

## QUESTIONS FOR MARCH 1 CONGRESSIONAL FORUM

- 1) Criminal Justice: Since Congress created mandatory minimum sentences for drug crimes in the 1980s, the federal prison population has grown from 24,000 prisoners to over 214,000 prisoners. Should the US abolish minimum mandatory sentences for non-violent drug offenses? What criminal justice reform measures would you work to achieve?

We all know that our criminal justice system is not equal. Unlike most elected officials, criminal justice reform is an issue that is personal to me. I am the only child of a convicted felon elected to statewide office in the United States. My father was wounded in Vietnam, got addicted to painkillers that were prescribed to him by the VA, which led down a path of substance abuse and eventually a federal drug conviction and a mandatory minimum sentence.

Mandatory minimum sentencing is not fair and does not make our communities safer. We must reform mandatory minimum sentencing laws, particularly for non-violent offenders, to give judges the flexibility to consider the reality of what individuals are going through.

I was the first state-wide elected official in Pennsylvania to come out in favor of taxing and regulating marijuana. Not only would it generate \$581 million in tax revenue for Pennsylvania, continuing to incarcerate people for marijuana possession makes no sense.

We need to treat drug addiction like the disease it is and get people into the appropriate treatment instead of incarcerating them. As the Auditor General, my office has audited all of the drug rehab programs in Pennsylvania to find which are working and which are not and that is the same approach I will take to Washington.

- 2) Gun Violence: Please discuss the measures you would support to address gun violence. What is your position on the following policies:
  - Universal background checks
  - A national permit to purchase policy
  - Banning firearms for individuals for individuals with domestic violence restraining orders
  - Banning ghost guns and 3D printing of weapons?

The gun lobby is powerful, and they need someone like me to take them on. Reducing gun violence is one area where my experience of taking on tough fights and holding powerful people accountable most prepares me to go to Washington. I have been endorsed by the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence because of my record as a leader on this issue.

As Auditor General, I did a Special Report on Firearm Safety and we found that two-thirds of all firearm deaths in Pennsylvania are the result of suicide. We need to do more to expand access to mental health care, especially in rural communities, to get people the help they need to prevent them from making that tragic decision.

About twenty-two percent of all gun sales in the US happen without a background check. I fully support universal background checks, which is also supported by 90 percent of Americans. I support red flag laws and preventing civilians from having access to weapons of war, which will prevent more unnecessary deaths due to gun violence. And finally, we must crack down on 3D printed guns. As your member of Congress, I would work together with federal law enforcement as well as state Attorneys General to make this happen.

- 3) Education: Secretary of Education DeVos proposes a 100% tax credit for donations from businesses and individuals to scholarship-sponsoring groups in order to fund tuition for private school pupils. Should the federal government provide tax credits or other forms of subsidy to non-public schools?

The Department of Education under the leadership of Secretary Betsy DeVos is taking us in the wrong direction. I have been recommended by the National Education Association (NEA) Fund for my record of holding public, charter, and cyber-charter schools accountable to make sure that kids are getting a quality education and that our tax dollars are being used in the right way. We clearly need to put more federal dollars into public schools. Specifically, the federal government needs to use funds available to meet its commitment to special education.

The federal government has failed on its commitment to fund special education under the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education) Act and under the current administration the rate at which the federal government has allocated funds to states has been falling even more every year. This means children with special needs are not getting the access or the education they need and deserve. In Congress, I would fight to ensure the federal government is fully meeting this commitment to make sure every child, regardless of income and regardless of ability, gets the education they deserve. Secretary DeVos' plan would take money out of the classroom, my plan would put that money back in the classroom.

- 4) Health Care: How would you address the current problems in our health care system, including
  - Policies to weaken Obamacare
  - Access to health care for those who cannot afford insurance or face unaffordable premiums, deductibles and copays
  - Escalating outrageous pharmaceutical costs

If there is an issue that I take most personally it is making sure folks have affordable healthcare and taking care of those with pre-existing conditions. I had a brother with muscular dystrophy and my family was never able to get health insurance for him. I know what it is like for those families who struggle with paying medical bills and funeral costs for their loved ones.

