

# 1 Hood Power Questionnaire\_\_Rick Coplen\_\_PA10\_\_2-22-2024

*Please list all public service positions held over your career, including unpaid public service.*

- Elected school board member, Carlisle Area School District, Cumberland County
- Combat and Peacekeeping Veteran, U.S. Army
- Project Outreach (Equal Opportunity) Officer, Office of Admissions, U.S. Military Academy at West Point, U.S. Army
- Teacher:
  - U.S. Military Academy at West Point
  - Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, U.S. Army War College
  - Elizabethtown College's School of Graduate and Professional Studies
- Team Leader, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Hurricane Katrina recovery, providing daily status update briefings to the DHS Secretary
- Board Member, Employment Skills Center (2014-23)
- [Chair, Rotary Veterans Initiative \(2015 – Present\)](#)
  - [Support for Veterans' education, training, and job search](#)
- [President, Rotary Club of Carlisle \(2012-13\)](#)
  - [Led Super Storm Sandy Relief efforts for 47 PA Rotary Clubs](#)
- Steering Committee Member, [Neighbor To Neighbor Opportunity Building Team, Greater Carlisle Project](#) (2015 – 17)

*Please describe the general background of your public service during your professional career.*

My guiding principle in all the public service positions listed above is to help as many people as possible. Much of my effort is dedicated to helping people enhance their own human potential through their education and training. My commUNITY building efforts include a focus on facilitating cross-sector collaboration amongst leaders in government, business, non-profits, academia, and religious communities.

*Please describe your accomplishments in promoting the concept of equity for all people.*

- Project Outreach (Equal Opportunity) Officer, West Point. After graduating from West Point, I volunteered to recruit Black and Latino, , students to attend West Point so that they could have the opportunity for the excellent education I had received as a Mexican-American student. In that position, I had a life-changing experience of my own. I went to a segregated Latino school in Texas and talked with students who were eager to serve their country. But when I saw their academic transcripts, I knew they would never be accepted at West Point. It was then that I understood that they had not failed the school; the school had failed them. Since leaving the military, I have been a teacher and a school board member. I will not let such failures happen to other children of any race or background.
- To date, in the face of inadequate state-level public education funding, I advocated and voted for eight consecutive Carlisle Area School District budgets that fully and fairly fund public education for ALL our students
- At Carlisle public school board meetings, I consistently advocate that ALL our students be provided the opportunity to participate in ALL our academic, extracurricular, and athletic programs

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*Please describe any particular qualification you possess which was developed either through your career or in your community that would enhance your ability in the office you seek.*

## Teaching and Communication

- Economic and Infrastructure Development
- Strategic Leadership
- Societal Economic Analysis
- Peacekeeping and Stability Operations
- Facilitate Cross-sector Collaboration (Government, Business, Non-Profit, Faith Communities, etc.)
- Macroeconomics/Microeconomics
- Climate Change
- Principles of Management
- Debt and Wealth in America
- Business Ethics
- International Relations
- International Trade

## Professional Experience

- Hurricane Katrina recovery — team leader providing daily briefings to the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security
- Global events – Chief of briefers for U.S. Army Chief of Staff and Secretary of the Army
- Career Intelligence Officer, U.S. Army
- Strategic Business Intelligence Analyst, Booz Allen Hamilton management consulting services
- Co-owner of a small farm boarding and training horses

## Community Service

- Elected school board member, Carlisle Area School District, Cumberland County (2015-Present)
- President of the Carlisle PA Rotary Club, leading relief efforts for 47 Rotary clubs following Super Storm Sandy (2012-13)
- Chair, Rotary Veterans Initiative providing education, training and job search activities for veterans (2015-Present)
- Board member of the Employment Skills Center, Carlisle (2014-2023)

*Please describe any particular qualification you possess which was developed either through your career or in your community that would enhance your ability to serve in government.*

My answer to the previous question shows the knowledge, skills, and experience I have acquired throughout my life, both in the public sector and in the private sector. This breadth and depth of experience is unmatched by any other candidate for the office I seek and would make me effective in working with diverse people and diverse perspectives to achieve common purposes.

