

OU ADVOCACY-PENNSYLVANIA 2014 GUBERNATORIAL VOTER GUIDE



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ABOUT THE GUIDE

As part of its efforts to educate the Jewish community about candidates running for office and their positions, OU Advocacy-PA reached out to the candidates for governor with questions about education and more general issues. The Orthodox Union is a not-for-profit organization and does not endorse any candidate.

THE CANDIDATES

Gov. Tom Corbett



Governor Tom Corbett was inaugurated as governor of Pennsylvania in January 2011. Under Gov. Corbett's leadership, the state's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program was expanded and the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) program was launched, giving parents more opportunities for school choice. Gov. Corbett also signed the Safe School legislation into law, which increased funding for school safety and made Pennsylvania the first state to dedicate funds to training and paying school resource officers and school safety officers. For more information, visit www.tomcorbettforgovernor.com.

Rob McCord



As treasurer for Pennsylvania, McCord repaired the \$1.5 billion PA 529 Guaranteed Savings Plan, taking it from 70 percent to 100 percent funded in three years, making college more accessible for families across the state. Prior to being elected treasurer, McCord served as co-founder and Managing Director of Pennsylvania Early Stage Partners — a family of three venture funds that invested in early-stage life-science and information technology firms; and he co-founded the Eastern Technology Fund, a successful provider of funding that served more than 800 innovative companies. For more information, visit www.robmccord.com

Rep. Allyson Schwartz



U.S. Representative Allyson Y. Schwartz is currently serving her fifth term representing Pennsylvania's 13th Congressional District. She has received national renown for her work on behalf of education, lowering healthcare costs and easing the tax burden on middle-class families. As the only Jewish member in Pennsylvania's Congressional Delegation, Schwartz has a deep and personal commitment to strengthening America's relationship with Israel and promoting ties between the two democratic nations. From 1990 to 2004, she served as a member of the Pennsylvania State Senate, where she established the Pennsylvania Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). For more information, visit www.allysonschwartz.com

Tom Wolf



Tom Wolf's company, the Wolf Organization, employs hundreds of people and does business in dozens of states. Wolf was appointed by Gov. Bob Casey to an economic development board and served on the Legislative Commission on Urban Schools and also served as Secretary of Revenue in Gov. Ed Rendell's cabinet. Wolf has also been active in his community, serving as Chair of the York County United Way, the York County Community Foundation, the York College Board of Trustees, and as Chairman of the York County Chamber of Commerce and has also been active in the York Jewish Community Center. For more information, visit www.wolfforpa.com

THE QUESTIONS

1. What role should the state have in providing and funding an education for every child?
2. Pennsylvania's Educational Improvement Tax Credit program and the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit program: do you support these programs? Do you intend to cut the program or expand it?
3. How do you propose to ensure that schools in our state are adequately funded? Would you support a funding formula for school districts to ensure that they are adequately funded? If so, what would be the key factors in such a formula?
4. Do you agree/disagree/undecided that tax dollars for education should follow the child? As long as Pennsylvania taxes citizens for public education, children should be able to choose a public or private school for Kindergarten through 12th grade, as they can for higher education. Please elaborate.
5. Do you agree/disagree/undecided that Pennsylvania should return to a part-time legislature with a limited number of legislative session days —similar to 46 other states. Please elaborate.
6. The economic health of business is vital to the future prosperity of the Commonwealth. How would your Administration create jobs and stimulate the economy?
7. Children cannot learn, and teachers cannot teach, in an unsafe or disruptive environment. What are your goals regarding school safety in general as well as specifically for non-public schools?
8. As Governor of Pennsylvania, my highest priorities as a public servant to the taxpayers and citizens of Pennsylvania will be ...

Question 1: What role should the state have in providing and funding an education for every child?



Gov. Tom Corbett: The state has an obligation to ensure that every Pennsylvania student is prepared with the skills necessary to succeed in a rapidly changing 21st Century workforce. As a former public school teacher, I understand the importance of a quality education which is the reason I have increased funding for basic education by \$1.55 billion since 2011; the highest level in Pennsylvania history.



