
Voting in the Primary 2020 Election

By Margaret Lenzi In Electoral Politics, Endorsements, News, Philly Politics 10 May 2020

Whether you vote by mail or in person, please consider the PNN endorsements and recommendations in this primary election which include the candidates and delegates to the Convention, and also the ballot questions. Based on candidates' questionnaires and interviews, and a super majority vote by our members, PNN endorsed the following slate of candidates in early March (that seems so long ago!).

PNN ENDORSEMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR PRIMARY ELECTION

- **PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES – BERNIE SANDERS (& Delegates to Convention)**
- **AUDITOR GENERAL – NINA AHMAD**
- **PA SENATE #1 – NIKIL SAVAL**
- **PA HOUSE #181 – MALCOLM KENYATTA**
- **PA HOUSE #182 – BRIAN SIMS**
- **PA HOUSE #184 – ELIZABETH FIEDLER**
- **PA HOUSE #188 – RICK KRAJEWSKI**
- **PA HOUSE #198 – SUPREME DOW**
- **PA HOUSE #200 – CHRIS RABB**

BALLOT QUESTION NO. 1: Shall the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter be amended to create a Department of Labor to enforce City laws that protect Philadelphia workers?

VOTE YES

BALLOT QUESTION NO. 2: Shall the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter be amended to allow city officers and employees to volunteer for state and federal political campaigns outside of work time and without using City resources. City officers and employees would remain restricted from participating in campaigns for Philadelphia offices and from participating in campaigns for state representatives, state senators and local judges for whom Philadelphia voters cast votes. **VOTE YES**

READ ON FOR MORE INFORMATION

ON THE CANDIDATES AND BALLOT QUESTIONS

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: BERNIE SANDERS (& HIS DELEGATES TO THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION)

We recommend voting for Bernie Sanders for President, along with all his pledged delegate candidates and here's why.

We realize that much has happened in the presidential primary since our members overwhelmingly voted to endorse Bernie in early March – chief among them, that Bernie suspended his campaign for the Democratic nomination. Yet, while Bernie has suspended his campaign, he is asking us to still vote for him and his delegates to be sure there is a strong voice at the Democratic National Convention that stands for healthcare as a right, a \$15 minimum wage, an end to tax breaks for the rich, an end to outrageous levels of student debt, strong support for public schools, and a government that works for all of us, not just the one percent.

These primaries are not just for nominating a candidate for president, but they are also for electing delegates who are going to decide the platform of the party and the rules of the party. Bernie Sanders's 2016 delegates were essential to the party's overhaul of its superdelegate system and getting many progressive positions added to the 2016 Democratic platform. By voting for Bernie in the upcoming primary, he will be able to get a proportionate share of his delegates elected to the Democratic National Convention. As of

today, Bernie has 984 delegates; he needs 1,188 in order to be able to have enough delegates to introduce resolutions. Every vote counts.

The issues that Bernie ran on this year poll exceedingly well, especially among those voters who by staying home in 2016, helped elect Trump President. We need motivated voters in 2020 to put an end to the Trump reign, and to achieve that, we need the strong platform that Bernie's delegates will insist on this year. That's why PNN still enthusiastically asks you to vote for Bernie Sanders for President, along with his entire delegates slate.

AUDITOR GENERAL: [NINA AHMAD](#)

Nina Ahmad is a fellow Philadelphian who intends to use the powers of this office to take on Big Pharma to lower costs on life saving medicines, protect education funding to make sure our students have the best schools, and fight the NRA, giving lawmakers the data they need to pass tough new gun laws. The Auditor General not only conducts financial audits of programs receiving state funds, but also conducts performance audits to assess whether the programs effectively and efficiently promote the intended public policy. Nina will work to make the Auditor general's office a powerful tool for progressive change.

