



Our Narrative and Agenda for 2024

Pennsylvanians work hard—not just for ourselves and our families but for our communities. We know that our success as individuals and as Pennsylvanians is a product of both our hard work and our common efforts.

Throughout the twentieth century, engaged Pennsylvanians joined community groups, advocacy organizations, and labor unions to bring us high wages, strong unions, public education at all levels, the protection of civil rights, and more. Together, we public policies that enabled our hard work to create vibrant economy and a strong middle class.

However, these achievements were imperfect. Too often, women; Black people; Indigenous people; people of color; immigrants, both documented and undocumented; people with disabilities; LGBTQ+ people; and other marginalized groups were excluded from these benefits.

Those same achievements—and our efforts to extend them to those previously excluded—have been under attack in the last twenty years by the right-wingers advancing a corporate-sponsored agenda. They have dominated Pennsylvania politics for too long making it increasingly difficult for too many to secure access to the common goods we all need: education and work training, housing, health care, child care, senior care, and a healthy environment.

Those who support the right-wing agenda stay in power only by dividing us against each other based on what we look like, where we were born, where we live, how we worship, and who we love.

Who We Are

Pennsylvanians Together is a campaign of diverse Pennsylvanians. We come from every corner of the state. We are rich and poor, Black, brown, and white. We are native-born and we are immigrants, both documented and undocumented. And we are determined to rise above our differences and work together for the goals we all share. We are fighting back against the right-wing agenda by blazing a new path toward an inclusive community and economy, one that provides the opportunities we all need to thrive.



OUR VISION

PENNSYLVANIANS TOGETHER aims to create a new era of political achievement that provides the common goods we all need to succeed as individuals. We reject the politics of division and intend to work together to create an inclusive commonwealth and economy that allows everyone to thrive, not just survive.

We are working to create

- **a fair economy** for all with high wages and strong unions.
- **education and training** that allow everyone to provide for their families and contribute to their communities.
- **affordable and quality housing, food, health care, childcare, and senior care.**
- **public safety** that emphasizes community policing and preventative strategies, to ensure the safety of those with mental illness or other disabilities.
- **a fair tax system** in which the ultra-rich and wealthy corporations pay what they owe.
- **infrastructure and environmental safeguards** including well-maintained roads and bridges, expanded transit systems, clean air and water, and eliminating the threat of climate change.
- **secure rights for all**, that eliminate barriers of race, gender, and sexual orientation to participation in our political and economic life and protect our freedom, including to have an abortion.
- **a vigorous democracy** in which there are no obstacles to voting and the impact of money on politics is limited.

A FAIR RETURN FOR OUR WORK

Too many Pennsylvanians work long hours for wages that do not allow them to support themselves or their families. They, like many local, community-based businesses, are at the mercy of large corporations that abuse them.

PENNSYLVANIANS TOGETHER calls for policies to protect and reward workers to ensure that everyone—with no exceptions—can secure a fair return on their work and give their kids a better life by

- removing the barriers that prevent Pennsylvanians from joining together to form unions to negotiate for better wages, benefits, and safety in the workplace and from creating worker-management councils in sectors of the economy that are not yet organized.
- ensuring that every worker has paid family leave and sick days.



- making it possible for undocumented workers to secure the driver's licenses they need to get to work.
- creating a living minimum wage that increases with the cost of living, ending the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers, ending the preemption of local minimum wage laws, and enforcing minimum wage laws.
- supporting local worker-based and community-based businesses that focus on the good of workers and their communities, not profits.
- fixing our unemployment system so it helps all who lose their jobs while helping the unemployed get the training they need to get better jobs at higher wages.

A GREAT EDUCATION FOR ALL

Education is the key to a bright future for every child, no matter where they live, the color of their skin, or their family's economic standing. Yet, the Right's divisive policies have created a system of public education in our state so unequal that the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court finds it unconstitutional. And rather than fix the problem, those same forces are now working to divert funding from public education to private schools that mainly serve the wealthy and some of which discriminate against students based on race, religion, ethnicity, disability status, and political beliefs.

PENNSYLVANIANS TOGETHER calls for every child to receive an equal and equitable public education by

- increasing state funding for childcare and pre-K programs and mandating universal kindergarten.
- fully and equitably funding and desegregating K-12 public schools so every child gets a superior education.
- reforming the system of cyber charter and charter school payments.
- banning new private school vouchers and creating full accountabilities for all private schools supported with tax credit voucher dollars.
- making tuition at community colleges and at our state colleges and universities, affordable to all—including undocumented immigrants—ensuring students can earn a degree without going deep in debt.
- relieving the student debt of those who are currently overburdened by paying back loans.
- investing in career and technical education, job training, and apprenticeship programs which are critical to the future of our children and our economy.



HEALTH CARE, SENIOR CARE, AND CHILD CARE FOR ALL

Unlike those who seek to divide us, we recognize our common vulnerability to illness and disease as well as the special needs of children and seniors, and those who care for them.

PENNSYLVANIANS TOGETHER calls for policies that ensure all of us—no matter our race, ethnicity, income, or immigrant status—can go to a highly-trained doctor or a hospital with the best equipment and that we can provide the best care for our loved ones, whether children or seniors, by

- creating state regulations that ensure no one is denied health insurance or is required to pay more if they have a pre-existing condition, as well as limiting the profits of health insurance companies.
- ending our dependence on private insurance by creating a public option for health insurance in Pennsylvania.
- guaranteeing access to essential health and hospital care in all urban, suburban, and rural areas.
- ensuring that every family can secure affordable and quality child care.
- guaranteeing that every senior can retire with dignity, whether in their own homes, their families' homes, or in high-quality, affordable retirement communities or nursing homes.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR ALL

Too often, political leaders divide our communities and side with developers and builders, leaving Pennsylvanians with low and moderate incomes—including many people of color and documented and undocumented immigrants—unable to find affordable housing.

