

AFRICAN AMERICAN GUBERNATORIAL FORUM COALITION

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Gubernatorial Forum Questions

Poverty and Income Inequality

President Barack Obama and governors in several other states are progressively raising the minimum wage so that it will reach \$10.10 per hour. Will you challenge the Pennsylvania Legislature to do the same?

As governor, I will support efforts to raise the minimum wage to \$10.10 and index it to inflation.

As the Governor how will you use the opportunities and resources of the Commonwealth to reduce unemployment and poverty among the State's minority populations?

As governor, I will give Pennsylvania a fresh start – I will work to make the Commonwealth the nation's "Keystone" for economic growth with its abundant natural resources, vibrant agricultural sector, world class universities and colleges, and its ideal location as the transportation and telecommunications hub between the East Coast, Midwest, and world markets.

I will take state government in a different direction with a strategic focus on making Pennsylvania a dynamo for economic development and a magnet for private sector entrepreneurs who will create good, high wage jobs. My fresh start will level the playing field, focus state government on preparing residents for 21st century jobs, leverage the innate strengths of Pennsylvania's economy, and use our resources to our full advantage.

My goal is to lead Pennsylvania to a future that is bright and promising for all Pennsylvanians.

How will you assure equal employment and contracting opportunities in state government, and especially among your cabinet and staff. What is the minority diversity on your campaign staff?

My administration will reflect the diversity of Pennsylvania, and my goal will be to have the best possible people in every position regardless of race, gender, or sexual identity. This is what I have done in business, it is what I have done on my campaign, and it is what I will do as governor. As a business owner, I recruited the best and brightest to senior positions. My Chief Financial Officer and my Chief Technology Officer are both African American.

As governor, I will increase women-, minority-, and disabled-owned business participation in government procurement and construction contracts. By carving out a percentage of

Tom Wolf for Governor

government contracts that should be awarded to women-, minority- and disabled-owned businesses, Pennsylvania can create more high-paying, skilled jobs. As governor, I will issue an executive order to increase the participation of these types of businesses in state contracting with the goal of 30% of total dollars committed to these contracts over the current 22%.

Diversity is important and minorities hold positions at all levels and in different areas of my campaign including as Deputy Campaign Manager. In addition, my Campaign Treasurer is African American.

Education

The quality of schools in poor African American communities is significantly below any reasonable or acceptable standard. Academic achievement gaps abound, especially in minority and urban school districts. Equitable distribution of financial resources cannot be achieved under the current school funding formula based on property tax. What can/will you do to close racial achievement gaps and provide equitable resources so as to ensure all of Pennsylvania's children receive a quality education, enter life on a level playing field, and have opportunities to thrive?

I support our state's public education system, and I know that Pennsylvania is home to some of the best public schools in the country but there are also too many struggling schools that are failing our children. My two daughters attended York County public schools, where they developed a strong academic foundation that prepared them to go on to top-notch colleges and build successful careers. There is still a lot of work to be done.

Where Tom Corbett has gutted Pennsylvania's schools, I will make education a priority. I believe we have not only a constitutional obligation to provide for a thorough and efficient public education system but also have a rational self-interest to ensure that our youngest residents receive an education that will allow them to reach their full potential. A good public education system is not just the right thing to do, it is what drives a healthy, vibrant economy – something that's good for all of us in Pennsylvania.

As governor, I will restore Governor Corbett's \$1 billion in cuts to education, implement a fair funding formula, and institute reforms to help local school districts innovate and improve student performance.

Adequately funding K-12 education will be a top priority of my administration. We can ensure that every student in the Commonwealth has access to the necessary resources by:

- Putting education first. This includes examining where the state is spending money, cutting waste, and redirecting funds to education.
- Changing the funding streams. The State should increase its share of public education dollars to help relieve tax pressures on local property owners.
- Enacting a five percent extraction tax on natural gas and diverting some of that funding stream to education programs.

Tom Wolf for Governor

- Instituting brick-and-mortar and cyber charter school funding formulas, which former Auditor General Wagner projects will save up to \$365 million per year. For more information on my charter school reform plan, visit <http://wolfforpa.com/sections/page/charter-school-reform>.

We need to make sure these additional funds are spent in the most efficient, effective, and transparent manner possible. That's why, as governor, I will institute a fair funding formula and develop a plan to fully fund it.