Nina has been a successful civic leader who takes on big fights and wins. Nina established the first Office of Public Engagement (OPE) in Philadelphia and, as Deputy Mayor, led the efforts to ensure that community voices were represented in every aspect of public policy. As president of the National Organization of Women (NOW), Nina led important efforts to fight workplace discrimination and harassment. Nina's experience in public policy and advocacy, and her scientific background in data analysis, makes her the best candidate to be a fiscal watchdog with a progressive outlook

STATE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS (Depending where you live, you may have one of these candidates on your ballot)

PA SENATE #1: [NIKIL SAVAL](#) (South Philadelphia)

Nikil Saval is a writer and community organizer, the first Asian American to be elected ward leader in Philadelphia. In 2009, he organized boycotts with UNITE HERE against luxury

hotel developers to fight for the rights of housekeepers. In 2013, he helped win back jobs for 1,000 cafeteria workers and noontime aides, who had been laid off because of Gov. Corbett's cuts to the state education budget. In 2016 he was a leader in the Bernie Sanders' campaign and he co-founded Reclaim Philadelphia.

Nikil's three highest priorities as a legislator are: 1) pass a renewable energy bill with a goal of 100% renewable by 2030 that also includes expanding public transportation and building thousands of affordable green units; 2) make the new and improved school funding formula retroactive and deliver funds to remediate and green our school infrastructure; and 3) establish a benefit fund for long-term elder care and childcare. PNN recommends Nikil Saval because he will fight for a Philadelphia and Pennsylvania that works for the many and not the few.

PA HOUSE #198: SUPREME DOW (Germantown, Upper North Philadelphia)

Supreme Dow's combination of experience, knowledge, activism and leadership make him the best suited candidate to be an effective legislator in the 198th district. He has over 30 years experience serving communities in the non-profit, education, and arts and cultural sectors. He has lived his entire life in this NW Philly community, worked on many local projects, and is well known and respected as a leader, community advocate, and fighter for people.

As a public school advocate, Dow served as president of two Home and School Associations, was an organizer for educational reform, advanced a community based approach to strengthening public education, and developed programs and curriculum in anti-bullying, violence prevention and youth mentoring. Recognized as a trailblazer in the arts & cultural sector, he is the founder, executive director, and curator of the Black Writers Museum, which transformed an underdeveloped historic landmark in Vernon Park into a national destination.

His three highest priorities as a legislator would be saving public education, increasing the minimum wage, and stemming the gun violence that plagues communities across the state. Supreme Dow will bring a strong voice to Harrisburg to address the many issues facing his district, Philadelphia and all Pennsylvanians.

PA HOUSE #200 – CHRIS RABB (Mt. Airy/Chestnut Hill)

Since 2017, Chris Rabb has been a leading voice for the progressive movement in Philadelphia- fighting for our values in Harrisburg and standing up to the corporate interests that rule our state. As a state legislator, he has promoted community economic development, criminal justice reform, environmental justice, and fought the good fight against wealth inequality, and gun violence. He has been prolific in introducing bills, including the Fair Share Tax Plan, an energy bill to transition to 100% renewable energy by 2050, and the One Fair Wage Bill to increase the minimum wage. PNN endorsed Chris in his two prior elections and we need him to remain in the legislature where he continues to speak truth to power.

PA HOUSE #188 – RICK KRAJEWSKI (West Philadelphia)

Rick's community organizing background and his work on a wide swath of issues give him the skills, experience, and commitment to make him a strong progressive candidate in his first run for political office. Since 2017, Rick has been a full-time organizer for Reclaim Philadelphia. In 2017 Rick led a team of over 200 volunteers as the West Philadelphia Organizer to elect Larry Krasner and convened the DA accountability table after the election to hold him accountable to his campaign promises. Rick was a leading force in establishing the participatory defense hub in Kingsessing, a resource to serve community members facing the criminal justice system. In the 2019 primary, he brought together a coalition of 15 community organizations in pursuit of electing progressive judges in Philadelphia, and they successfully elected several.

When elected, Rick's top priorities, in addition to criminal justice reform, will be public education, and housing as all these issues intersect at every level. We recommend Rick for this seat because he will take a bigger, bolder, and more inclusive vision to Harrisburg – one that is sorely needed to bring opportunities to all people in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania.

