

Getting 'primed' for this year's election – start with the Primary

By: Akilah Williams, CSP Advocacy Co-Chair

Now that the 2024 celebratory dust has settled and we have formed a sound foundation for this year's resolutions, or have completely abandoned them, the timing seems right to turn our attention toward Pennsylvania's upcoming Primary election. Even though there is a sense of urgency surrounding November's General election for the office of president, there are several other important races taking place before polls open on April 23rd.

U.S. Senator

Incumbent Bob Casey, the longest serving Democratic U.S. Senator in Pennsylvania history, hopes to hold onto his office against Republican David McCormick. McCormick graduated from West Point, was awarded a Bronze Star for service in the Gulf War and served in President Bush's administration. Key issues that both candidates have been discussing on the campaign trail include abortion rights and the United States response to the Israel-Hamas war. McCormick has been critical of the Biden administration for not backing Israel strongly enough after the October 7th attack by Hamas. While Casey has described himself as a "Pro-life Democrat" his voting record shows that he has consistently supported abortion rights including the Women's Health Protection Act. He also voted to stop state-level abortion bans. In the past, McCormick has stated that he is pro-life and that he supports exceptions to preserve the life of the mother.

Attorney General

This position acts as Pennsylvania's chief law enforcement official by overseeing lawyers that prosecute criminal and civil cases. They also enforce consumer protection laws. Five Democrats and one Republican have thrown their hats into the ring to succeed the current Attorney General, Michelle Henry, who was tapped to fill the last two years of Shapiro's term. They include:

Democrats:

Philly's former Chief Public Defender Keir Bradford-Grey

As Pennsylvania Attorney General, Keir Bradford-Grey will advocate for strong consumer protections and work to ensure that consumers are treated fairly and have access to the resources they need to make informed decisions.

Former state Auditor General and U.S. House candidate Eugene DePasquale

On Eugene DePasquale's website he lists the issues that are important to him and that he is passionate about upholding including: reproductive rights, voting and democracy, the economy, consumer protections, unions, LGBTQ+ protections, student loans, healthcare, environment and climate, gun violence, defending liberty and freedom, and fighting public corruption.

Former Bucks County solicitor and Philadelphia District Attorney candidate Joe Khan

Joe Khan's record as a local prosecutor, federal prosecutor and county solicitor demonstrates he has what it takes to hold bad actors accountable and stand up for us all against powerful interests. He's running to tackle corporate and political corruption, keep our families safe and build a better world for all Pennsylvanians.

Northeast Philly State Rep. Jared Solomon

State Rep. Jared Solomon is dedicated to combating issues like housing, fighting hatred, consumer protection, drug policy, clean air and water, labor and employment, abortion rights, voting rights, and gun crime.

Delaware County District Attorney Jack Stollsteimer

Working together, we've reduced gun-related homicides in the City of Chester by 68%. I'm running for Pennsylvania Attorney General to help make our communities safer all across the commonwealth. **Jack has helped reduce the gun violence homicide rate in the City of Chester by nearly 70%** and the overall number of gun violence incidents by 65%. Jack formed an **Environmental Crimes Unit**, the first in Pennsylvania. Jack's team collaborated with Attorney General Shapiro's staff in a successful joint criminal prosecution against a gas pipeline manufacturer, who polluted local communities.

Republican:

York County District Attorney Dave Sunday

District Attorney Sunday's collaborative approach to public safety resulted in a 30% decrease in crime during his first term; reductions in the prison population by almost 40% since its peak. Dave is also a top litigator, a United States Navy Veteran and a dynamic leader who put himself through college and law school while working at UPS. Dave leads an office of prosecutors and detectives who together investigate and prosecute approximately 9,000 criminal cases annually.

State Treasurer

The Treasurer's office manages tax revenues, other funds, as well as pays state employees, disburses funds for state agencies, oversees investments, manages college savings program and runs other programs. Candidates include:

Republican:

Incumbent Stacey Garrity

Transparency is the foundation of our democracy. Taxpayers have a right to know how state government functions and how it spends their tax dollars. Pennsylvania's treasurer's office is sitting on \$3.5 billion in unclaimed property that belongs to our state's taxpayers. Let's make an honest effort to return every penny to Pennsylvania taxpayers. As treasurer, Stacy will help Pennsylvanians start and maintain 529 accounts that will help make education affordable for everyone.

Democrat:

State Rep. Ryan Bizzarro, 3rd district (Erie County)

State Rep. Ryan Bizzarro pledges that he will protect our state's assets and pensions from waste, fraud abuse, and greedy money managers. He will protect important programs like 529 college savings plans, PA Able and low-interest loans. He will have regional offices, increase financial literacy and return lost money to Pennsylvanians.

Auditor General

The Auditor makes sure that state money is spent legally and properly by conducting financial audits of state agencies and other entities like local governments, school districts, public pension programs, and universities. Occasionally it performs performance audits of prisons and mental health centers too. Candidates include:

Democrats:

State Rep Malcolm Kenyatta, 181st district (Philadelphia)

I'm running for Auditor General because it's time for the underdog to be a watchdog for Pennsylvania's working families. To ask the tough questions, to help reimagine and streamline government, and to help build the coalitions to fix what's wrong. It's what I've done as a State Representative for nearly five years, working to protect workers' rights, enact common-sense gun safety policies, and root out government corruption and waste. I've had multiple legislative leadership roles: as a member of the powerful State Government Committee with oversight on state agencies and elections, minority Chair of the Subcommittee on Campaign Finance and Elections, minority Chair of Automation and Technology in the Committee on Commerce, and a member of the Finance Committee.

Lehigh County Controller Mark Pinsley

It's more than just watching the dollars. It's making sure your money is being spent the way it's supposed to. It's about righting wrongs, helping people with problems and making sure Pennsylvania does what it promises. It's eliminating waste and enforcing policy. It's fighting to make sure money is spent fairly. I'm the only candidate with years of experience with auditing the government. I saved the county \$9 million in healthcare spending through a rigorous audit.

Republican:

Incumbent Auditor General Timothy DeFoor

With over 25 years of combined experience in law enforcement and auditing in both public and private industries, Tim is uniquely qualified to serve Pennsylvania citizens on day one. Tim has a proven track record of fighting waste, fraud and abuse. He'll work tirelessly to cut wasteful government spending to protect taxpayers and help create a stronger economy that allows businesses to create good paying jobs here in Pennsylvania.

Important dates

April 23, 2024 is the Primary Election

Polls are open on election day from 7am-8pm

Last day to register to vote is April 8, 2024

Last day to register a mail-in or absentee ballot: April 16, 2024

Sources:

<https://why.org/articles/2024-election-pennsylvania-senate-david-mccormick-israel-hamas-war/>

<https://www.newsfromthestates.com/article/issues-casey-and-mccormick-call-each-others-abortion-views-extreme>

<https://billypenn.com/2024/01/22/pennsylvania-primary-election-2024-ballot-primer/>