## If elected, what are your top three priorities?

1. Guarantee reproductive freedom and bodily autonomy for women.
2. Enact gun safety legislation to protect our people and communities.
3. Help EVERYONE pursue a path to family financial independence and prosperity, including home ownership --- by enacting a living wage and supporting public education, workforce training, and sustainable community economic development.

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## 1. Do you feel the government has done its job of making our region more equitable?

Strongly Disagree

## 2. What is within the government's ability to make our region more equitable, and what in your view, is its role?

Government can and must eliminate systemic racism in all forms – criminal and civil justice, housing, employment, education, environment, medicine, and finance.

Government can do this by vigorously enforcing equal protection laws and by repealing laws and practices that have a disproportionately negative effect on minority groups.

## 3. Do you believe the government has a role to play to address our region's longstanding racial, gender and sexual identity inequities?

Strongly Agree

## 4. What is that role? What specific policy decisions could help address these inequities?

I will aggressively advocate and vote to achieve:

- A Constitutional amendment as well as statutes protecting the reproductive rights and bodily autonomy of women.
- Pay equity and eliminating sexism wherever it exists.
- The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, the For the People Act, making Election Day a national holiday, and aggressive efforts to encourage all legal voters to vote.
- Legal protection for the human and political rights of LGBTQ+ people without exception.
- Repeal criminal sentencing laws and policy decisions, such as making marijuana a Schedule 1 drug, which result in discriminatory punishment and employment barriers.
- Universal, high-quality preschool for all children to level the playing field for everyone as they begin their education.

## 5. Should individual members of government focus on addressing the root causes of the racial and other inequities within the Pennsylvania region?

Strongly Agree

## 6. How do you feel you may do this for your district and the people you represent?

My career as a public servant and as a teacher has focused on bringing diverse people together to engage in solving problems. The 10th Congressional District is diverse, but it also includes too many silos where people do not have enough experiences with others who are not like them. I will use my background and my skill as a facilitator to encourage more communication and interaction between and among our diverse communities.

## 7. Do you support efforts to increase the minimum wage?

Strongly Agree

## 8. Do you support efforts to legalize cannabis in PA?

Strongly Agree

The federal classification of marijuana as a Schedule 1 drug has resulted in unjust sentencing and incarceration for people of color in particular. It also creates legal conflicts between the federal and

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state governments where marijuana has been legalized either for medical or recreational use. it is unfair and unproductive to put small business and legal users in this bind. It also wrongly classifies marijuana as more dangerous than methamphetamine and steroids. This is wrong, and I will work to change it.

## 9. Do you support the expungement of records related to cannabis sale, possession, and or/usage?

**Strongly Agree**

Please see my comment above.

## 10. Do you support the expansion of our public transit system (ex. Pittsburgh Regional Transit) into neighboring counties and the potential use of new methods of transit (Rail rapid transit, light rail expansion etc.)?

**Strongly Agree**

I support more federal funding for mass transit that connects people and jobs and that reduces pollution and helps to improve the environment. I am not familiar enough with the situation in and around Pittsburgh to comment specifically on what is needed there.

## 11. Do you support a pathway for immunity for those with cannabis related conditions and an inclusion of such individuals in the emerging cannabis industry? Why? Why Not?\*

Yes. Like any other drug, marijuana has value when used properly. That decision should be in the hands of patients and doctors, not politicians.

## 12. Should the Commonwealth pass new laws to protect voting rights in light of new challenges against the recently passed ACT 77?

**Strongly Agree**

## 13. What, if any, is the biggest threat to voting rights in Pennsylvania?

Scott Perry and the MAGA Republicans who tried on January 6, 2021, and will try again, to overturn the results of elections they do not win.

## 14. Do you support the creation or continuation of universal health programs, such as Medicare for All?

**Strongly Agree**

## 15. If you answered yes, do you believe this should be permanent or a stepping stone to single payer healthcare?

I believe a public option such as Medicare for All should be available for anyone to choose. Those who wish to pay for a private health insurance plan should have the freedom to do so.

