



# Candidate Conversations - Central PA

**Pennsylvanians with disabilities face many barriers to voting, including inaccessible polling places/equipment, difficulty getting to the polling place, poorly informed election officials/poll workers and a lack of sufficient information about the candidates in regard to disability related issues. What will you do to ensure people with disabilities have equal access to the fundamental right to vote?**

**Zach Womer:**

Upon notification from a constituent that they find themselves at a polling location that is unaccessible I will notify the Pennsylvania Department of State and follow through to ensure that all polling places comply with ADA standards.

**Beth Farnham:**

Expand free transit services to get people with disabilities to the polls, expand absentee ballot-voting, authorize early voting through expansion of John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act.

**If elected, what will you do to ensure that people with disabilities have a voice at the table on policies legislation, and issues that directly affect them?**

**Zach Womer:**

One thing I pride myself on is constant interaction with my constituents so that I hear the issues that impact them. For those with disabilities whom have issues that they would like heard I would do everything in my power to ensure that they receive a personal response, not a form letter, and in the event there is an issue that calls for testimony from that community, I would invite members of that community to testify in front of that particular House committee.

**Bath Farnham:**

Call on constituent groups that represent people with disabilities such as SAIL prior to making decisions regarding legislation and policies that directly affect people with disabilities, so that their opinions are heard.



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**The lack of paid leave, including paid family and medical leave, has significantly affected the ability of people with disabilities and their families to work. What are your thoughts on paid family and medical leave including the Pennsylvania Family Care Act?**

**Zach Womer:**

I support Federal legislation that provides all families with paid family and medical leave.

**Beth Farnham:**

At the federal level, we should enact legislation that mandates paid FMLA, not just a guarantee to return to work. Since 40% of FMLA is unpaid, the Pennsylvania Family Care Act looks like a solution to solve that problem. At the federal level, I would look to the PFCA as a springboard for improving FMLA.

**What is the biggest barrier facing Pennsylvanians with disabilities and what would you like to do, if elected, to address this barrier?**

**Zach Womer:**

As a law student and future attorney, I believe knowledge of rights of the disabled is a barrier for those with disabilities to reach justice. I would like to hold meetings around my district to inform disabled constituents on the rights they have and the remedies available to them through civil legal action to ensure their rights are enforced. Additionally, as a rural representative, I am aware that rural areas and their lack of resources often leave disabled individuals in rural Pennsylvania with less accessibility than their peers in more populated regions. To that end, I would advocate for funding to bring the same level of accessibility to rural Pennsylvania that other members of the disabled community enjoy.

**Beth Farnham:**

Increase disability payments. I also believe transportation is one of the biggest issues facing Pennsylvanians with disabilities so at the federal level, I would look to expand funding to the state for improving public transportation opportunities for all Americans with disabilities.



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# Candidate Conversations - Eastern PA

**Pennsylvanians with disabilities face many barriers to voting, including inaccessible polling places/equipment, difficulty getting to the polling place, poorly informed election officials/poll workers and a lack of sufficient information about the candidates in regard to disability related issues. What will you do to ensure people with disabilities have equal access to the fundamental right to vote?**

**Tina Burns:**

Yes, voting is a right for all and no one should be excluded for any reason.

**Joe Lenzi:**

Require all voting districts be chair accessible and on election day have Para-transit free of charge to get voters to poll. Automatic mailing ballot

**Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz:**

Ensuring that Pennsylvanians with disabilities have equal access to voting is crucial. To address this I would work on making sure all polling places are fully accessible by addressing physical barriers like ramps, parking and entrances; ensure that polling stations have accessible voting machines including those with audio and large print options; providing resources or partnerships with local transportation services to assist people with disabilities in getting to polling places; require comprehensive training to poll workers and elected officials on how to assist voters with disabilities, ensuring they are well informed and sensitive to the needs of these voters; make information about candidates and voting procedures is available in multiple formats, such as braille, audio, and easy to read versions, so that everyone can make informed decision; expand mail-in voting options ensuring they are accessible and easy to use for people with disabilities

**Megan Kocher:**

I feel that it is absolutely essential to ensure polling places are fully accessible to people with disabilities. Voting is essential to maintain our democracy, and I believe that it is the role of elected officials to make voting easier and more accessible to the public. Additionally, poll workers should go through additional training to ensure they are not a roadblock to voting for anyone. Finally, candidates should do our part to make our views easy to find and research, so I appreciate the opportunity to complete this form! If election, I will consult with people who understand the ways that these issues are impacting people with disabilities firsthand to ensure I take necessary and adequate steps to addressing the issues mentioned.

