property taxes to fund public education? Local government services?

### Education

5. In 2008, funding for basic education across the state, based on a costing-out study of what was necessary for a good education, was adopted. This meant an increase state funding for basic education with equity to be achieved within six years. In these days of tight budgets, how do you propose to keep this commitment to basic education?
6. Special education was not included in the 2008 basic education funding legislation. However, the House has passed a bill that would require the state to support special education in much the same way that it supports basic education. Given current budget issues, would you be in favor of passage of this legislation? If not, what would you suggest to help school districts with special education funding?

7. A bill has been introduced that would give low-income families scholarships for their children to attend private schools if they are in a district with at least one low-achieving school. What is your position on scholarships provided by the state and local districts for children to attend private schools?
8. Cyber charter schools in Pennsylvania have been under criticism because they have amassed reserves far in excess of what is allowed for public schools. This appears to be because it costs less to educate children online than in a bricks and mortar school. Cyber schools attract children from many different districts. What suggestions do you have that would be fair to both the cyber charter schools and the public schools that pay for them?

### Gun Violence

1. In view of the fact that 1200 citizens are killed every year in Pennsylvania and 3000 wounded what requirements should gun owners be required to meet in order to own a gun?
2. The fact that a nine year old boy kills himself with his father's pistol is unheard of in other top industrialized countries. There have been two of these incidents in the Philadelphia suburbs in the past week, how can we prevent this from happening here in Pennsylvania?
3. In view of the enormous health care costs, one way we might cut them is with fewer gun deaths and victims, any ideas on that?

### Energy/Energy/Energy/Environment/Natural Resources

1. What can be done in the area of environmental protection for the people of Pennsylvania in the areas where gas exploration is occurring? How can our water supply be protected in relation to the gas retrieval process?
2. How do you think the revenue from the severance tax on natural gas should be allocated?
3. How do you think the public interests and private rights should be balanced in the extraction of natural gas from Marcellus Shale?
4. Given the opportunities and dangers inherent in natural gas drilling from Marcellus Shale, how will you go about making decisions that will provide maximum protection to the environment and public health while capitalizing on the economic potential of this natural resource?
5. What is your opinion of forced pooling and eminent domain as these relate to Marcellus Shale natural gas extraction?
6. With much of our electric power still generated by coal in Pennsylvania, what measures do you suggest for the safe disposal of coal ash in this Commonwealth that is a problem elsewhere in the country?
7. What do you suggest for energy efficiency incentives in Pennsylvania?
8. Are Pennsylvanians being adequately served by the Department of Environmental Protection? Why or why not? How could this be improved?
9. What suggestions do you have for a dedicated source of funding for Growing Greener?

### Transportation

1. What innovative ideas do you have to create an intermodal public transportation system that connects people with jobs markets, education and health care across the state?

2. How would you integrate the national transit systems into the state systems with responsible fiscal support from state, regional, county and local governments.
3. What percentage of the gas tax should go to roads and bridges and what percentage to public transit?
4. Will you support the use of public transit by using it to commute to your job in Harrisburg?
5. What role can surface mass transportation play in the movement of goods and people across regions to insure there are no shortages of food and fuel in the coming months?
6. Does the Federal Government have the ability to provide sufficient funding to states to maintain the interstate commerce needs of the United States?
7. The role of surface mass transportation in this country needs to given new attention from the Federal Government. What can be done to cut down on the excessive emissions of cars and trucks? How could the Federal Government encourage the use of trains, buses and carpools by the working public? Would raising the minimum age to drive a vehicle to the age of 21 across the nation help to cut down on vehicle emissions?
8. What can be done to encourage citizens to take individual responsibility to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels?
9. If available would you choose to use mass transit as your major means of transportation for the next 20 years?