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**16. Should the government require local law enforcement agencies to ban chokeholds and no-knock style raids in order to receive assistance?**

**Agree**

I find it hard to imagine that there are no circumstances in which these techniques are always inappropriate. If it were shown that other methods are equally or more effective, then I would support a ban.

**17. Do you believe the affordable, fair housing crisis includes having the government address issues with zoning, rent control, and eviction alternatives?**

**Strongly Agree**

**18. What do you believe the solutions to the housing and eviction crisis should be?**

The United States should invest in more affordable housing. Studies have shown that communities with an adequate amount of housing have far lower rent increases than communities where housing is scarce.

Increasing the amount of affordable housing should be part of a comprehensive plan that leads to home ownership. America's systemic racism has deprived families of color from building generational wealth through homeownership. It is a leading cause of the "cycle of poverty" and must come to an end.

***I will advocate and vote for legislation that helps implement the "7-point plan to increase Black homeownership by 3 million households by 2030" articulated by the Black Homeownership Collaborative:***

1. Homeownership Counseling
2. Down Payment Assistance
3. Housing Production
4. Credit and Lending
5. Civil and Consumer Rights
6. Homeownership Sustainability
7. Marketing and Outreach

Unlike Scott Perry, I will advocate and VOTE for increased federal funding for the above.

**19. Should Pennsylvania end qualified immunity for government officials, including law enforcement agents, in civil actions alleging deprivation of rights?**

**Somewhat Agree**

I agree that this is a state issue. There are times when qualified immunity is justified, but this immunity obviously has been abused and those abuses should be prevented by the General Assembly.

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## ***20. Should Pennsylvania pass legislation requiring the commonwealth to focus on the ability to release net-zero carbon emissions into the atmosphere by the year 2050?***

### **Strongly Agree**

This is not a Congressional issue, but the federal government can and should adopt national net-zero standards. I support environmentally responsible efforts to develop more of America's own energy resources. Our goal should be 100% renewable energy with wind, solar, hydro and geothermal energy. We also should accelerate the development of nuclear fusion now that we have demonstrated that it can be done. I support investigating whether a windfall profits tax on oil companies is warranted by their excessive profits at a time of high prices at the pump.

## ***21. Do you support public investment and funding of public schools and public community schools?***

### **Strongly Agree**

As a school board member, and for many years before my election, I have advocated for robust investments in public education, pre-K through community college, to provide educational opportunities for all.

Pennsylvania has one of the most racially discriminatory school funding systems in the United States. While that problem is being addressed at the state level, I will push for our national government to fully fund its commitment to children with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). That can and will make state funding of these programs easier and more equitable. That also will give the federal government a bigger stick in promoting educational equity in states in order to maintain their federal funding.

## ***22. Do you support investment into green energy and green energy jobs at the local level?***

### **Strongly Agree**

Absolutely, and particularly in communities that have suffered the impacts of environmental racism. I support environmentally responsible efforts to develop more of America's own energy resources. Our goal should be 100% renewable energy with wind, solar, hydro and geothermal energy.

We also should accelerate the development of nuclear fusion now that we have demonstrated that it can be done. I support investigating whether a windfall profits tax on oil companies is warranted by their excessive profits at a time of high prices at the pump.

## ***23. Do you support investment into business education and sustainability in underserved and underrepresented communities?***

### **Strongly Agree**

Through my leadership of the Carlisle Rotary's Veterans Initiative and my service on the board of Carlisle's Employment Skills Center, I have demonstrated my commitment to training, education and job placement for people on the economic margins. In Congress, I will advocate aggressively for federal seed funding for similar programs in communities nationwide.

## ***24. Should the ICE detention facilities in the United States be subject to greater local oversight?***

### **Agree**

Yes. EVERY federal governmental action can be improved by fully integrating the well-informed efforts of local, state, and federal public servants and the diverse communities they represent. Local oversight depends on the knowledge and skills of the local community to deal with the issues presented by such

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facilities. The federal government should work to improve the ability of local communities to play a significant oversight role in ICE detention facilities in their jurisdictions.

## 25. Should the Commonwealth work within its power to ensure access to banking for locally regulated cannabis businesses?