Rob McCord: Investing in education is a moral and economic imperative for the commonwealth. It is also a constitutional requirement for the state to “provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public education.” Unfortunately, Governor Corbett has failed to live up to these obligations. He has done a tremendous disservice to Pennsylvania’s children, and his failure to support education will have consequences for these students for the remainder of their lives.

Education will be my top priority as governor, because everything else – job creation, economic development, crime prevention, healthy lifestyles, and civic engagement – all improve with a better educated public. Not only will I restore the \$1 billion Governor Corbett cut from our classrooms, but I will also dedicate considerable new resources that will provide greater access to voluntary, high-quality early childhood learning opportunities and that will make higher education more affordable for young adults.



Rep. Allyson Schwartz: Providing high-quality public education is the most fundamental responsibility of state government and the key to our children’s future and Pennsylvania’s economic prosperity. During my service in the Pennsylvania Senate, I served for a decade as the Democratic Chair of the Education Committee and pushed for greater investments in education.

As governor, I will make a historic commitment to early education to ensure that Pennsylvania’s children start school ready to learn. I will launch Keystone Kids, a landmark initiative to provide universal access to voluntary prekindergarten for all 4- year-olds within a decade. Keystone Kids will offer affordable access to all of Pennsylvania families and will serve children in a variety of high-quality, accredited settings, including school districts, licensed nursery schools, Head Start sites, and child care centers.

I will also recommit the Commonwealth to public education and reverse Governor Corbett’s nearly \$1 billion of extreme cuts by growing the economy, re-prioritizing the existing budget,

and drawing upon new resources from a five percent natural gas tax. There is no better investment for our children and our economic future.



Tom Wolf: The key to good jobs and a secure middle class is a strong public education system. The current way of funding schools in Pennsylvania shortchanges too many school districts and the students in those communities, and Governor Corbett's more than \$1 billion in education cuts have only made the problem worse.

We can and we must do better for our children and for Pennsylvania taxpayers. As governor, I will ensure that every public school student in the Commonwealth has access to the necessary resources by:

- Putting education first. This includes reversing Governor Corbett's \$1 billion in funding cuts, and 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 revenue to education programs.
- Instituting brick-and-mortar and cyber charter school funding formulas, which are projected to save up to \$365 million per year.
- Using the power of the governor's office to publicly and consistently reaffirm that public education is a shared responsibility and all Pennsylvanians need to commit to the education of our children, regardless of where they live.

Question 2: Pennsylvania’s Educational Improvement Tax Credit program and the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit program: do you support these programs? Do you intend to cut the program or expand it?



Gov. Tom Corbett: Over the past three years, I am proud that my administration has expanded the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program by \$25 million. This program is critical in providing children from low-income families an opportunity to enroll in better performing public, private or parochial schools.

In 2012, I was honored to sign Act 85 which established the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit program (OSTC). The OSTC provides \$50 million in scholarship funding for low-income families so their children can leave underperforming schools and obtain the quality education they deserve.

I remain committed to working with business leaders across the Commonwealth in expanding the countless opportunities afforded to Pennsylvania students through the EITC and OSTC programs.



Rob McCord: I support both programs as they provide a means through which the private sector can offer students – particularly disadvantaged, low-income students in struggling school districts – the opportunity to pursue their academic success in the environment that best fits their needs. As such, I would preserve both programs at current levels.



Rep. Allyson Schwartz: I will maintain the Educational Improvement Tax Credit and ensure that it benefits the greatest number of students and improves student performance. I will also review the impact of the newer Opportunity Scholarship tax Credit program.

As a former senior member of the House Budget Committee, I know that budgets are statements of our priorities and principles. As governor, I will ensure that my budgets include the necessary investments to provide greater opportunity to our children and families.



Tom Wolf: As governor, I will take a look at all of the State’s tax credits to ensure that we are not just rewarding special interests. I do not think that public tax dollars should be diverted from our public schools to create a back door voucher system. I will take a close look at both of these programs and examine how they impact public education funding.

Question 3: How do you propose to ensure that schools in our state are adequately funded? Would you support a funding formula for school districts to ensure that they are adequately funded? If so, what would be the key factors in such a formula?