When the Affordable Care Act was passed, I thought that families would no longer have to go through what my family and many others went through. It would not have prevented my brother's death, but it would have prevented insurance companies from denying coverage based on a pre-existing condition. Rep. Scott Perry has voted to repeal the Affordable Care Act twelve times. If I am your next member of Congress, I will work to protect the most vulnerable in our society with everything I've got, not vote to strip away protections.

I support a public option that builds on and expands the Affordable Care Act. It would allow those with private insurance to keep it, and provides the option to buy into Medicare at an affordable rate. I also support automatic enrollment into Medicaid for those who cannot afford insurance.

We need to work to bring down the cost of prescription drugs. As Auditor General, I audited Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) who make billions of dollars to negotiate drug prices while prescription costs continue to rise. I demanded more transparency, oversight, and accountability

to help lower the cost of prescription drugs and doing the same thing on a national level would be one of my top priorities in Congress.

I support H.R. 3, the “Lower Drug Costs Now Act” which is common-sense bipartisan legislation to lower the cost of prescription drugs for all families and seniors. The legislation gives Medicare the power to negotiate for lower drug prices on behalf of Medicare recipients and those on private insurance, saving families thousands of dollars per year.

- 5) National Security: Please explain strategies and actions that would you support to insure our national security, including the problems of
- rogue nations, including Iran and North Korea, developing nuclear arms
  - continued spread of terrorist ideologies in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria and the rest of the world

The number one thing we need to do to improve our national security is rebuild our alliances across the world. Actions taken by the current administration have left us isolated from global allies. The United States should be a leader and example of freedom, decency, and civility.

We must reestablish ourselves as a global leader to address the challenges of nuclear proliferation, global terror, threats to cybersecurity, and protecting human rights. We should be reinforcing our relationships with our NATO allies and the UN, not threatening to pull away from them. When we remove ourselves from that role, the world loses confidence in our ability to lead as we once did.

- 6) Immigration: What would be the components of a comprehensive immigration policy that you would support? Please include your positions on the following in your response:
- DACA
  - Amnesty
  - Asylum
  - Border Wall
  - Family Separation

Our immigration system is broken and years of inaction have been exacerbated by the Trump Administration’s harmful actions which have left our immigrant communities living in fear and uncertainty. We must modernize border security with smart, targeted technology and practices to assess and address threats. We must create a fair pathway to citizenship for the nearly 11 million undocumented immigrants already in the United States. As Auditor General, I audited the Berks detention center, which is housing families seeking asylum, and have called on the federal government to shut it down. Seeking asylum is not a crime, and we need to place more immigration judges on the bench so those who are trying to come into our country legally are able to follow the appropriate process to do that.

- 7) Good Government: What type of “good government” and “anti –corruption” measures would you support to address the rampant corrupting influence of money in politics?

As Auditor General, part of my job is rooting out corruption in our system. In my tenure we have found over \$1 billion in taxpayer funds being wasted by Harrisburg and I've taken on tough fights on both sides of the aisle. I was also a leader on transparency during my time in the state legislature. I was the first legislator to post my office expenses publicly online and now it is a requirement that every member of the General Assembly make their expenses public online or electronically. That is the same type of approach I will take to Washington to make our government more transparent and honest.

I support legislation to end Citizens United and reform the corrupting influence of money in politics. I support H.R. 1 that would require dark money groups to disclose their donors and strengthen campaign finance oversight rules among many other policies to create a more accountable and ethical government.

- 8) Environment: What is your strategy for addressing global warming, including:
- Fracking
  - Carbon Tax
  - Assistance to victims and differential treatment of low-income Americans

The climate crisis is one of the biggest challenges we face. Addressing climate change is one of my top priorities and I am proud to be endorsed by League of Conservation Voters and Clean Water Action Pennsylvania. I believe we must take bold, aggressive action to tackle the climate crisis, while creating good clean energy jobs to provide a sustainable planet for future generations. The United States must demonstrate leadership on this issue because we cannot tackle climate change on our own. It will take an unprecedented global effort and if elected, I will urge whoever is in the White House to rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement.