### Strongly Agree

As stated earlier, it is unfair and unproductive to force marijuana businesses to operate in a way that is unsafe and unsound both for the businesses and for the communities where they are located.

## 26. Do you agree gun legislation can be used to combat the health epidemic of mass shootings and community gun violence?

### Strongly Agree

Yes! It's time for all of us to step up and act now to combat the health epidemic of mass shootings and community gun violence!

Congress MUST act now to effectively reduce gun violence, achieve gun safety, and protect the 2nd Amendment. We can and must do all three. We are Americans. We are back-to-back World War Champions. We put men on the moon first. We lead the global economy and international regimes dedicated to peace, prosperity, and security. Surely, we can protect our children MUCH more effectively.

Congress, supported by commUNITY-led efforts, MUST pursue a comprehensive approach. Based on extensive conversations with residents during my ongoing 'Listening Tour' throughout Dauphin, York, and Cumberland Counties, I believe this is the strategic outline we should pursue:

- **Background Checks.** Background checks have blocked more than 3.5 million illegal gun sales in the past 20 years. I support the most effective background check system possible to prevent guns from falling into the wrong hands.
- **Domestic Violence.** According to Moms Demand Action, America is the most dangerous country in the world for gun violence against women. I support disarming domestic abusers who are convicted of a crime or are under a restraining order.
- **Red Flag Law.** I support a "red flag" law to allow families and law enforcement to intervene if someone is a threat to himself or others with a gun.
- **Responsible Gun Ownership:**
  - **Training.** I support responsible gun owner safety classes like those the NRA provides, including mandatory training for those purchasing certain weapons.
  - **Storage.** Every year, 700 children commit suicide by gun. More than 4 million children live in homes with unlocked/loaded guns. I will work with the NRA and gun safety advocates to educate people about keeping guns safe in the home. I support mandatory trigger locks.
  - **Reporting.** I support mandatory reporting of all lost and stolen guns to help law enforcement pursue criminals.
  - **Adult Responsibility.** I support holding parents liable for gun crimes committed by their minor children.
  - **Open Carry.** I support banning open carry in public places with exceptions for hunters in the field and in transit.
- **Guns Off the Streets.** Guns used to commit crimes should never be back on the streets endangering our communities. I support their immediate destruction after they are no longer needed as evidence. I support a gun buy-back program by the federal government to get more unneeded guns out of circulation.

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- **Assault Weapons.** When the assault weapons ban was in force, mass killings in America went down. Since the ban was revoked, mass killings have gone up. I will vote to ban assault weapons as a Constitutional way to save lives. I support banning modifications to ordinary guns that increase their firing power.
- **Ghost Guns.** Ghost guns are unregistered, and untraceable guns built from kits at home. They have become the gun of choice for criminals because they can't be traced. They are an assault upon law enforcement and a plague upon communities trying to stay safe. I support outlawing ghost guns.

## ***27. Do you support a path to citizenship for "Dreamers"?***

### **Strongly Agree**

America prides itself on fairness, but the treatment of Dreamers has been anything but fair. I absolutely support a path to full citizenship for Dreamers and will work to make that happen. Immigrants are a source of strength, not weakness. The reality is the majority of us have ancestors that came from another country. My mother's family immigrated from Mexico. Many of our industries benefit greatly from people coming to America from elsewhere – whether they are here legally or in an undocumented status. The federal government should finally adopt comprehensive immigration reform that provides a viable path to citizenship to those seeking to contribute to our Nation of Immigrants. As a son of an immigrant, I will not close the door behind me.

## ***28. Do you support creating incentives for green technology innovation in opposition to working to revive the coal industry?***

### **Strongly Agree**

Climate change and pollution are not the fault of the workers. We should make special efforts to bring those workers into the clean energy industries of the future.

## ***29. Do you support expanding access to affordable, accessible housing for low-income people and those experiencing displacement?***

### **Strongly Agree**

Please see my response to question 18 above.

Also, "affordability" is tied to people earning a living wage, which I define as a wage that allows people to have a decent life without having to rely on the government.

