

New Jersey Citizen Action

2011 Candidate Questionnaire for State Senate & Assembly

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Party Affiliation: Democratic
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Election Reform:

1) Do you support/oppose voluntary public financing (clean elections) for New Jersey's legislative races?

I support voluntary public financing (clean elections) for New Jersey's legislative races.

2) Do you support/oppose banning the practice of "wheeling", which would prohibit the transfer of political action committee (PAC) funds from one PAC to another?

I support banning the practice of "wheeling."

Work and Family:

3) Did you support/Oppose S2937/A4133, which made various changes to pension and health care benefits for public employees?

I opposed S2937, which made various changes to pension and health care benefits for public employees. I plan to introduce legislation to fix some of the problems I see with the health care portion.

4) Do you Support/Oppose the collective bargaining right of public employees, wherein contributions are negotiated rather than imposed by legislation?

I support the collective bargaining right of public employees, wherein contributions are negotiated rather than imposed by legislation

5) Do you Support/Oppose legislation to guarantee a minimum number of earned paid sick days for all NJ workers?

I support legislation to guarantee a minimum number of earned paid sick days for all NJ workers. Have you explored the public health benefits? If so, please share your research because it would be a good angle for me to be more proactive in my support.

6) Do you Support/oppose upholding New Jersey's law on family leave insurance?

I support upholding New Jersey's law on family leave insurance.

7) Do you Support/Oppose increasing the minimum wage for all NJ workers and indexing it to increase in the cost of living?

I support increasing the minimum wage for all NJ workers and indexing it to increases in the cost of living.

Good Government:

8) Do you Support/Oppose allowing towns and municipalities to opt-out of Civil Service?

I oppose allowing towns to opt out of civil service.

Quality, Affordable Health Care

9) Do you Support/Oppose S2899, which would restore State funds for family planning services and would reinstate Medicaid coverage for such services?

I am a prime sponsor of S2899 and support restoring State funds for family planning services and would reinstate Medicaid coverage for such services. Please make sure to notice that Governor Christie included family planning in the Global Waiver: limits to women of child bearing age who have household incomes that don't exceed 133% FPL. We need to highlight how much Federal money we're losing by not expanding the service to 200% FPL; they'll pay 90 cents of every dollar.

10) Did you Support/Oppose A3636/S2443, which seeks to establish a Medicaid Accountable services (ACO) demonstration project within the Department of Human Services?

I am a prime sponsor of S2443, which establishes a Medicaid Accountable services (ACO) demonstration project within the Department of Human Services. Thank you for your support and advocacy to get signed into law.

11) Do you Support/Oppose A1930/S2553 the "NJ Health Benefit Exchange Act", which seeks to establish a new consumer-friendly marketplace where individuals and small businesses can shop for health insurance?

I am a prime sponsor of S2553, the "NJ Health Benefit Exchange Act", which seeks to establish a new consumer-friendly marketplace where individuals and small businesses can shop for health insurance. Thank you so much for the conference you held this week and for including me. I am sorry I was not able to attend the entire morning, but Laurie on my staff said she walked away with a lot of helpful information. We'll start getting into the details soon.

12) Do you Support/Oppose Governor Christie's proposal to apply for a federal Medicaid Waiver that would allow the state to cut parent eligibility for NJ FamilyCare from 133% to 25% of the Federal Poverty Line?

Obviously your questionnaire came out before we saw that the Administration backed off this idea. They instead request a higher reimbursement rate from CMS for populations NJ already covers. That's fine, but I doubt CMS will approve it and I am concerned with how the Christie Administration will use a negative decision. We need to think ahead about this one.

13) In the FY2011 Budget Governor Chris Christie eliminated access to NJ FamilyCare for all legal immigrant parents who have not held legal resident status for at least 5 years. Do you Support/Oppose restoring access for all legal immigrant parents to NJ FamilyCare?

I support restoring access for all legal immigrant parents to NJ FamilyCare.