**Leanne Krueger:**

I believe that we need to make voting as accessible as possible and that includes protecting the right to vote by mail. I have co-sponsored bills that would make updates to the mail-in voting rules including practical changes requested by bipartisan groups of county election officials, including 21 days of pre-canvassing and implementing statewide electronic poll books for secure, real-time monitoring of election rolls. The Department of State and our County Election offices need to continue to improve their training materials so that poll workers and election officials are trained and have information to ensure that their polling places are accessible.

**Lisa Borowski:**

Expanding mail in voting; free rides on public transit; declare Election Day a state holiday.

**Dan Williams:**

- **Improve Accessibility of Polling Places:** Advocate for all polling places to be fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This includes accessible entrances, pathways, and voting machines. Regular audits can help identify and rectify accessibility issues.
- **Enhance Transportation Options:** Work with local governments and transportation services to provide reliable, accessible transportation to polling places. Promote initiatives like ride-sharing programs specifically for voters with disabilities.
- **Train Election Officials and Poll Workers:** Implement comprehensive training programs focused on disability awareness and accessibility for all election staff. This ensures they understand the specific needs of voters with disabilities and can assist them appropriately.
- **Increase Information Availability:** Create and disseminate clear, accessible information about candidates and their positions on disability-related issues. Use various formats, such as braille, large print, and digital platforms, to ensure everyone can access the information.
- **Outreach and Advocacy:** Collaborate with disability advocacy organizations to engage the community and raise awareness about voting rights and accessible voting options. Provide resources and support to empower voters with disabilities.
- **Promote Vote-by-Mail Options:** Advocate for the expansion and simplification of vote-by-mail systems, ensuring they are accessible and secure for voters with disabilities.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Establish channels for voters with disabilities to provide feedback on their voting experience. Use this feedback to continuously improve accessibility measures.

**Anna Payne:**

I would like to see some funding go back to the counties to ensure that all voting locations are ADA accessible and proper accommodations are made. I know my campaign website has a widget that makes it accessible for all. I would like to work to make sure all government websites are accessible.



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**If elected, what will you do to ensure that people with disabilities have a voice at the table on policies legislation, and issues that directly affect them?**

**Tina Burns :**

Yes. I am a parent and grandparent of disabled people, I see first hand their struggles and will absolutely make sure their voices are heard.

**Joe Lenzi:**

Have representative from Sail on my policy staff

**Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz:**

When re-elected I would help strengthen and expand advisory councils in my district and ensure that individuals with disabilities are appointed to key decision-making roles in government agencies and legislative committees. I would propose inclusive legislation that mandates the inclusion of people with disabilities in any policy-making process that affects them. I would also raise awareness and educate my community on the rights and contributions of people with disabilities, helping to break down the social barriers and foster a more inclusive environment.

**Megan Kocher:**

I am a firm believer that obtaining a position of authority, like elected office, does not make you an expert on anything. We will never actually address issues facing any community if we are not consulting with leaders within that community. If elected, I will consult with leaders in the community of people with disabilities to ensure that I am amplifying voices who have different experiences than my own.

**Leanne Krueger:**

Every time an advocacy group or a family of an individual with a disability requests to meet with me, I make time to hear their stories. In particular, I have heard from a number of families in my district about the challenges they face in getting support staff. I fought for increased funding this year (\$261 million) in the Intellectual Disabilities Community Waiver program. This will increase the rates paid to intellectual disability and autism programs that employ Direct Support Professionals so that more families can get the home and community-based services they need.