## ***30. Do you support diversion or community-based alternatives for people with mental illness from the criminal justice system, and to increase access to community mental health services?***

### **Strongly Agree**

A huge percentage of those in prison either have mental illness or are there because of mental illness. Prisons, particularly at the local level, have become the placement of last resort, and that is wrong. Both federal and state governments should provide incentives for students to enter the mental health field to meet the demand for professionals. I will support funding and policy changes to help communities develop places and programs for the treatment and prevention of mental illness.



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***31. Do you believe the Commonwealth has a role to play in reducing the maternal and infant mortality rates for the Black community in Pennsylvania?***

**Strongly Agree**

The history of our medical practice from slavery to Henrietta Lacks and even today is shameful and replete with racism that must be overcome with aggressive research into the special needs of the Black community. Reducing maternal and infant mortality is just one part of what must be done.

***32. According to the FBI, White Supremacy is on the offensive both in government and in our socio-political rhetoric. What can be done to protect communities of color, LGBTQ folk, Women, Immigrants, and other at-risk communities from this very real threat?***

Since Donald Trump descended the golden escalator in 2015, he and MAGA Republicans have empowered and enabled the worst assault on non-white "others," LGBTQ+ people, and women since the 1960s. We need leadership in government, the private sector, and in the faith community to stand up and say that hatred and discrimination are not just un-American but morally politically wrong. But the response must not be merely rhetorical. We need to revisit our hate crime laws and create penalties that fit the crime. And we need to create ways in which people can replace fear with understanding and suspicion with acceptance.

***33. How do you define community safety? How can your position work to keep the community safe?***

Community safety requires making public spaces free from violence, disease, ignorance and bigotry. Properly trained, paid and supported police are part of what is needed, as are economic opportunities produced through education and targeted investments in housing and employment.

***34. Outside of policing and prisons, what are some of the solutions to reducing the amount of violence that happens in the commonwealth?***

As outlined in question 26 above, an aggressive approach to gun safety is urgently needed. But that is not enough. We have to address the underlying causes of violence, most of which are the result of poverty and community dysfunction. I will work to bring mental health and social services to the side of law enforcement, who too often are called upon to make judgments about people and situations they are not trained to make.

***35. Do you support expansive ballot access to include drop boxes, ballots translated into multiple languages, and extended voting opportunities on the weekends?***

**Strongly Agree**

We should do everything we can think of to encourage voting and to make it convenient as well as secure. Every legal vote should be cast and counted in a way that gives us all confidence that elections reflect the true will of those the government is supposed to serve.

We also must do a better job of helping the public to understand how we ensure the security and occurrence of our elections so that no one will believe those who claim without evidence that elections are not valid.

***36. Do you believe the process to reinstate the right to vote for returning citizens (those returning from government detainment) should be streamlined and automated to inform participants upon release?***

**Strongly Agree**

Society should welcome back into the fold those who have paid the debt for their transgressions.

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## 37. What can you do to improve the quality of life of the average Black 22-year-old man in your district?

I will work to:

- Enact a living wage that rewards work with the ability to afford a home, to afford adequate and nutritious food, and to raise a family.
- Provide a safe community in which to live with the infrastructure – grocery stores, libraries, places of entertainment, law enforcement, employment opportunities – that white suburban families take for granted.
- Provide opportunities to pursue education and training for a job he wants to perform.
- Eliminate the racism that especially affects the treatment of young Black men.

## 39. Do you believe art is a vital resource for education, tourism, violence intervention, and cultural competency?

### Strongly Agree

Art has been important to human beings since we lived in caves. It is vital to sustaining the human spirit and bridging gaps between people. I believe in the power of art to transform lives and support it for all of the values it imparts in our economic and cultural lives.

## 40. Do you believe in funding the arts as a general practice of community investments?

### Strongly Agree

Yes, I firmly believe in public and private funding of the arts! America has a strong tradition, dating to FDR's Civilian Conservation Corps, of funding the arts and artists because of the arts' ability to improve community life and inspire people to achieve a better life.