Community Reinvestment, Fair Housing:

14) Do you Support/ Oppose the NJ Law Revision Commission's recent landlord/tenant project, which would rewrite all landlord/tenant law if enacted by the Legislature?

I am not familiar with the NJ Law Revision Commission's recent landlord/tenant project, which would rewrite all landlord/tenant law. Please be sure to fill me in, especially if it's something that is unfavorable to tenants.

15) Do you Support/Oppose Linked Deposit legislation where a financial institution's eligibility for business involving state funds is tied to its lending practices and community reinvestment standards? This would incentivize lending institutions to better serve disadvantage borrowers (including first time homebuyers, small business owners women and minorities) in the form of the State's financial deposits.

I need you to bring me up to speed on what the Linked Deposit legislation is about.

16) In the FY2011 Budget Governor Christie eliminated the Mortgage Assistance Program, which provides grants to qualified agencies to provide foreclosure prevention services including counseling, legal assistance, assistance with loan modification and other activities as well as to provide emergency loans to homeowners experiencing difficulty making mortgage payments as a result of temporary hardship. Do you Support/Oppose restoring funds to the Mortgage Assistance Fund?

I support restoring funds to the Mortgage Assistance Fund.

17) How do you propose to assist homeowners who have lost their homes due to foreclosure and are unable to rent an apartment or purchase a second home due to their damaged credit?

My District Office has had some success helping families prevent foreclosure by using the Housing Affordable Modification Program. It's tough to even qualify for these programs. A lot of people aren't making enough to be able to hit the 30% of income mark in order to qualify for a HAMP modification. The Credit Agencies are Federal entities and so I'm not sure what a State can do to limit the inclusion of a foreclosure when someone does a credit check. And then once the information is there it's there and I do not know if we could ever effectively limit the use of a foreclosure as a factor considered when trying to rent or purchase a future home. If you have ideas, please share them with me.

Budget and Fair Taxes:

18) Do you Support/Oppose Governor Christie's FY 2012 Budget?

I opposed Governor Christie's FY 2012 budget and the Legislature's budget. Someone once said to me: "Show me your budget and I'll show you your priorities." While a few things were restored in the Budget by the Legislature, it fell far short of achieving my priorities.

19) In the FY 2011 Budget Governor Christie permanently reduced the state Earned Income Tax credit (EITC) to 20% from 25% of the federal level. Do you support reinstating the state EITC to 25% in FY2013 Budget?

I support reinstating the state EITC to 25% in FY 2013 Budget. Please note that this required companion legislation to get done (S2101/A3016). Make sure you review those votes.

20) Do you Support/Oppose restoring the FY2010 state income tax rate, which increased the tax rate from 6.37% to 8% for those making between \$400,000-\$500,000; from 8.97% to 10.25% for those making between \$500,000 and \$ 1 million from 8.97% to 10.75% for those making \$1 million and above?

I support restoring the FY2010 state income tax rate, which increased the tax rate from 6.37% to 8% for those making between \$400,000-\$500,000; from 8.97% to 10.25% for those making between \$500,000 and \$ 1 million from 8.97% to 10.75% for those making \$1 million and above.

21) Do you Support/Oppose adjusting New Jersey's income tax to more closely reflect ability to pay?

I'd be happy to review a proposal Citizen Action has to make our income tax system more progressive. Ideally, I'd like to see something that eliminates regressive taxes at the same time.

Fair and Affordable Utility Rates:

22) Do you Support/Oppose the deregulation of telecommunications and cable industries as outlined in S2664/A3766?

I oppose the deregulation of telecommunications and cable industries as outlined in S2664/A3766.

23) Do you Support/Oppose full funding for New Jersey's Universal Service Fund, which sets electricity and gas rates for NJ's low income families based on income and energy usage?

I support full funding for New Jersey's Universal Service Fund, which sets electricity and gas rates for NJ's low income families based on income and energy usage.

24) Do you Support/ Oppose Governor Christie's decision to take \$158 million of ratepayer money from NJ's Clean Energy Fund, which is designated to finance energy efficiency improvements in businesses, home and creating jobs, to plug nonrelated shortfalls in the FY2011 budget?

