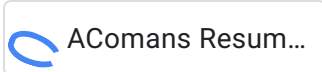


# 1Hood Power 2024 **General Assembly** Candidate Questionnaire

Please upload your bio and resume.



## Campaign Contact Information

Candidate Name \*

Ashley Comans

Office candidate is seeking \*

PA State Representative HD-34

Campaign Contact Person \*

Erik Oas

Campaign Email \*

hello@ashleycomans.com

Campaign Website

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Campaign Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/AshleyRComans>

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Campaign Twitter

<https://twitter.com/ashleyrcmans>

.....

Campaign Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/ashleyrcmans/>

.....

Campaign Tik Tok

.....

Campaign Youtube

<https://www.youtube.com/@PeoplewithAshleyComans>

.....

Other Social Media

.....

Background Info & Questions

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

Wilkinsburg School Board Director, Democratic Committee Woman

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

My public service has generally been through my work as a school board director in the Wilkinsburg School District. Since being elected in 2017 our board has been able to effectively restructure our elementary schools into a primary and intermediate structure, implementing Spanish for our PreK to 6th grade students, lowering of our borough taxes 6 mills since 2017, and working to strengthen parent engagement.

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

Through my work on school board we have made impactful changes through lowering property taxes for our residents which ensures financial relief for our community while strengthening early learning initiatives and setting a strong foundation for our young learners. I have also been doing the work to engage parents and caregivers to help us foster a more inclusive environment where our students have the opportunity to thrive. My work has been driven through my commitment to make a positive impact on the education system and my community as a whole.

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. \*

My qualification for this office are multifaceted. As a lifelong resident of this district I have an intimate understanding of the needs, challenges, and aspiration of my community. My lived experiences have proved me with invaluable insight into the intricacies of local issue which makes me well-equipped to address the needs of my community at the state level. As a community advocate I have been instrumental in mobilizing and empowering my community through our local elections year after year. My work over the years has helped to strengthen the democratic process so we can ensure the voices of the people are heard and represented in our elected officials. My combination of lived experiences, deep community roots, and a proven track record as a mobilizer and advocate uniquely qualifies me to serve as a state representative in the 34th House District. My commitment to uplifting and representing my community sets me apart as a candidate truly invested in creating positive change for the people I hope to serve.

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. \*

This question seems to be similar to the last, as the office I seek is in our government. My qualification for this office are multifaceted. As a lifelong resident of this district I have an intimate understanding of the needs, challenges, and aspiration of my community. My lived experiences have proved me with invaluable insight into the intricacies of local issue which makes me well-equipped to address the needs of my community at the state level. As a community advocate I have been instrumental in mobilizing and empowering my community through our local elections year after year. My work over the years has helped to strengthen the democratic process so we can ensure the voices of the people are heard and represented in our elected officials. My combination of lived experiences, deep community roots, and a proven track record as a mobilizer and advocate uniquely qualifies me to serve as a state representative in the 34th House District. My commitment to uplifting and representing my community sets me apart as a candidate truly invested in creating positive change for the people I hope to serve.

Please list all endorsements you have received \*

Young Democrats of Allegheny County, Run for Something, Working Families Party, Congresswoman Summer Lee, OnePA, ATU Local 85, International Union of Painters and Allied Trades District Council 57, Bethany Hallam, Anita Prizio, Barb Warwick, Wilkinsburg Mayor Dontae Comans, Wilkinsburg Council Moses Workman, Wilkinsburg School Board Director Amanda Barber, Former Swissvale Councilor Weldianne Scales, Churchill Councilor Andrea Ditillo, Swissvale Councilor Fred Quinn, East Pittsburgh Councilor Ahmonique Washington

If elected, what are your top three priorities? \*

Fairly Funding our Public Schools, Passing Paid Family & Medical Leave, Codifying Access to Abortion Care and improving maternal health

## Questionnaire

Please answer the questions below to the best of your ability. Please select **no opinion** if you believe your position prevents you from answering a question. Comments are provided **only IF** you would like to expand on your multiple choice answers.

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

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

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

Our government has the ability to make our region more equitable through legislation and policies that address systemic inequalities and discrimination. From affordable housing, criminal justice reform, allocating resources and funding in a way that prioritizes marginalized communities and addresses disparities, access to services like care infrastructure, healthcare, transportation, clean water, & affordable housing are ways our government can support making our region more equitable. My role in this is advocating and fighting to make sure the focus of issues like these are a top priority.