## 41. How do you define governmental transparency?

Some believe that government information is inherently secret and should only be made available when explicitly authorized. I approach transparency the other way around. I believe information should be made public unless there is a compelling reason, such as national security, to keep it closely held. The lack of government transparency has been a contributing factor in many of America's and our communities' worst episodes. The lack of transparency about the truth during the Vietnam War cost thousands of lives and billions of dollars unnecessarily, and its eventual disclosure undermined the American people's faith in their government. Closer to home, the secrecy behind the epidemic of deaths at Dauphin County prison cannot be justified and has done immeasurable harm to the community's faith in the police and prison system.

## 42. What does reproductive justice mean to you? How is it able to reduce the maternal and infant mortality rates in the Black community?

When someone else controls your body, you are a slave or a prisoner. Reproductive justice means not only bodily autonomy for women controlling for themselves every decision pertaining to pregnancy. It also means having a healthcare system that supports women and infants before, during and after pregnancy, recognizing that Black women need special care to prevent bad outcomes.

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***43. The medical result of the pregnancy decision should not result in a criminal arrest or prosecution of the individual or their doctor.***

**Strongly Agree**

I have two adult daughters. I do not want politicians, judges or anyone else making decisions for them – or any other women – about their pregnancies. Doctors must be free to practice medicine with their patients' well-being their only concern, not whether a medical decision can be second-guessed by someone who is not qualified to make medical decisions and who does not know the unique circumstances of the patient, the doctor, and their relationship.

***44. Do you support reparations for the descendants of those who were enslaved or denied governmental services based upon their racial classification?***

**Strongly Agree**

Justice requires not merely stopping what is wrong but also making it right. There is no way that any amount of reparation can make right the centuries of enslavement suffered by Black people in America. But we can create systems and policies that undo some of the damage. The Supreme Court notwithstanding, I support affirmative action to overcome the discriminatory effects of America's systemic racism. Additionally, I support reparations in the form of scholarships to academic and career/technical schools. We should also fully explore reparations in the form of help with the down payment on a family home. Some forms of prosperity-inducing reparations are needed to achieve social justice.

***45. Research indicates Black men are disproportionately targeted by gun possession laws with little to no ways to legally own a gun once a violation occurs. Do you believe it is important to review the impact gun legislation has on communities in order to ensure common-sense reforms are not interfering with constitutional rights?***

**Strongly Agree**

As a soldier who has on-the-ground combat experience, I understand the gun culture and the need to achieve real gun safety for our communities while remaining faithful to the 2nd Amendment. As with all other rights, the right to keep and bear arms should not be influenced by a person's color, gender, ethnic heritage, religion, sexual orientation, or any other such factor.

***46. Do you support legislation that would afford members of the LGBTQIA+ community protection from eviction, employment discrimination, job termination, and denial of medical care?***

**Strongly Agree**

LGBTQIA+ are people, and all people are to be treated equally if we are to have a United States of America. We pledge to ensure "liberty and justice for ALL" and to uphold the ideal that "ALL men [and women] are created equal," endowed by their creator with rights that no legitimate government can take away.

***47. Pennsylvania has one of the largest aging populations in the country. Do you believe our government can do more to improve the conditions of the facilities and the overall quality of life for our seniors?***

**Strongly Agree**

The United States and Pennsylvania share a crisis in care-giving for children and seniors. We absolutely need to invest more in the people and facilities that care for people who cannot care fully for

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themselves. Systems that were designed for families that lived their lives in the same community are not sufficient for today's families that are dispersed throughout the nation and world. We have never valued care-givers enough, and it's time to recognize their value with compensation and working conditions that match the importance of their work.

## ***48. How do you define disability justice and how have you worked in the past to uphold its principles?***

Decades ago, a Philadelphia attorney named Stephen Gold made it his life's work to advocate for making all of life's experiences accessible to people with disabilities. He is largely responsible for the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the results of his work can be seen every day in curb cuts and ramps that make it easier for people in wheelchairs to navigate among us. Today, Steve can no longer ride his bike to work and has fallen victim to a degenerative disease that makes him use a wheelchair. He achieved justice not only for all of us but for himself as well.