**Lisa Borowski:**

Since assuming my position, I have spent a lot of time with disability advocates to understand the issues impacting the community. I have also visited day programs in my district and residential programs to hear not only from those who are differently abled, but also from their caregivers and loved ones. I will continue these efforts and continue working to take what I've learned and create actionable solutions.

**Dan Williams:**

I would prioritize ensuring that people with disabilities have a meaningful voice in policy-making through engagement with disability advocacy organizations and encourage and support individuals with disabilities to take on leadership roles within government and community organizations, ensuring they have a seat at the table.

**Anna Payne:**

As someone living with two invisible disabilities, who also has serves on the PA rare disease councils, I will always ensure people with disabilities have a voice at the table.



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# Candidate Conversations - Eastern PA

**The lack of paid leave, including paid family and medical leave, has significantly affected the ability of people with disabilities and their families to work. What are your thoughts on paid family and medical leave including the Pennsylvania Family Care Act?**

**Tina Burns:**

This should not even have to be a thought, it should have been mandated long ago.

**Joe Lenzi:**

All for it

**Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz:**

I would vote in favor of PA Family Care Act also known as HB181 as soon as it goes to third consideration on the house floor.

**Megan Kocher:**

I am a strong supporter of paid family and medical leave and the Pennsylvania Family Care Act. We have a duty to support people through difficult times, and paid family and medical leave will help to do so.

**Leanne Krueger:**

I support the Pennsylvania Family Care Act and would vote for it if it got to the floor.

**Lisa Borowski:**

I support this legislation. No one should have to choose between their livelihood and the health and wellness of their family or loved one.

**Dan Williams:**

Paid family and medical leave is essential for supporting individuals with disabilities and their families. By supporting comprehensive paid family and medical leave, including the Pennsylvania Family Care Act, we can create a more equitable environment for workers with disabilities and their families, ultimately enhancing their quality of life and economic security.

**Anna Payne:**

I fully support this issue as I have first hand experiences of what it's like to take off work and not get paid when being out of work from an illness.



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**What is the biggest barrier facing Pennsylvanians with disabilities and what would you like to do, if elected, to address this barrier?**

**Tina Burns:**

Resources for service programs. There are some very good programs already established even in the rural area which I live in, however, the wait lists for services are well over a year or longer due to lack of resources. A program or service without resources doesn't help those who are in immediate need.

**Joe Lenzi:**

Acceptance

**Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz:**

From speaking with Constituents in my district, one of the biggest barriers is employment. Pennsylvanians with disabilities continue to face discrimination in the job market and a lack of reasonable accommodations in the workplace. When re-elected I will work on legislation that supports tax incentives for businesses that hire and provide accommodations for employees with disabilities and expand job training and placement programs tailored to the needs of people with disabilities.

**Megan Kocher:**

I am not qualified to assert what the biggest issue facing Pennsylvanians with Disabilities is. If elected, I would like to do my part to consult with the community and address issues that people with disabilities deem most pressing. Having said that, I recently canvassed a voter who let me know that they were struggling to provide care for their son, until they were deemed eligible for a type of voucher or grant that helps them afford home care workers. I am nowhere near as knowledgeable on this as they were, so another conversation would definitely have to be had to increase my knowledge on the program, but I would like to discuss further and do my part to expand that opportunity to other families if elected.

**Leanne Krueger:**

There are several barriers facing Pennsylvanians with disabilities - whether they be in employment, education, transportation, housing and healthcare. While we need to expand the support services offered, we also need to make it easier for families to navigate them to get the care and support they need. Our step to increase pay for direct support professionals in this year's budget is intended to help families retain the help they need.

**Lisa Borowski:**

Addressing the wages of DSPs. These caring, compassionate and well-trained individuals need to have a significant salary increase.

**Dan Williams:**

One of the biggest barriers facing Pennsylvanians with disabilities is accessibility—specifically, the lack of accessible public spaces, transportation, and services. This encompasses physical accessibility in buildings and facilities, as well as access to transportation options that allow individuals to participate fully in their communities. By focusing on accessibility, we can significantly enhance the quality of life for Pennsylvanians with disabilities, empowering them to engage fully in their communities and live more independent lives.