Throughout my career, I have been a leader on this issue fighting for our environment, including my role as Deputy Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, where I was part of the team that helped secure the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards Act. As a state legislator, I sponsored and passed with bi-partisan support the Alternative Energy Investment Act which led to Pennsylvania being a leader in wind energy East of the Mississippi.

As Auditor General, my first audit was to assess the impact of fracking on the environment and drinking water quality. We found that the Department of Environmental Protection was not prepared to protect drinking water and enforce environmental protections, which led to the hiring of more inspectors. Last year, I released the first ever special report on the fiscal impact of climate change on the state of Pennsylvania. We found the state is spending millions of dollars annually on climate-related costs and called for an urgent, proactive, and comprehensive strategy to combat climate change.

Right here in South Central Pennsylvania, we have some of the worst air quality in the country and the Susquehanna River is suffering from over-pollution. I support improving our stormwater infrastructure and increasing stream buffers to protect our waterways from agricultural runoff. If elected, I will demand, regardless of who the president is, that the EPA enforce anti-idling regulations along trucking corridors in the district, which is a major contributor to the air-quality problem.

In Congress, I will focus on investment in alternative energy, including research on smarter energy storage for solar and wind, and a more durable grid. I support tax credits to incentivize

the use of solar. We need to work towards a 100% clean energy economy as quickly as science will allow while ensuring good-paying, family-supporting union jobs.

- 9) Income Inequality: How would you address income inequality, including
- Creation of living wage jobs and jobs of the future
  - The tax structure
  - Job training
  - Guaranteed annual income

To combat income inequality, we need to increase the minimum wage and strengthen equal pay laws to protect against sex-based pay discrimination. We need to ensure our tax code rewards working and middle-class families and is not a giveaway to the ultra-rich. I support expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

In Congress, I would fight to strengthen our labor laws and protect the rights of working people to join together in collective action to improve their working conditions. I support encouraging a greater emphasis on well-paying jobs in skilled trades and I support enhancements designed to better help older workers update their skill-sets. As Auditor General, I conducted an audit of Pennsylvania's workforce development system that called for a stronger commitment and more effective oversight to ensure Pennsylvania's vision and goals for workforce development are met. I will take that same type of leadership to Washington.

The best long term way to fight income inequality is to make sure that everyone has access to a quality, affordable education. We need to make sure that our public schools get the resources they need. I believe that our public universities should be free for in-state students who meet certain eligibility requirements based on strong academic performance. We also need to promote attending community colleges and trade or technical schools that may provide a lower-cost alternative to earning a degree.

- 10) LGBTQ Rights: The Trump administration has initiated changes in federal policy toward transgender individuals across both federal agencies and the military that decrease protections for this population. This occurs at a time when crimes directed toward transgender people increased 34% from 2017 to 2018. What will you do to protect the rights and safety of all Americans and reverse the changes in federal policy that discriminate against the transgender community in particular?

I have a long record of being an outspoken advocate for the LGBTQ community from publicly supporting the campaign for marriage equality to protecting members of the LGBTQ community in the workplace. I am proud to be endorsed by Equality PAC for my commitment to fighting for full LGBTQ equality. In Congress, I would support the Equality Act that would protect LGBTQ people from discrimination in housing, the workplace, and public accommodation.

While conducting the Pennsylvania School Safety Task Force with Gov. Tom Wolf, every single student we spoke to asked for more and better mental health services. It was heartbreaking to find out that 1 in 10 of our young people in Pennsylvania had attempted suicide and I know the rates are higher for LGBTQ youth. I would support any legislation to increase support services and safety and prohibit harassment and bullying in our schools and institutions of higher education.

I support protecting health care providers like Planned Parenthood that provide quality, affordable, and affirming health care for members of the LGBTQ community. I also support legislation that would require insurance plans to cover PrEP and other HIV prevention services.

I believe anyone who is called to serve this country should be able to do so and I support legislation to reject the Trump ban on transgender military service.

I support any effort to bar discriminatory practices in adoption and I support paid family leave that would include provisions to allow for care for chosen family.

I also know that members of the LGBTQ community exist in all of our communities so the fight for affordable health care, housing, an increase in the minimum wage, common sense firearm regulations, protecting voting rights, and environmental protection policies also impact the life and liberty of LGBTQ people in South Central Pennsylvania and across the country.