Justice for people with disabilities requires us to put ourselves in the shoes – or wheelchairs – of others and to provide accommodations that enable full participation in society to the full extent of each individual's gifts and abilities.

As a school board member, I have consistently supported making our schools diverse, equitable, and inclusive for ALL students.

## ***49. The current SSI formula creates a default disability marriage penalty that should be altered to allow individuals to maintain their award levels irrespective of their marriage status?***

### **Strongly Agree**

Whether in SSI benefits or tax law or anywhere else, there should be no penalty that undermines a decision to enter into a marriage.

## ***50. How have you worked in the past to engage or mentor youth, particularly those who have been considered at risk?***

### **I have mentored youth in multiple roles:**

- As a Project Outreach Officer at the West Point Office of Admissions for one full academic year, I visited middle and high schools across the Southwest USA to inspire young people of color to apply to West Point. Although not all those students were qualified to gain admittance to West Point, I expressed the same hopeful message to all the young students: "YOUR Education is your pathway to achieving your dreams. Work hard. Study hard. Become the person and leader you are meant to be. Help others in your community."
- As a Carlisle School Board member and community volunteer, I have read to and interacted multiple times with the students attending the Summer Program for Youth in Carlisle. This program provides at-risk students with educational opportunities.
- As a Carlisle School Board member and community volunteer, I have read to and interacted multiple times with the students participating in the annual Buck-a-Book program, which supports child literacy and raises funds to support adult literacy through our Employment Skills Center.

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## ***51. Artists, cultural spaces, and artist practitioners provide a vital partnership and resources to government agencies.***

### **Strongly Agree**

All levels of our American Government can improve by partnering with community members --- especially artists in the context of cultural spaces. Here in Carlisle, PA, we see many examples of this, especially thanks to some of our younger artists. I demonstrated my strong belief in this concept by facilitating this presentation by our Chief of Police and Carlisle High School students:

[Carlisle High School students learn the art of compromise in painting the Unity Mural](#)

Art, flowing directly from the people, can express the heart-wrenching challenges facing a community as well as its hopes and dreams. Elected officials are wise to encourage such expressions and to pay close attention to them.

## ***52. As a member of Congress, you have the unique responsibility to vote for the country to go to war. What is your foreign policy philosophy in regard to this congressional power?***

I am a veteran of on-the-ground combat and on-the-ground peacekeeping. I understand the risks of putting American citizens in harm's way better than any other candidate in the 10th Congressional District.

I believe that war begins when diplomacy fails, and war ends when diplomacy succeeds. War must be a last resort that occurs only when America's national interest is in danger.

Because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine two years ago, and because of the potential for Russia to invade NATO countries if left unchecked, I believe we must be prepared to honor the commitments we have made to defend democracy and the integrity of other countries' people, territory and governments. If we show weakness and a lack of resolve, we invite disaster.

## ***53. What is your position on immigration reform and border security?***

Please see my response to Question 27 above.

Partisan gridlock on immigration issues has paralyzed improvements to a system that desperately needs them. President Biden's proposals are a good starting point for restoring order and fairness to the immigration process. However, we also need to recognize the immense burden that border communities shoulder and find ways to strengthen those communities and their ability to help immigrants.

## ***54. In order to assist individuals in obtaining economic mobility, it is important to have universal, automatic student loan debt relief.***

### **Strongly Agree**

I support President Biden's actions and proposals to relieve former students from the debt that prevents them and their families from participating fully in our economy and keeps people working in jobs they don't like. For too many, pursuing a higher education has transformed from opportunity to oppression. It should not carry such a penalty.

MAGA Republicans like Scott Perry routinely approve forgiveness for businesses, even those that have defrauded the American people, while opposing any form of loan forgiveness for students. That policy is exactly backwards, and I will work hard to change it.

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*55. Given the use of hip hop and rap lyrics in criminal prosecutions, passing the RAP ACT is common sense legislation which would narrow the use of lyrics in prosecutorial proceedings to instances directly connected to or about an alleged crime.*

**Strongly Agree**

There should always be a direct connection between the evidence of a crime and its prosecution.