

Democracy for Pittsburgh is the greater Pittsburgh meet-up group of Democracy for America, the offspring of the "socially progressive, fiscally responsible" Howard Dean campaign. We endorse only candidates who receive $\geq 70\%$ support from the voting membership. Members are encouraged to consider answers to these questions, candidate statements, newspaper interviews, and the answers you give to other groups. We try not to duplicate topics covered by other groups. Questions, answers and press materials submitted in electronic form will be posted on our website, <http://pghdfa.org/> (used almost exclusively for endorsements).

City and County executive, legislative and administrative offices:

I. Privacy, openness, and accountability: What have you done in the past to support "sunlight" laws or encourage public access to information, deliberation, and decision-making? (and/or) What existing or new ideas do you support, going forward, to encourage informed public participation? How have you / how would you protect the information of private individuals, that might otherwise be inappropriately disclosed by the push for greater public openness? From first responders (police, fire, EMT) through higher level administrative positions, what practical steps do you support to encourage professionalism and accountability?

I believe that openness ought to be one of the highest ideals of a government. As a public servant, I am elected to do the work of the people. Those individuals whom I represent have an inherent right to have access to information about how their government is, or is not, working in their best interests. One of my proudest accomplishments on City Council was working with Councilman Bill Peduto to pass a robust and long overdue set of campaign finance regulations for the city, including contribution limits, a searchable contribution database, and lobbyist disclosure and regulation.

I entered politics as a citizen and small business owner with the goal of bringing the community into the public policy process. From countless community meetings on the development of a plan for the responsible management of the South Side's business district, to addressing the concerns of residents in the Hilltop neighborhoods through the establishment of a district office in Arlington, my service on City Council has been, and will continue to be, motivated by a desire engage regularly and closely with those whom I represent.

When the public endorses a government with their votes and tax dollars, they deserve it to be accountable and professional, with a commitment to promoting the common good. An example of how the public can hold their city government accountable is the Citizens' Police Review Board (CPRB). I have been, and will remain, an ardent supporter for the valuable work that the CPRB does for the Pittsburgh community. A pioneering model of citizens demanding professionalism from their public servants, the CPRB investigates hundreds of complaints filed against the Pittsburgh Police. Through their hearings, they give citizens a chance to make their voices heard, as well as provide an opportunity to build trust, communication, and cooperation between our dedicated police officers and the communities that they protect.

II. Several public-private partnerships have been set up in areas such as the Schenley plaza and riverside locations on the Northside. While this pseudo-public space is lovely for recreation, it is also considered private for purposes of assembly, rallies, protests, or informational / not-for-profit leafleting--effectively, off-limits, even including the adjacent city sidewalks. Moving forward, how can the city and county prevent or remedy the significant de-facto privatization of public space, without, at the same time, countenancing harassment?

The rights to free speech and assembly rest at the cornerstone of our democracy, and issues like these must be handled with the reverence due to such foundational rights. In addition, public spaces are, at the most basic level, what makes a city a city and we are blest to have an abundance of such public spaces in Pittsburgh. As such, we need to ensure that the public nature of these spaces is protected, while also balancing the need also protects individuals' rights. One of the more effective means of balancing these two competing needs for public spaces is open, collaborative communication between those planning on

assembling, the private entity, and the city. Oftentimes, such front-end conversations can do wonders for mitigating problems like the one described above. In addition, from a legislative perspective, the city could negotiate provisions for public assemblies within public-private developments in the agreements that the city makes with a particular developer, as was done with prevailing wage legislation.

III. What sorts of jobs best anchor and sustain a community? What role, if any, should your office play in encouraging / not hindering certain types of job development?

The jobs that can create and foster strong communities are those that pay a living wage, offer fair and adequate benefits, and provide safe and supportive workplaces where all people are treated with dignity. I believe that the city has a very important role in fostering the development of these types of jobs. I am proud of the work that my colleagues and I have done in this area over the past three years. I have been a co-sponsor of legislation that requires development projects receiving city funding to pay a prevailing wage to their employees and adhere to practical environmental standards. Such legislation is one way that City Council can ensure that projects in our city create the right type of jobs for our residents and our communities. It is not enough to simply add number to job statistics – rather we need to be seriously concerned about attracting jobs that truly build strong communities.

IV. What sorts of development, redevelopment, or blight-fighting programs best anchors and sustains a community? What could you do, within the bounds of your office, to suggest, encourage, implement or support specific responses to (e.g.) abandoned or decrepit housing, declining schools, and/or other problems that typify a community in decline?

I am a big believer in the “broken window theory.” Taking care of the little things will prevent the big things from becoming a problem. From the perspective of the city, it is important to look at both the immediate and long-term needs of a neighborhood experiencing blight. In the short term, it is important to address the most immediate needs of the community. Abandoned house must be boarded up and, if necessary, demolished. Vacant lots must be cleaned, “greened,” and maintained. Litter and graffiti must be eliminated. Police must begin targeting the criminals whose behavior is pulling the neighborhood down. In the end, these seemingly small efforts can have a huge payoff as the community begins to take back its neighborhood. Though resources are limited, I believe that we could be doing a more thorough and equitable job of allocating those resources to neighborhoods most in need.

In the long-run, I am a firm believer in the importance of *community* development as the tool to address problems of blight in struggling neighborhoods. The success of any such effort is dependent on bringing members of the community together and having a conversation about what they envision for their community. The capacity of a community to bring together its collective strengths and expertise to improve their neighborhood is truly remarkable to witness, as I am witnessing in our Hilltop neighborhoods.

V. The 800 lb gorillas: Health care is a statewide / national level issue. So is ecological policy. However, benefits, funding, permitting and potentially funding of clinics are city and county issues (within the bounds set by Act 47). Similarly, both the city and county have some say in determining the appropriateness and location of coal and gas extraction / processing / waste product storage, from the standpoint of risks to public health and to infrastructure. In both cases, very large local employers have vested interests that may not be in line with the best interests of the citizenry. What, realistically, do you hope to do to further the best interests of the citizenry, and/or reduce the risk of inappropriate corporate influence?

I serve on City Council, and hope to continue serving there, as the representative of the more than 30,000 people who reside in the eleven neighborhoods of Council District 3. Upon taking the oath of office, I accepted a solemn and sacred responsibility to serve as the voice for these constituents in every step that I take as City Councilman. Corporations and interests group have the resources to hire professional lobbyists and consultants to make their cases to the city. An individual citizen, however, does not have that luxury. Thus, it is my job, and indeed my obligation, to be an advocate for the both the individual

citizen and the collective community. This is not to say that I am unconcerned about city-wide issues or the importance of businesses and other organizations, because as a former small business owner, I most certainly am. But the highest responsibility that I have as a City Councilman is to the people – collectively and individually – and nothing takes precedence over that duty.

For all offices: Answers should be ~50-300 words, and focus on whatever aspect of the question is most relevant for your specific office. You may also submit a candidate statement / press release and/or a link to a public YouTube statement. Your response can be in the form of e-mail text or an attached .doc, .rtf, .txt or .pdf file.

You must include a statement saying who is doing the actual e-mailing, and that the answers are in their final form, as approved by the candidate.