11) Voting Rights: Given the Supreme Court's decision regarding the Voting Rights Act, what can be done to ensure that all American citizens are able to easily vote?

The right to vote rests at the core of our democratic system. The Supreme Court's decision in 2013 to dismantle important protections in the Voting Rights Act opened the door to voter suppression laws across the country that have created barriers to voting which disproportionately impact people of color, low-income voters, students, and the elderly. The House of Representatives has already passed H.R. 4, which would restore the Voting Rights Act. This is critical in Pennsylvania and across the country to ensure that everyone has the right to cast their ballot. When I was a state legislator, I introduced a bill to allow early voting in Pennsylvania. In Congress, I would fight to expand early voting and vote-by-mail, to enact automatic voter registration, oppose voter ID laws, and ensure we have modern, secure, and streamlined voting systems. I support implementation of independent redistricting commissions to ensure voters are picking their representatives and not the other way around.

12) Women/Family Issues: Please address these issues affecting women voters

- Equal pay for equal work
- Paid family leave for parents and caregivers
- Reproductive rights
- Affordable child care
- Sexual harassment in the workplace

I have been endorsed by NARAL Pro-Choice America and Planned Parenthood because of my 100% commitment to protecting reproductive health care and the right to choose. As we are seeing increased attacks across the country to take away reproductive freedoms I will oppose TRAP laws that seek to place undue burdens on reproductive health care, efforts to strip away funding for health care providers like Planned Parenthood that provide critical services like cancer screenings, and oppose any effort to overturn Roe v. Wade.

I was disappointed earlier this year when our current congressman Rep. Scott Perry voted to block ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, which would ensure American women equal protection under the law. It is past due for these protections to be codified in our Constitution. It

is critical that the Violence Against Women Act, which was passed in the U.S. House over a year ago but has stagnated in the Senate, is passed and sent to the President's desk to be signed immediately.

As Auditor General, I have taken the issues of sexual assault and sexual harassment very seriously. Because of my audit that found over 3,200 untested rape kits in Pennsylvania, that backlog has been nearly eliminated. I am also auditing the sexual harassment policies of every state agency to make sure there are proper protections in the workplace.

In 2017, Rep. Scott Perry said, "I have two children, and we're not having any more. I don't want to pay for maternity care." I support protecting maternity care as an essential health benefit covered by insurance plans. I support equality in paid leave policies for sick leave, family leave, and new parents. I support strengthening equal pay laws to protect against sex-based pay discrimination. I support increasing the minimum wage and strengthening our labor laws.

13) Who inspires you and why?

The main inspiration for running for Congress is my kids and their future. I have a son who is a sophomore in college studying the environment and music. I have a daughter who is a junior in high school and she wants to go to college to study the human brain. We have an obligation to make the world a better place for all of our children - where we address climate change, fight for greater equality, and have a fair and just economic system. I do the best I can to be a better dad, a better person, a better leader, a better coach. I try to live by leading by example and practicing what I preach. Every day I'm fighting not only for my own kids, but the next generation so we can leave a better world for them.

CLOSING STATEMENT: For Democrats - Why are you the best candidate to defeat Scott Perry?

For the last seven years I have been honored to be your Auditor General taking on the tough fights for taxpayers. My record of nearly eliminating the backlog of 3,200 untested rape kits, uncovering 58,000 unanswered phone calls at the child abuse hotline, taking on Pharmacy Benefit Managers to lower prescription drug costs, and finding over \$1 billion wasted by Harrisburg is a record that will help me win in November and govern if elected. I also know what it's like to suffer loss, losing my brother to muscular dystrophy and never being able to get health insurance for him. I know what it's like to overcome the challenges of having a father that was incarcerated due to choices he made because of an addiction that started when doctors at the VA prescribed him some bad painkillers. My life experience prepares me for what may be the most challenging next two years in our history.

I am running for Congress because the times have chosen us and we need to send Rep. Scott Perry packing. This is going to be a tough fight not only to win this district but to repair the wounds in our society and bring more civility, decency, and unity. My track record is doing that.