Gov. Tom Corbett: It is incumbent upon state government to ensure that every Pennsylvania student has access to a quality education. I have long supported the creation of a commission to examine the existing funding formula and offer recommendations on fairly distributing funding to Pennsylvania schools.



Rob McCord: We must dramatically revise and reform the state funding formulas for public education. As governor, I will demand a funding formula that ensures public dollars are fairly and effectively delivered to school districts and that the formula takes into account student needs, as well as the local tax base and tax effort needed to fund education.

This burden should not be placed solely on local communities, though. The state must step up and contribute more to public education. Even though public funding for pre-K -12 in Pennsylvania represents one of the largest components of the General Fund budget, Pennsylvania continues to lag other states in the degree to which it supports public education, contributing slightly more than one-third of total funds — while the national average is around 45%.

Certainly, communities should have a role in supporting their local school districts, but we need to consider moving away from an over-reliance on local property taxes and explore the availability of alternative state revenue sources. A McCord Administration will be receptive to every option for new revenues and greater efficiencies.



Rep. Allyson Schwartz: As the Democratic Chair of the Pennsylvania Senate Education Committee, I fought for fair funding for our public schools. During my first term, I will reverse Governor Corbett's nearly \$1 billion of extreme cuts by growing the economy, re-prioritizing the existing budget, and drawing upon new resources from a five percent natural gas tax.

In addition, I will work with stakeholders to establish a new funding formula that provides the necessary level of state support for each of our 500 school districts to ensure that all students receive a quality education. I will work to establish a transparent formula that recognizes student and school district characteristics, considers local effort, and provides sustained, adequate, and fair funding to every school.



Tom Wolf: As governor, I will enact a fair funding formula. Instituting a fair funding formula is about recognizing the differing and variable needs of children across the state. I will work closely with Democrats and Republicans alike in the state Legislature to enact a sensible, equitable funding formula that starts with a costing out study, includes a nationally competitive base rate, and ties additional funding to district size, poverty levels, local tax efforts, and student makeup. As governor, I will commit to fully funding this formula, which 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

Question 4: Do you agree/disagree/undecided that tax dollars for education should follow the child? As long as Pennsylvania taxes citizens for public education, children should be able to choose a public or private school for Kindergarten through 12th grade, as they can for higher education. Please elaborate.



Gov. Tom Corbett: I remain committed to improving the quality of every public school in the Commonwealth while ensuring that each family has the choice of the best high quality education option for their child.



Rob McCord: I believe public funds are best and most efficiently allocated directly to the school district, allowing districts to plan resources and staff accordingly based on projected enrollment and ensuring all students have access to an education. Private schools provide a measure of competition, which is entirely appropriate, but I do not believe public dollars should support those entities beyond current levels through programs like the EITC and OSTC program. This is just as is the case in higher education, where state-owned and affiliated universities tend to offer lower tuition rates than private universities, yet the state provides a measure of financial support (grants and subsidized loans) for students who enroll in the latter.



Rep. Allyson Schwartz: Disagree. While parents and families should absolutely have educational choices, I do not support school vouchers.



Tom Wolf: No, I disagree. Every child in the Commonwealth should have access to a high quality public education. Directing taxpayers' dollars to private schools benefits a few while taking away needed resources from many. It also suggests that education is a private good and that we do not all have a shared responsibility to ensure that all students get a top-notch education. As governor, I will work to strengthen our public education system so that every child, regardless of where he or she lives, has the same access to a great public school.

Question 5: Do you agree/Disagree/Undecided that Pennsylvania should return to a part-time legislature with a limited number of legislative session days — similar to 46 other states? Please elaborate.



Gov. Tom Corbett: The cost of operating Pennsylvania’s legislature is among the highest in the nation. I have consistently supported efforts to create a biennial budget process which would greatly limit the amount of time legislators are required to spend in Harrisburg. This would enable the Commonwealth to reduce the high operating costs of the legislature and preserve more of your hard-earned tax dollars.



Rob McCord: I agree with the need for a full-time legislature as I believe Pennsylvanians should have regular access to elected officials who are focused on the needs of their district and constituents, but I also feel the General Assembly should spend more time in session in Harrisburg to get the work of the people of Pennsylvania done.



