



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: Kristin Marcell
Current Job: Communications professional

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You are running for election in which district? House 178

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

A: The benefit of high-quality pre-K is the educational, mental, and social jumpstart it provides to children during their formative years. The challenge is that the state (taxpayers) have limited resources which must be allocated to a multitude of programs and increasing funding here requires reduction elsewhere or higher taxes that few can afford, especially in this time of record inflation. I am, however, generally in favor of such increases.

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: Child care is an important component to rebuilding our economy and getting people back to work. Forced shutdowns of child care artificially impacted the child care system as well as placed a serious burden on working families, and we must avoid them in the future if at all possible. I would support tax credits for businesses/employers who offer child care as part of an employment package, as well as continuation of the recently created Child Care Tax Credit for individual/family taxpayers.

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

A: This is a difficult question because of the definition of "similar qualifications." Does this mean an education degree and qualifications test? Simply years of service? Etc.? In general, however, wages should be more commensurate.

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

A: Yes, I would be in favor of such increases within the budgetary constraints of the Commonwealth.

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

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A: As noted earlier, I would support tax credits for businesses/employers who provide child care as part of an employment package as well as continuing the newly created Child Care Tax Credit for individuals/families.

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

A: One of the biggest things we can do is eliminate the “fiscal cliff” that working families who receive government assistance of any form face. A fiscal cliff occurs when a working family reaches an income level that results in a complete cessation of that assistance but that income is not at a level that allows them to meet actual, responsible costs. If we had an inverse relationship between said income levels and assistance (as income rises/assistance reduces) we could ensure that working families achieve economic stability while meeting responsible costs.

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: The disastrous effects on mental health of the COVID-19 shutdowns are still only becoming clear and we do not yet truly know exactly which mental health supports are needed (or most needed.) With that said, we must focus resources on mental health support to ensure those who truly need it get help and avoid a longer-term problem.

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

A: Pending review of an economic impact study (to compare with the study you noted) I would be likely to support such a credit to help working families.

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

A: First, we need to get broadband across the state – including rural areas that are currently underserved. To do that, I would support a tax deferral program for a portion of the infrastructure costs that will be incurred by broadband companies. These deferrals could then be made permanent by the broadband companies’ providing lower-cost or no-cost broadband to qualifying families (low- or no- dependent upon income levels.)