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
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

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

Implementing and enforcing anti-discrimination laws, investing in equity initiatives, collecting and analyzing data, promoting education, and awareness, supporting representation and participation, and engaging with affected communities. Our government can enact laws and policies which prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity. These laws span from employment, housing, education, healthcare, and public accommodations. These policies should promote diversity and inclusion in our government institutions and private organizations.

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

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

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

Addressing root causes of racial and other inequities in Pennsylvania requires promoting the education and awareness of historical and systemic factors contributing to our inequities. I would do this by advocating for policy changes like criminal justice reform, addressing issues impacting affordable housing, fighting to fairly fund our public schools, access to healthcare and ensure access and awareness for employment opportunities providing a livable wage and good benefits by way of promoting good union jobs.

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

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

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

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments

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

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments \*

Supporting the expungement of records related to cannabis sale, possession, and usage is a crucial step towards criminal justice reform, social equity, public health, and economic empowerment. This acknowledges the disproportionate impact of past drug enforcement policies on marginalized communities and seeks to address the injustices of our past and promotes a more fair and equitable future.

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
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

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, doing this is a step towards health equity, social justice, economic opportunities, and community integration. This recognizes the legitimate use of cannabis for medical purposes and ensures individuals with cannabis related conditions aren't unfairly penalized for seeking relief from their symptoms.

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

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

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

I think there are multiple ways we have threats to voting rights. Voter suppression is one, here we've most recently seen the debate with our upcoming primary falling on a religious holiday. We are also seeing a lot of misinformation and disinformation that can deliberately impact the upcoming election and undermine the confidence in our electoral process. We also see how money in politics can also be a threat to how we are being informed about our politics and the people who want to serve us.

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

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

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

I wouldn't say once we get to universal health care that way of providing healthcare is permanent. I think looking at other countries who have implemented either universal healthcare or a single payer system varies on the bureaucracy of implementation. We should continue to work towards ensuring we have accessible and quality healthcare for all, meet the needs of those most impacted, and continue to do the work where we see improvements with making sure every person has high quality and accessible healthcare coverage.

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

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments

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

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

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

I believe the solutions require incorporating short term interventions while working towards long term solutions. We need to increase funding for affordable housing programs like subsidies, rental assistance programs, affordable housing developments, and preserving existing affordable housing stock. Tenant protections are important so we can prevent unfair evictions and more stability for folks who rent. We must also invest in homelessness prevention programs so we can help those at risk of homelessness to stay housed. Access to legal assistance when tenants are facing eviction so people can know their rights and not be taken advantage of. We can also work on our land use and promote mixed-income housing development. Education is also key to empower people to advocate for themselves.

Comments

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

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

### Comments

If we want to build trust, see accountability, provide justice for victims, and deter others from depriving citizens of their rights we must end qualified immunity. We know there is a fear of this happening and there is excessive litigation and an impact on recruitment into jobs, but we also know more law enforcement doesn't prevent crime. We can invest in more supports with social services and mental health that can better support the needs of our communities when a crisis arises.

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
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments

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

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

### Comments

Our public schools should be the pillars to strengthening our communities. If we don't start with our youngest and build them up strong through our public schools we are doing our communities a disservice.

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

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments

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

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

### Comments

Yes, serving as a board member with Catapult Greater Pittsburgh I have seen first hand the successes we can see in the community from investing in business/entrepreneurship education and sustainability in underserved and underrepresented communities.

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

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments

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

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments

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26. Do you believe there should be any new gun legislation to combat the health epidemic of mass shootings and gun violence? \*

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments

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27. Do you support a path to citizenship for “dreamers”? \*

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

## Comments

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

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Do you believe in a hybrid model?

For green technologies we need to push for 100% renewable energy by 2050. We see everyday how the health outcomes are worse in areas like my district where the profit of businesses are put ahead of the health of people who live here. Everyday we need to use the power of the purse as a legislator to move us towards green technologies, storm infrastructure, and renewable energies so we can be part of the needed change to address the existential threat of climate change and environmental racism.

29. Do you support expanding access to affordable, accessible housing for low-income people? \*

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

If you answered yes, through what means? If no, why not? \*

Yes, I believe we do this by including subsidies for low-income renters, develop affordable housing units, and promote land use policies to promote mixed-income housing.



30. Do you promote diversion of people with mental illness from the criminal justice system, and to increase access to community mental health services? \*

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

### Comments

When our community is facing mental health challenges, placing them in our criminal justice systems doesn't meet their needs to make their lives safer and the community as a whole. Providing more access to and support from social workers and mental health providers to those in need will meet the needs of those who are suffering from a lack of care and support in their communities.