I oppose Governor Christie's decision to take \$158 million of ratepayer money from NJ's Clean Energy Fund, which is designated to finance energy efficiency improvements in businesses, home and creating jobs, to plug nonrelated shortfalls in the FY2011 budget.

25) Do you Support/Oppose S2032, which would ban formula based utility rates for all utilities including electric companies and water and sewerage authorities?

I am not familiar with S2032. I am happy to consider supporting you decision. Please send me information.

Quality Public Education:

26) Do you Support/ Oppose private school vouchers?

I oppose private school vouchers.

27) Do you Support/Oppose giving local communities the ability to decide if a new charter school should be able to open and draw students and resources from their district?

I oppose giving local school districts full control over whether a charter school opens in their District.

28) Do you Support/Oppose increasing the financial and educational transparency and accountability of all charter schools?

I support increasing the financial and educational transparency and accountability of all charter schools.

29) Do you Support/Oppose allowing for-profit entities to manage public schools?

I oppose allowing for-profit entities to manage public schools.

30) Do you Support/Oppose the Opportunity Scholarship Act (S1872/A2810), which would establish a pilot program in the Department of the Treasury to provide tax credits for contributions to entities that provide tuition scholarships to children in certain urban enterprise zone municipalities?

I oppose the Opportunity Scholarship Act. Please note that I did support it to allow it to get out of the Senate Economic Growth Committee and I explained that I maintained my opportunity to vote against the bill in the future.

31) Do you Support/Oppose providing in-state tuition to students having graduated from New Jersey high schools but who do not have Social Security numbers?

I support providing in-state tuition to students having graduated from New Jersey high schools but who do not have Social Security numbers.

32) Do you Support/Oppose providing access to universal early childhood education and adequately funding the program?

I support providing access to universal early childhood education and adequately funding the program.

33) Do you Support/Oppose the School Funding Reform Act of 2008, which distributes state aid to schools based on enrollment, with extra resources going to districts with higher concentrations of children in poverty, special needs or limited English proficiency?

I support the School Funding Reform Act of 2008, which distributes state aid to schools based on enrollment, with extra resources going to districts with higher concentrations of children in poverty, special needs or limited English proficiency.

34) Do you Support/Oppose fully funding the School Funding Reform Act's formula for education aid?

I support fully funding the School Funding Reform Act's formula for education aid as passed by the Legislature and approved by the Supreme Court.

Auto Insurance:

35) Do you Support/Oppose S170/A1747, which would ban the use of occupation and Education as rating and underwriting factors in New Jersey's auto insurance market?

I am a sponsor of S170 and strongly support its passage.

Civil Rights:

36) Do you Support/Oppose legislation that establishes marriage equality, granting same-sex relationships equal status under New Jersey law?

I support legislation that establishes marriage equality, granting same-sex relationships equal status under New Jersey law.

Consumer Protections:

37) Do you Support/Oppose the right of people injured by medical negligence to be treated fairly by the court system?

I support the right of people injured by medical negligence to be treated fairly by the court system.

38) Do you Support/Oppose preserving the right of New Jersey auto accident victims to receive medical care from doctors and medical professional of their choosing?

I support preserving the right of New Jersey auto accident victims to receive medical care from doctors and medical professional of their choosing

39) Do you believe that a strong civil justice system is important for injured consumers?

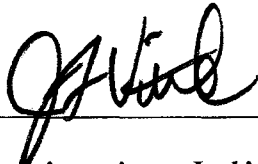
Yes, I believe that a strong civil justice system is important for injured consumers.

40) Do you Support/Oppose any weakening of New Jersey's Consumer Fraud Act?

I oppose any weakening of New Jersey's Consumer Fraud Act

Please Provide Any Additional Information or Comments:

Candidate Signature



Date:

9/18/11

Please fax completed questionnaire to Jackie Cornell-Bechelli, NJ citizen Action Legislative/Political Director at 732.214.8385 or jackiec@njcitizenaction.org by Friday, September 16, 2011.