**Anna Payne:**

Inclusion, there is still a lot of work to be done to ensure people with disabilities are fully included in society. We need to ensure that we are putting resources to, improve infrastructure that promotes ADA curb ramps in neighborhoods and places of business. I would be a strong advocate and a voice at the table for others with invisible and visible disabilities. I have been an advocate at a local level for them, approving more funding for curb ramp projects, and making sure our play grounds are accessible.



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# Candidate Conversations: Western PA

**Pennsylvanians with disabilities face many barriers to voting, including inaccessible polling places/equipment, difficulty getting to the polling place, poorly informed election officials/poll workers and a lack of sufficient information about the candidates in regard to disability related issues. What will you do to ensure people with disabilities have equal access to the fundamental right to vote?**

**Jeremy Shaffer:**

It is critical that all eligible citizens are able to vote and participate in our elections. We need to ensure that all of our polling places are fully accessible and do not have physical or other barriers present. County elections departments should ensure and evaluate access options. Candidates should also engage with all groups of voters. I will always have an open door and be accessible.

**Dr. Kenya Johns:**

Continue to advocate for main-in ballots and accessible polling places.

**Hadley Haas:**

Once elected, I will meet with stakeholders and leaders in the legislature, like Rep. Dan Miller, to understand the issues and barriers that face Pennsylvanians with disabilities. I will seek ways to allocate funds and resources to remove these barriers.

**If elected, what will you do to ensure that people with disabilities have a voice at the table on policies legislation, and issues that directly affect them?**

**Jeremy Shaffer:**

I think it is critical for elected officials to proactively reach out to members of the community. Far too often for legislation it is just the lobbyists who seek to engage with legislators. This can create a skewed view and also not have all voices heard. I will reach out to individuals and leaders on these issues.

**Dr. Kenya Johns:**

Host annual gatherings and meetings to make sure that legislation that will be proposed or needs to be proposed is created and supported by those directly impacted by it.

**Hadley Haas:**

As the parent of two sons who were born with hearing loss, this will always be close to my heart. I will proactively seek the perspectives of people with disabilities and use my position to ensure their voices are heard in Harrisburg. I will support efforts like Rep. Dan Miller's disability summit and hold in-district events to seek input on legislative priorities



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# Candidate Conversations: Western PA

**The lack of paid leave, including paid family and medical leave, has significantly affected the ability of people with disabilities and their families to work. What are your thoughts on paid family and medical leave including the Pennsylvania Family Care Act?**

**Jeremy Shaffer:**

The need for good job benefits is something that affects all PA residents including those with disabilities. The state should explore ways to encourage businesses to provide these benefits to employees without dramatically increasing costs. A number of options exist from tax credits to direct support.

**Dr. Kenya Johns:**

I believe that paid family leave is a priority of our and that if we truly care about families, having access to parental leave is a necessity.

**Hadley Haas:**

I support the Family Care Act and ways to make family and medical leave available to Pennsylvania families. I have talked to many voters for whom this is an important issue. Too many Pennsylvania families have to choose between their careers and caring for family members. I will work with leaders like Rep. Tim Briggs to support this legislation.

**What is the biggest barrier facing Pennsylvanians with disabilities and what would you like to do, if elected, to address this barrier?**

**Jeremy Shaffer:**

The community of PA residents with disabilities is very diverse and spans a wide spectrum of needs for both physical and intellectual support. One of the most pressing needs that I have heard about are the wait lists for critical services and access to facilities or in home aides. We need to look at increasing resources and streamlining the bureaucratic process to allow people to get the support needed quickly.

**Dr. Kenya Johns:**

I believe that access to the resources available is a barrier and I would love to help implement legislation that takes on a more hands on approach to support individuals and families with disabilities.

**Hadley Haas:**

This is a difficult and complex question to answer. I think there are a number of barriers in Pennsylvania, including accessible care, transportation and employment. In Harrisburg, I will be an ally for people with disabilities and work to pass legislation that helps to remove barriers for them.



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