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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
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

### Comments

We are in a crisis in Pennsylvania and across this country when it comes to the Black infant and maternal mortality rates. As a participant with the PA Black Maternal Health Caucus, it is imperative we focus on policy and legislation that increases the funding for birthworkers, education and awareness of how this is systemically and disproportionately impacting Black women and babies. As an employee with Healthy Start, Inc. we work every single day to provide support through access to resources, mental health supports, and finding a holistic way to support the families we serve.

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? \*

We must address the root causes of racism. We have to confront hate speech head on. Whether in person or online. Addressing structural racism in education, healthcare, criminal justice, housing, and economic opportunities overall. We can't allow the erasure of the real history of how these systemic issues of white supremacy permeates in the fabric of our country. We must also do the work to empowering our communities through political engagement and fostering more solidarity and collaboration within marginalized communities.

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

Community safety to me is a community that is invested in. When we ensure our communities have quality schools, access to affordable and healthy food, health care, and good paying jobs we will see a difference in how our communities can sustain. I believe my position as a state legislator should be one where we are constantly organizing, mobilizing, and creating good legislation that meets these needs to ensure a safe community.

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

Some solutions to reducing violence in our communities is through investing in our communities from our schools, out of school time spaces, community member intervention programs where respected community members can be boots on the ground to work through mediation and communication between members of our community who at times might not see eye to eye. We are seeing this work in communities like mine with programs like CURE Violence. Our community interventionist have relationships with the community and are well respected when it comes to supporting in conflict and providing prevention strategies that are respected within the community.

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
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

## Comments

I believe election day should be a national holiday. And the access to the ballot should be made as easy and accessible for all.

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 participant upon release?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

## Comments

There should be no barrier to exercising your right to vote even if you are in government detainment.

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

I think a way we improve the quality of life for the average Black 22 year is is by ensuring they had a quality free public K-12 education experience in our communities. Cheaper post secondary education. Accessible healthcare and working with small businesses to revive our once thriving main streets to make it more fun and easy to be out doing things in our neighborhoods for things that help a 22 year old.

38. Why should voters trust you to operate differently? How will you ensure transparency if elected?

I believe my reputation of being in this movement work over the years is a reflection of the type of leader I'd be in this role. Being accessible and transparent within my community has always been a high priority for me as a currently elected official. We get into these positions to serve the community and that is how I will continue to lead in this position.

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

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments

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

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments

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41. How do you define governmental transparency?

I define governmental transparency as being open and accessible as well as bringing in the community to support how decisions are made. I also think about co-governance. I believe as an elected official we are chosen to be a representation of the communities we serve and we can only be a representation when we are consistently engaging and being intentional of bringing the voices of those most impacted in our communities to the forefront.

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Comments

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43. What does reproductive justice mean to you?

I pull from the definition from the In Our Own Voice National Black Women's RJ agenda, where it states reproductive justice (RJ) means the human right to control our sexuality, our gender, our work, and our reproduction. That right can only be achieved when all women and girls have the complete economic, social, and political power and resources to make healthy decisions about our bodies, our families, and our communities in all areas of our lives.

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

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments

Abortion is healthcare.

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

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments

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46. Do you support an end to lifetime parole in Pennsylvania? \*

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree



Comments

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46. Do you support a restoration of gun rights to those who have completed their \* sentence of incarceration and who have not committed a violent act within a minimum 10 year time period following their release?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments

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47. Do you support protections from discrimination that would allow members of the LGBTQIA+ community protection from eviction, employment opportunities, and medical discrimination? \*

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments

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48. 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
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments

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

Disability justice is an approach that seeks to address and dismantle the intersecting systems of oppression that impact disabled individuals, particularly those from marginalized communities. Going beyond to focus on the liberation, empowerment, and self determination of disabled people. There is intersectionality in the space of social justice. I have done most of my work in this space surrounding the push to pass legislation such as paid family and medical leave. Through my work with the Family Care Coalition we have centered the need for legislation such as this which would most certainly be a positive impact on our communities who are in need of being able to care for one another without fear of impacting their livelihood.

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

My first job out of undergrad was as a case manager at a girls shelter. Through that work I was quickly piqued in being able to support and give back to our young people in community. Whether it's being supporting to the local little league sports in my community, working in the out of school time space and advocating for issues such as more funding for our young people in our communities and seeing the development of the county office for children's initiatives was through the advocacy work I've done through the Allegheny Partners for Out of School time. I led work in the Hill District through the Hill Youth Partnership for Enrichment to strengthen after school system building for our youth in the out of school time space.

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

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments

Thank You

Thank you so much for applying. We appreciate your commitment to public service and working to ensure the people of the Commonwealth are well represented.

# Google Forms