PENNSYLVANIANS TOGETHER supports protecting renters, homeowners, and future homeowners, by

- creating eviction diversion programs and a “good cause” eviction requirement in every county, as well as fully funding the state’s Homeowner Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program (HEMAP).
- reducing the cost of housing through rental subsidies and targeted tax relief.
- making substantial new investments in housing for those who are homeless, for affordable housing, and for the Whole-Home Repairs program.
- changing zoning laws to encourage affordable housing development in gentrifying urban communities and the suburbs.
- creating programs to train and pay local community members to rehabilitate homes.



MAKE SURE EVERYONE PAYS THEIR FAIR SHARE

There is no greater sign of how the Right seeks to divide us than our upside-down tax system, which asks working people—especially those who are Black, brown, or immigrants, both documented and undocumented—to pay a far greater share of their income than that paid by wealthy corporations and the ultra-rich. Our tax system is not only unfair but it keeps us from raising the revenue we need to invest in our future.

PENNSYLVANIANS TOGETHER insists that everyone pays what they owe for our common needs by

- enacting the Fair Share Tax, which would raise taxes on profits, capital gains, dividends, and estates and reduce taxes on wages and interest.
- ending tax loopholes so that large multi-state and multinational corporations start paying taxes to the state.
- instituting a severance tax on natural gas drilling.
- creating a working families' tax credit, piggybacked on the federal Earned Income Tax Credit, which would prevent families from being taxed into poverty.
- taxing wealth fairly by creating a state-wide tax on intangible wealth and limiting property taxes to a reasonable share of family income.

ENSURE PUBLIC SAFETY FOR ALL

Right-wing politicians use the threat of crime to divide us and justify rapidly growing police forces as they cut the social services and crime prevention programs that can reduce violence. Our current model of policing is too often focused on reacting to crime after it happens instead of preventing it. Instead of working closely with communities, the police often stand above them. And we all know the tragic stories about an interaction with police resulting in harm, or even death, to Black and brown people; people who are experiencing homelessness; people living with the effects of trauma; people living with mental illness; or people living with developmental, physical, or mental disabilities.

PENNSYLVANIANS TOGETHER is committed to ensuring the safety of all by

- supporting community-based public safety efforts that provide the appropriate level of policing as well as necessary social welfare and mental health services to deal with situations beyond the capacity of the police.
- creating strong citizen oversight of law enforcement agencies that establishes training and mental health standards, has investigatory and disciplinary power, provides an independent review process for police officers who harm civilians, and eliminates all legal and contractual barriers to police accountability.



- enacting legislation that limits the use of deadly force, prohibits methods of detaining citizens likely to lead to injury and death, and not only requires officers of the law to report the misconduct of their peers but also protects them when they do.
- investing in low-income communities, and especially those of Black and brown people, to create economic opportunities that reduce crime and to repair the damage that our legacy of slavery, the “war on drugs,” and racism more broadly has created.

CLEAN AIR AND WATER FOR AND PROTECTION FROM CLIMATE CHANGE FOR ALL COMMUNITIES

Pennsylvanians in every corner of the state suffer from the effects of air and water pollution and the growing menace of climate change. These dangers especially afflict the communities of Black and brown people, those of us with low incomes, and documented and undocumented immigrants. Meanwhile, right-wing politicians seek to divide us with false claims that economic progress is impossible without environmental degradation.

PENNSYLVANIANS TOGETHER is committed to ensuring environmental and climate justice by

- investing in state funds and helping bring in federal funds, to clean brownfields and other dangerous sites, and to reduce local sources of air and water pollution.
- increasing the complement of environmental inspectors.
- doing our part to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gasses in Pennsylvania by entering the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) or similar program.
- funding community solar projects throughout the Commonwealth.

PROTECT OUR RIGHTS

“Equal rights before the law” is guaranteed by the U.S. and Pennsylvania constitutions. However, rights that we have long taken for granted are being threatened by extremist political movements. No one should face limitations on their liberty or discrimination based on their income, race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

PENNSYLVANIANS TOGETHER believes that we must ensure that the rights of every Pennsylvanian are protected by



- passing the Fairness Act in the Pennsylvania state Senate, which bans discrimination in securing public or private goods and services based on our race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
- allowing everyone to make fundamental decisions about their lives, including whether to have children, without the interference of the state.
- embedding the right to an affordable and safe abortion in our state constitution.

EVERY VOICE MUST BE HEARD AND EVERY VOTE COUNTED

Every other goal we seek is impossible without fair and secure elections with minimal barriers to voting. But extremists in Harrisburg want to make voting more difficult and have both threatened and acted to undermine the right of the people to choose their political leaders.

PENNSYLVANIANS TOGETHER seeks to eliminate barriers that prevent everyone—especially Black and brown people and those with low incomes—from playing a role in shaping our future government by

- preserving the current system, which allows voters to choose whether to vote in person or by mail.
- ensuring that early voting locations and ballot boxes are widely available to all voters in the state.
- allowing voters to register on Election Day.
- ending the partisan and racial gerrymandering of legislative districts.
- limiting the influence of money in our politics.
- ensuring that the people, not state legislators, can choose their own political leaders, including local, county, state, federal, and presidential electors.