I will start by updating the 2007 costing out study to determine the true costs of a high-quality education. In addition to a nationally competitive base rate, the funding formula will tie additional funds to district size, poverty levels, local tax efforts, and student makeup. This formula will:

- Lead to increases in state funding, which will help alleviate the tax burden on property owners;
- Ensure that state funds are distributed in an equitable, transparent, and predictable manner so that school district leaders have the ability to plan for the long term; and
- Incentivize school districts to develop innovative programs that improve student achievement.

I will fight every day to build a strong public education system so that we can keep, create, and attract good jobs right here in Pennsylvania.

Voter ID

Despite the absence of widespread voter fraud in the Commonwealth, Pennsylvania is among several states that has attempted to impose “so-called” Voter ID Laws. The courts have put a temporary halt to these efforts. If elected Governor of Pennsylvania, what would you do regarding the current Voter ID Legislation currently being considered by the courts?

The most fundamental test of fairness and access to the political system in Pennsylvania is the ability to vote. It is a right protected by the United States and Pennsylvania Constitutions and is one of the most cherished gifts granted by our Founding Fathers. Yet, Tom Corbett and other Republicans want to place arbitrary restrictions on the right to vote based upon unsupported claims that voter fraud is widespread and that photo IDs are necessary to address the alleged voter fraud.

I will lead the fight to protect Pennsylvania's voting rights by overturning the arbitrary requirement for photo IDs. At least one Pennsylvania Court of Appeals has already held that the mandatory photo ID requirement is unconstitutional. Instead of making it difficult to vote, Pennsylvania lawmakers should be enacting reforms similar to those in neighboring states that make it easier for residents to participate in the electoral process. I will support measures to protect and expand the right to vote, while making participation convenient for voters. I will:

- Expand the ability to vote by mail and vote online – Pennsylvanians should be encouraged to vote, not discouraged. Today, state residents who cannot make it to the polling booth on Election Day are required to provide an explanation prior to receiving their absentee ballot. As governor, I will expand absentee voting by eliminating the excuse requirement and giving these voters the option of casting their ballot online.
- Create early voting periods – In past elections, Pennsylvania residents have had to spend hours waiting in line to vote and some have been denied that right because the polling place did not have their card on file. I will support legislation that allows for early voting at suitable, well equipped polling places such as schools.
- Allow for same day registration – Researchers have found that when states allow for same day registration, voter participation increases by up to four percentage points. I will advocate for legislation that allows Pennsylvania voters to register on election days.

Narcotics and Gun Trafficking and Homicides

Narcotics and Gun Trafficking permeate the Commonwealth's urban and suburban communities. Subsequent homicides have taken the lives of far too many Black Pennsylvanians in the prime of their lives. Jails and prisons are filled to capacity with young men, uneducated and unemployed and mostly incarcerated for drug related crimes. As Governor how would you rally the support of federal, state and local law enforcement *and* social service agencies to eliminate this scourge?

As governor, I will adopt policies that reduce pressure on Pennsylvania's criminal justice system to free up funding that can be used to address the root causes of criminal activity. These policies will include decriminalizing marijuana, eliminating mandatory minimum sentences, and expanding the use of specialized courts to help non-violent offenders address mental health and addiction issues. I will also expand prison education and job training initiatives and improve access to post-incarceration treatment to help reduce the recidivism rate.

What is your position on the decriminalization of marijuana with lessor penalties for possession of small amounts of the drug?

Pennsylvania's court and probation systems are being clogged with offenders convicted of possessing minor amounts of marijuana. A 2006 report by the Office of National Drug Control Policy found that on average, Pennsylvania spends more than \$325 million a year on marijuana arrests. As governor, I will support legislation to decriminalize marijuana, which would make possession of one ounce or less a civil offense that would be accompanied by a fine. I will also support legalizing the use of medical marijuana because he believes we should not deny doctor recommended treatments that could help people suffering from diseases or illnesses.

What is your position on Ban the Box and other initiatives to help formerly incarcerated persons gain employment, and live in public housing?

Tom Wolf for Governor

I know the important role steady employment plays in lowering the recidivism rate. At the Wolf Organization, we make a concerted effort during the hiring process to consider individuals who have been convicted of minor drug and other non-violent offenses. Unfortunately, many government and private sector employers do not provide the same second chance employment opportunities to ex-offenders. As governor, I will work with the private sector to support efforts, like “Ban the Box” policies, to improve job prospects and housing options for ex-offenders.

Marcellus Shale

What would be your administration’s position on taxation of corporate profits generated by this growing sector of the economy and using the revenue to fund schools and other public needs?