PA HOUSE #184- ELIZABETH FIEDLER (South Philadelphia)

In 2018, PNN endorsed Elizabeth Fiedler in her initial run to be the State Representative in the 184th District – she ran a grassroots insurgent campaign and won. Since she has been

in office, Fiedler has been a champion for school funding, for restoring General Assistance, for a Fair Share Tax Plan, for a Fair Work Week, for a sustainable climate and for the rights of the incarcerated. She has emerged as a leader on education justice having introduced legislation for emergency funding to remediate lead, mold and asbestos in our schools which led to Gov Wolf allocating 1 billion dollars for these repairs in this year's budget proposal. She has used her organizational skills to build support for progressive legislation both inside and outside of the State House. Elizabeth Fiedler deserves our continued support as a strong progressive voice in the legislature.

PA HOUSE #182 – BRIAN SIMS (Center City/Fairmount)

In 2012, Brian Sims became the first openly LGBTQ person ever elected to the Pennsylvania General Assembly. Since then he has dedicated his time in office to powerful advocacy for making Philadelphia safer, strengthening and protecting public education, preserving services for seniors and other vulnerable Pennsylvanians, making affordable health care more available, expanding civil rights for all Pennsylvanians, preserving our environment while investing in alternative energy, creating jobs and cleaning up the culture of corruption in Harrisburg. Brian has drafted and introduced 17 pieces of legislation on subjects as diverse as the Pennsylvania Marriage Equality Act, the Ban on Conversion Abuse of Minors, and the Pennsylvania Equal Pay Act.

While it has been difficult to get progressive legislation passed in a legislature controlled by Republicans, Brian Sims has been tireless in his pursuit of his legislative initiatives. PNN recommends his candidacy because of his powerful commitment to a legislative agenda that will provide equality and opportunities for all Philadelphians.

PA HOUSE #181- MALCOLM KENYATTA (North Philadelphia)

Elected to a first term in 2018, Malcolm Kenyatta's three highest priorities have been poverty reduction, gun violence reduction, and mental health care. Living in his legislative district his entire life, Malcolm speaks to the issues of deep poverty and racism that affect his constituents in an authentic and compelling voice, focusing especially hard on ways to confront the displacement of seniors and low income people due to gentrification and development. Due to increasing gun related deaths in Philly, he supported 23 bills to

eliminate gun violence and led a fight for a special session on gun violence. He has been extremely active as a first term legislator and routinely hosts community events in his district. We need Malcolm in the legislature to continue a laser focus on the problems that plague low income and minority neighborhoods in our city.

BALLOT QUESTION NO. 1: Shall the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter be amended to create a Department of Labor to enforce City laws that protect Philadelphia workers? VOTE YES

This Department would protect many of the new worker rights that have been created by the Fair Work Week, Domestic Workers, Paid Sick Leave and a variety of other recent legislative initiatives. Without a strong oversight and enforcement department, these worker rights will become nothing more than another set of unmet promises. If a worker complains that she has been denied her rights under these new labor protections, she would now have a permanent place to go. If the Department is established under the City's Charter, it will make the Department of Labor permanent so that it cannot be eliminated in future administrations.

BALLOT QUESTION NO. 2: Shall the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter be amended to allow city officers and employees to volunteer for state and federal political campaigns outside of work time and without using City resources. City officers and employees would remain restricted from participating in campaigns for Philadelphia offices and from participating in campaigns for state representatives, state senators and local judges for whom Philadelphia voters cast votes. VOTE YES

The current charter, that was adopted in 1951, prohibits most City officials and employees from taking part in the conduct of anyone's political campaign for an elected office, whether local, state, or federal. This is a relic from the time before the City had a civil service system, based on the blatant coercion that the Republican Party used to apply regularly to City workers to make them support their candidates. With the onset of civil service and adoption of an Ethics Code, that has become all but impossible.

This proposed amendment goes part way to making City workers first class citizens. It will allow City officers and employees to work on federal campaigns and on some state campaigns. However, they will still be restricting from working on campaigns for any local city offices and from participating in campaigns for state representatives, state senators and local judges for whom Philadelphia voters cast votes. Police, Sheriff, City Commissioner, D.A. and City Ethics Board employees are still prohibited from engaging in political activities.

It could be argued that this amendment doesn't go far enough because it still bars participation in campaigns for City office and legislative offices based in Philly, but it is a first step and it will free City workers to participate in the November federal election. On balance, it restores the democratic right to participate in the electoral process for thousands of Philadelphia residents.