Rep. Allyson Schwartz: Disagree. I am committed to ending the current status quo of stale, failed Harrisburg politics but I do not support Pennsylvania changing to a part-time legislature. We do, however, need to change Harrisburg’s culture of inaction and restore leadership with a renewed sense of purpose. As the only woman member of Pennsylvania’s 20-member Congressional delegation, I have devoted my public service career to strengthening public education, expanding access to affordable, high-quality health coverage for all Americans, and standing up for middle class families. I will use my experience, high expectations and sense of urgency to make Harrisburg work for Pennsylvanians again.



Tom Wolf: No, I disagree. First, I think we should allow those in the legislature to decide how many days they are in session. If we as the public do not agree with their decisions, we have the power to elect different representatives. I do support significant government reforms, including those that address gerrymandering, to make our elections more competitive. Second, I believe this change would simply address the symptoms and not the root cause of problems in the General Assembly. And it would end up shifting more decision- making power to non-elected staffers.

Question 6: The economic health of business is vital to the future prosperity of the Commonwealth. How would your Administration create jobs and stimulate the economy?



Gov. Tom Corbett: The private sector – not state government – is the engine that drives economic opportunity in Pennsylvania. Since taking office, I have fought to eliminate the onerous taxes and regulatory burdens that stifled economic progress for too long. We have empowered small businesses to grow and continue training Pennsylvanians for the jobs of the 21st Century. We have also reduced business taxes by \$1 billion and eliminated the “death tax” on small business owners and family farms.

The effectiveness of these policies is evident: over 150,000 private sector jobs have been created since 2011; and, in January, Pennsylvania’s unemployment rate reached a five-year low of 6.4%.



Rob McCord: As a business leader, I believe that if we are willing to invest in ourselves, businesses will invest in us. My administration will invest in infrastructure projects, our existing high-tech and biomedical fields, environmental remediation and brownfield redevelopment, schools and institutions of higher education, and Pennsylvania’s energy industries, including renewables. Each of these areas generate a significant number of jobs but we must be willing to put our money where the jobs are, that means leveraging state investments to create a tremendous “multiplier effect” that sends positive ripples through the entire economy. We’ll increase that multiplier by leveraging private sector dollars to match or exceed the public funds.



Rep. Allyson Schwartz: Pennsylvania has great assets. Our hard-working and determined people, vast energy resources, manufacturing base, top universities, and agricultural wealth provide the Commonwealth with tremendous opportunities to grow the economy and create jobs.

As governor, I will ensure that all Pennsylvanians profit from the Marcellus Shale by enacting a moderate 5 percent gas severance tax to support transformational investments in the Commonwealth’s future. I will prioritize the development of “downstream” businesses and create and implement a plan to expand job opportunities for Pennsylvanians in the shale industry.

I will focus on building a skilled workforce by investing in education from pre-K to postsecondary. I will improve our workforce development efforts by creating new apprenticeship opportunities and building new partnerships with industry.

I will work to start a manufacturing renaissance in Pennsylvania by providing our manufacturers with increased access to capital and by connecting them with our world- class research universities. I will strengthen Pennsylvania’s innovation economy by creating a million-dollar innovation prize to encourage Pennsylvania’s best and brightest to turn their research into new products and companies.

I will also prioritize investments in Pennsylvania agriculture, which remains our number one industry. And, I will make a major commitment to clean energy and energy efficiency.

Finally, I will launch Build PA to create good-paying jobs for Pennsylvania’s workers, strengthen our economic competitiveness, and improve everyday life for Pennsylvanians. This statewide infrastructure bank will be capitalized over time with hundreds of millions of dollars in natural-gas tax profits and will offer loans, loan guarantees, grants and other financing to start, accelerate, or expand infrastructure projects that will modernize our current infrastructure and grow economic opportunity across the Commonwealth.



Tom Wolf: I have spent most of my life as a businessman and entrepreneur creating jobs. I am running for governor because I want to give Pennsylvania a fresh start – to make the Commonwealth the nation’s “Keystone” for economic growth with its abundant natural resources, vibrant agricultural industries, world class universities and colleges, and its ideal location as the transportation 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 an engine 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, exploit the innate strengths of Pennsylvania’s economy, and use our resources to our full advantage.