With Pennsylvania sitting on one of the largest deposits of natural gas in the world, I believe the Marcellus Shale must be a key component of any plan for Pennsylvania's future. We must ensure that we take advantage of this resource and opportunity in a way that benefits all Pennsylvanians and protects our water and environment.

I believe we have an obligation to get this new energy era right. The urgent challenge facing our state leaders, now and into the future, is how to manage this remarkable natural resource so that its benefits are broadly shared by the residents of Pennsylvania for many years to come.

I will take a responsible approach to natural gas development that includes enacting a 5 percent extraction tax so that we make gas companies pay their fair share and have the resources to fund schools and other key priorities. If done right, natural gas development can be a bridge to a clean energy future and create good-paying energy jobs.

In addition to a 5 percent extraction tax, I will protect our environment and hold drillers accountable by enacting practical regulatory actions, and increasing funding for the Department of Environmental Protection so that it is sufficiently staffed and able to provide proper oversight of drillers. I will work to bring greater transparency to the fracking process by requiring drillers to publicly disclose chemicals used in the hydraulic fracturing process (similar to Senator Casey’s federal proposal), and lifting the current gag order on physicians. Additionally, I will support an increase in the annual permit application fee as well as an increase in the fee for drilling on state lands.

Equitable and targeted public funding

As Governor what policies would you support to give equitable allocation of public dollars for community and economic development?

I know that community and economic development often go hand-in-hand. In partnership with my fellow community members, I've worked to revitalize the city of York -- the economic anchor of my community.

I served as the president of Better York, which hired David Rusk to develop a regional plan to help revitalize the city, I chaired the board of York College, where I helped to integrate the school into the city by having it invest in the surrounding neighborhood, and I worked as the board chair of Historic York to find new residential and commercial uses for existing buildings. My work with these organizations led to redevelopment as well as new jobs, new social supports for city residents, and new tools to attract middle-class families back to the city.

I've also worked with numerous social support nonprofits, including Crispus Attucks, the South George Street Community Partnership, and the United Way of York County, to ensure our residents are connected with essential services.

I know we need to breakdown government silos and develop a more comprehensive approach to serving Pennsylvania residents. As governor, I will personally lead and strategically deploy existing state resources through an Economic Development Partnership – a Cabinet Level initiative with public/private participation that will include representatives from state departments, the private sector, labor, and local government.

The goal of this partnership will be to break down barriers between departments and programs and provide more focused and effective leadership to the State's economic development efforts. By bringing all parties to the table, we can move away from this idea that economic development is strictly related to attracting new businesses to Pennsylvania, and we can better understand how the vast majority of the work our government does relates directly to job creation – whether it is education, health services, or community development.

What policies would you support to prioritize social service, economic and community development monies so that they go to the targeted census tracts and communities that qualify the State to receive the funds in the first place?

I want to restore fairness in Pennsylvania and level the playing field so that we can rebuild our middle class. With our current systems, there is often no logic in how resources are distributed to the community, and as a result many of our neediest residents don't receive services they need. As governor, I will work to make the distribution of the funds fair by ensuring that they are appropriately targeted.

Meeting the Needs of Western Pennsylvania

There is a tendency for those in office in Harrisburg to give more attention, consideration, and resources to counties in the eastern part of the state. How will you be more cognizant of the concerns and needs of western PA counties?

As governor, my job will be to promote the needs of *all* Pennsylvanians. I believe that to truly transform Pennsylvania we need to implement policies that serve the needs of all residents, regardless of where they live in the state.

I am running for governor because want to give Pennsylvania a fresh start. I will work to make the Commonwealth the nation's "Keystone" for economic growth with its abundant natural resources, vibrant agricultural sector, world class universities and colleges, and its ideal location as the transportation and telecommunications hub between the East Coast, Midwest, and world markets.

I will take state government in a different direction with a strategic focus on making Pennsylvania a dynamo for economic development and a magnet for private sector entrepreneurs who will create good, high wage jobs. My fresh start will level the playing field, focus state government on preparing residents for 21st century jobs, leverage the innate strengths of Pennsylvania's economy, and use our resources to our full advantage.

As Governor would you commit to meeting with the organizations sponsoring this Forum on a quarterly or biannual basis to discuss policy and legislative concerns that affect our communities?

I believe that it is extremely important for our elected leaders to engage residents in the policy process. As Secretary of Revenue, I drove my own car all across Pennsylvania to meet with more than 2,000 department workers to learn about their jobs and solicit advice on how to improve the department. As governor, I will take a similar approach by engaging residents and key stakeholders as we work to develop policies that strengthen our economy and rebuild our middle class.