



## MAY 2022 VOTER GUIDE

Dear Neighbor,

The 2022 primary election is upon us. It's a confusing political moment. Trump has been defeated, but the forces that supported him are stronger than ever. The pandemic laid bare the government's inability to take care of us, but the political possibility this undeniable fact created has faded back to the status quo, only more bleak, and nastier.

Yet, if we can turn away from the national culture war waged across social and corporate media, we can choose a different version of politics that is *local* and *persistent*. Local, not in terms of minor issues or small ambition, but in terms of valuing real-world relationships as the basis of a respectful and caring civic culture and listening to each other and identifying shared interests. Persistent, because winning anything big requires the repeated participation of ordinary people over days, years, and decades. Democracy is, after all, just the name for all of us taking charge and winning more for ourselves and each other than elites want to give us: more free time, better jobs, more beautiful environments, better health, more education, better services. Whether those elites are kings or CEOs, that fight never has been and never will be easy. We're committed to the local and persistent version of politics, and maintaining the First Ward as a democratic, transparent organization and powerful voice for working people in South Philly for the long-haul. So when someone knocks on your door, please open it, and talk to them with kindness and curiosity, neighbor to neighbor.

Our next step on this long-haul journey is the **May 17 primary election**, which features races for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, US Senate and Congress, and Pennsylvania State House. We spent many hours researching and discussing the candidates. We held two forums with candidates, conducted a straw poll of residents, and endorsed candidates based on the democratic votes of our committee people.

**Josh Shapiro for Governor:** If a Republican is elected governor of Pennsylvania, it will open a floodgate of legislation to expand fracking, destroy unions, privatize schools, criminalize abortion, and imperil fair elections. As Attorney General, Josh Shapiro defended our democracy against Trump's attempts to discount the votes of Philadelphians in the 2020 presidential election. He also went after Hawbaker Inc., a construction company that was stealing employees' wages, and won over \$20 million for workers—the largest settlement of its kind in U.S. history. While we find that he falls short in some regards (racial justice, climate change), we recognize the urgency of electing him as our next governor.

**Austin Davis for Lieutenant Governor:** Austin Davis, a third-term State Representative from the Pittsburgh area, is Josh Shapiro's chosen running mate. We agree with Shapiro's analysis that a Black running mate from Western PA strengthens the general election ticket. Moreover, Davis impressed us in our candidate forum with clear and thoughtful answers, is respected and liked by his colleagues, and is a strong labor supporter. We applaud the effort of his competitor, Brian Sims, but think that Davis is the better option in this race.

**Malcolm Kenyatta for US Senate:** Malcolm Kenyatta is a third-term State Representative from North Philadelphia. He was raised in poor and working-class communities, common experiences that need to be represented in the out-of-touch Senate. His record in the State House is notable for his passionate fight against ending the lifeline General Assistance program in 2019. There are two main reasons we support Kenyatta. First, he has assembled an impressive coalition with endorsements from many of the unions and organizations of the "essential workers" of the pandemic: teachers, custodians, package deliverers, and workers in healthcare, hospitality, and the public sector. If he wins, he will be accountable to them. Second, he was extremely personable, skillful, and respectful in our forum and in conversations. He showed up, and was able to make his case and answer questions clearly and impressively. This ability to engage with people and build relationships will be important for winning the general election and delivering for us as a Senator.

If you feel passionately about John Fetterman, please vote for him! We admire his message and positions, and many of us initially supported him. However, over many months he consistently declined offers to speak with us and numerous other community and religious groups. He has few relationships, and it's unclear what forces he is accountable to. We do not recommend Conor Lamb, who is supported by cynical corporate super-PACs and who would represent powerful donors rather than the long-term needs of working-class people. While we will work hard in November to elect the Democratic nominee, we would rather not put our energy into elevating another Joe Manchin (who has praised Lamb).

**Dwight Evans for US Congress District 3:** Dwight Evans is running for re-election in the Third Congressional District. Evans has fought for the Build Back Better agenda in Congress, and wants to negotiate drug prices and reinstate the Child Tax Credit. He has supported State Senator Nikil Saval's Whole-Home Repairs Act, brought millions of federal dollars to the district in economic support and to fight gun violence, and has been a leader on Postal Service reform. While we appreciate the energy and agree with some of the critiques of Evans' challengers, it is an important fact that Evans is the only federal representative of color in Pennsylvania, representing the state's only Black-majority district. His Congressional record has been good, and we believe Dwight Evans deserves another term.

**Elizabeth Fiedler for State House District 184:** Elizabeth Fiedler has worked tirelessly serving the residents of HD184. Her dedicated staff have helped an unprecedented 13,000 constituents with critical unemployment benefits, tax and rent rebates, food assistance, pandemic relief programs, and much more. She has brought back state grant money to programs that benefit not insiders or profit-seekers but the people of the district: recreation centers, libraries, violence prevention work, apprenticeship and job training, daycares, and senior programs. With community organizations, she has led volunteer canvassing efforts to connect seniors to Covid vaccines, and to increase voter turnout and ensure Democrat victories in the 2018 governor and 2020 presidential elections. She is a leader in the fight for public schools, whose coalition-building paved the way for the Governor's \$1 billion investment proposal for public school repairs. She supports universal healthcare and strong climate action that puts organized labor first. She fights for the working-class majority of ordinary people in South Philly because she cares about everyone—and because she is an ordinary person: a worker, a mom, a community member. We are grateful for her work, and strongly recommend her for re-election.

**On the Proposed Charter Change (Ballot) Questions:**

**YES on Question 1:** Expand the Zoning Board of Adjustments and require members to have specific qualifications (architect, urban planner, zoning lawyer, etc.) and be approved by City Council. We have concerns about more Council influence, but overall agree this is likely to be a small but positive step toward improving the ZBA.

**YES on Question 2:** Make Philadelphia's Home Rule Charter gender neutral and inclusive.

**YES on Question 3:** Make a supplement to the Home Rule Charter gender neutral and inclusive.

**YES on Question 4:** Make permanent the City's independent Fair Housing Commission, which enforces rules about unfair rental practices and mediates disputes between landlords and tenants.

And please do not forget to vote for your **committee people!** Since 2018, we have worked hard. We knocked on about 10,000 doors to help elect Governor Wolf in 2018 and 12,000 doors in the 2019 City Council elections. In 2020 we organized 150 volunteers to make nearly 10,000 calls, texts, and visits to infrequent voters to help elect President Biden. Last year, we knocked on about 8,000 doors and were the only ward in all of Philadelphia that voted no on retaining four Republican judges. We see the ward as an organization for increasing participation and turnout and serving the neighborhood. And it's worked! Voter participation has increased 27% and **the First Ward is now one of the highest-turnout wards in Philly.**

This is not easy work, but we are proud to do it. This May, in many voting divisions, you'll have a choice between committee person candidates who want to continue in this direction and ones that believe the ward should operate more as a closed club that doesn't engage neighbors or challenge powerful interests. If you don't know who is who, please reach out to the candidates and ask them, or ask anyone involved in the ward! Remember, vote for two candidates!

This year you can vote in person on **May 17th**, by mail at [vote.pa.gov/applyMailBallot](https://vote.pa.gov/applyMailBallot), or in-person in Room 142 of City Hall. You can also drop off completed ballots at Ford PAL, 609 Snyder Ave. See our website — [www.phillyfirstward.org](http://www.phillyfirstward.org) — for more information.

This election will have an enormous impact on the future of our city and the day-to-day lives of all our neighbors. If you have any questions please reach out to your committee people. Remember that a powerful city is a city that votes.

Sincerely,

Your elected committee people of the Democratic First Ward