Question 7: Children cannot learn, and teachers cannot teach, in an unsafe or disruptive environment. What are your goals regarding school safety in general as well as specifically for non-public schools?



Gov. Tom Corbett: As the former Attorney General of Pennsylvania, I believe the safety and security of all Pennsylvania schools is of paramount importance. In 2013, working in partnership with the General Assembly, we expanded the Safe School Grant Program by \$3.9 million. This funding supports the placement of resource officers and police officers in schools across Pennsylvania.



Rob McCord: I wholeheartedly agree that a safe environment is essential to a successful learning environment. Schools must have adequate planning on how to respond to emergencies, good working relationships with local law enforcement, and professionals on staff who are trained on how to deal with crises and disruptive students. To these ends, I will direct my secretary of Education, State Police commissioner, and director of Emergency Management to help school districts collaboratively develop emergency action plans, and I will push for legislation that requires every school to form a school safety committee. Additionally, by restoring Governor Corbett's education cuts and investing new dollars in K-12 schools, my plan will dedicate a portion of those funds to professional development training in not only teaching, but also emergency preparedness and response and managing disruptive students. Lastly, school districts will be able to use their additional funding to ensure each school has a full-time counselor who is available to students who may regularly face bullying or problems at home.



Rep. Allyson Schwartz: Ensuring that our schools have healthy and safe learning environments is essential to enabling teachers to focus their attention on classroom learning and student achievement. Safe classrooms and school buildings are the product of teachers and staff who are well trained to intervene with difficult students.

As districts in Pennsylvania face increasingly difficult financial pressures, class sizes have increased and critical support staff have been laid off. As governor, I will ensure that the state provides districts with the resources and incentives they need to ensure safe learning environments. My administration will work to develop best practices for all schools across the Commonwealth.

In Congress, I have cosponsored the Safe Schools Improvement Act to require schools to have effective anti-bullying remedies.



Tom Wolf: I believe safety is a fundamental civil right, and nowhere is that more evident than in our schools. Students go there to learn and should be safe and protected. In order to create an environment where students feel comfortable testing new ideas and asking questions, there needs to be a positive school climate where students feel safe. Not only does the Commonwealth need to ensure that public school teachers have the knowledge and tools to prevent bullying but we also need to strengthen our anti-bullying laws so that there are real consequences.

In addition to addressing issues of in-school bullying, we also need to tackle the problem of cyber-bullying, which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have referred to as a public health emergency. As governor, I will support legislation that strengthens our current laws to create serious consequences for bullies and provide school districts with the tools needed to properly address the problem.

Question 8: As Governor of Pennsylvania, my highest priorities as a public servant to the taxpayers and citizens of Pennsylvania will be ...



Gov. Tom Corbett: As your Governor, my highest priority is serving as a responsible steward of the Commonwealth for the next generation of Pennsylvanians. I believe the lens of government is too often clouded by four or six year election cycles. We must look beyond the present and address the difficult issues before us, such as job creation, education funding and pension reform. By focusing on the issues of consequence, we will leave our children with a better Pennsylvania and a brighter future.



Rob McCord: Education, education, education, followed by economic development and job creation.



Rep. Allyson Schwartz: My top priority as governor will be recommitting the Commonwealth to public education. On day one, I will begin developing a budget that starts to reverse Tom Corbett's \$1 billion in education cuts. I will also start the work of developing a fair and sustained funding formula. Nothing is more important to the future of the Commonwealth.

I will also expand Medicaid to provide coverage to over 500,000 working Pennsylvanians and will build a Pennsylvania health insurance exchange. And, I will work to grow the Commonwealth's economy and to expand economic opportunity for Pennsylvania's citizens.



Tom Wolf: I want to set the table so that Pennsylvania is a dynamo for economic development and magnet for entrepreneurs who will create great jobs. I will do that by leveling the playing field, reinvesting in public education, building a 21st century transportation infrastructure, and making sure that we are using Pennsylvania's natural resources reasonably and in an economically efficient manner.