



## Children First Action Fund General 2022 Survey Results

The Children First Action Fund is surveying all candidates for Pennsylvania House and Senate to learn more about their views on issues affecting the lives of children. We invite you to learn more by reviewing their responses below; by contacting their campaigns; and by following them on social media. Let me know your views on the importance of ensuring young children in Pennsylvania get the early education supports they need and deserve.

**Name:** Robert Freeman

**Website:**

**Current Job:** State Representative, 136th District

**Social Media:**

**Campaign Contact Person:** Bob Freeman

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**You are running for election in which district?** House 136th District

**Q: What are your views on the benefits, or drawbacks, of allocating additional state funds for high-quality pre-k education?**

A: I am a strong supporter of high-quality pre-k education. I believe good pre-k education helps to build a solid foundation for the academic success of all children. Programs such as Head Start have demonstrated the value of a good high-quality pre-k education.

**Q: How important, or unimportant, are increased public resources to expand access and affordability to high-quality child care to working families in your district?**

A: Increasing public resources to expand access and affordability to high-quality child care for working families is very important in my district. Such child care is critical to both the early educational development of children and the ability of working families to be able to provide for their families and get the quality child care that is needed to ensure their children are properly cared for and that the parents are able to obtain and retain meaningful employment with good paying, family sustaining jobs. Child care workers deserve to receive a good, living wage in order to be properly compensated for their important work and to better retain their services in the field of child care.

**Q: Should the wages for child care workers and preschool teachers be commensurate with those of other educators with similar qualifications and experience?**

A: Absolutely. Child care workers are currently underpaid and they deserve decent compensation for the important service they provide and to ensure they are retained in the field of child care services.

**Q: Will you support the expansion of state investment dollars to serve those in your district who can benefit from home visiting?**

A: Yes. Home visiting is a critical service, especially for vulnerable families in need of such support systems to ensure a good home environment and help with successful parenting skills.

**Q: In addition to making child care more accessible and affordable, what other policies would you champion to help businesses facing a workforce shortage?**

A: We need to take a more comprehensive approach to incentivize businesses to work with government and non-profit organizations to ensure workers receive the support system they need to provide for their families and give them a chance at long term employment. We should provide tax

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credits for businesses that offer their employees public transportation passes to get to and from work. Child care options should be made more readily accessible, affordable and available to meet the needs of workers and their children with on-site child care as an option, if feasible. And paid family and medical leave should be enacted in Pennsylvania.

**Q: What other government resources or policies would you consider for families that are struggling with keeping costs, especially child care, under control?**

A: We must do more to provide for affordable housing in our communities including the establishment of lease to own models that allow families to have part of their rent set aside in an escrow account that will allow them to buy the home they are currently renting. This would enable families of modest means to access home ownership and the equity it will provide. We also need to do more to ensure that working families can access fresh and nutritional food through expanded farmers market opportunities and providing incentives to encourage grocery stores to be established in food desert neighborhoods.

**Q: Which mental health supports are needed most in your district and how will you work to increase access to families that need them?**

A: Greater access to mental health services is critical to address the uptick in both adults and children seeking mental health support. Hospitals should be required to provide both in-patient and outpatient mental health services as part of their licensing requirements. We need to attract more practitioners into the field of mental health by offering loan forgiveness programs for those seeking a degree to practice in the field of mental health services. Better training and awareness of mental health issues is also needed in our schools to ensure early detection so that proper care can be sought.

**Q: Would you support the creation of a refundable State Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)? Why/why not?**

A: I support the creation of a refundable State Earned Income Tax Credit to help families and reduce child poverty.

**Q: What would you do, if elected, to expand the access to affordable broadband internet?**

A: I am in favor of expanding access to affordable broadband internet and have supported such proposals in the legislature.