

# Vote411 Voters' Mini-Guide

April 23, 2024 Primary

## US Representative Pennsylvania District 12

*This Voters' Mini-Guide is an excerpt of the [Vote411.org](#) online Voters' Guide -- a project of the League of Women Voters. All information in Vote411 Voters' Guides is submitted by the candidates and has not been edited or altered in any way.*



**To vote in this election, you must register by April 8, 2024.** You must be registered as a Democrat to vote in the Democratic Primary or as a Republican to vote in the Republican Primary. Candidates of other parties are not included in Pennsylvania's Closed Primary.

**Description of office:** The US Constitution requires that the House of Representatives be composed of Representatives from each state, elected in proportion to population. There are 435 members of the House of Representatives, with 17 Representatives allotted to Pennsylvania after the 2020 census. A US Representative must be at least 25 years old, have been a citizen of the United States for the past seven years, and be a resident of the state they seek to represent at the time of the election (though not necessarily the same district). The House of Representatives is responsible for introducing and voting on bills, resolutions and amendments, and for approving the budget. Representatives also serve on various policy committees. The House may send Articles of Impeachment of elected officials to the Senate and elects the President if there is a tie in the Electoral College.

**Democratic Primary Ballot:** Choose 1 of 2

- Summer Lee
- Bhavini Patel

**Republican Primary Ballot:** Choose 1 of 1

- James Hayes

## **Democratic Primary Ballot:** Choose 1 of 2

### **Summer Lee**

**Party:** Democratic

#### **Biographical Info:**

**Occupation:** American politician who is the U.S. representative for Pennsylvania's 12th congressional district  
**Education:** I graduated from Pennsylvania State University in 2009 and earned a Juris Doctor from the Howard University School of Law

**Qualifications:** In 2022, I was the first Black woman from my region elected to represent Pennsylvania's 12th district. I secured \$1 Billion in federal investments for Western PA, which will improve our infrastructure & transit and create thousands of union jobs. I also have leadership positions in many caucuses.

**Campaign Website:** <http://summerforpa.com>

**Facebook:** <http://facebook.com/SummerForPA>

**X Handle:** [twitter.com/RepSummerLee](https://twitter.com/RepSummerLee)

**Instagram:** <http://www.instagram.com/summerleeforpa/>



#### **Questions:**

**Q: What do you see as the most pressing issues facing the country, and how would you address them?**

**A:** Throughout our nation's history, we have never delivered on the promises of democracy. The legacy of slavery has carried on through gerrymandering and voter suppression, and democracy reform is the root of all issues we face today. Our region suffers from some of the poorest air quality in the nation. Environmental justice is one of our most pressing issues, which is why I've fought for a Green New Deal to transition to a renewable energy economy. Every child also deserves access to a first-rate, free public education despite their background. Right-wing extremists on the Supreme Court have gutted our right to abortion care. Congress must do everything in its power to restore our fundamental freedom to control our bodies and our futures.

**Q: What changes, if any, would you support that would help Congress function more efficiently and effectively?**

**A:** I believe that we should end the filibuster, a tool used by segregationist Senators to oppose civil rights legislation, that stands in the way of progress today. We need to ban members of Congress from trading stocks because they should not be profiting off access to closed-door information about the companies they should be regulating. Members of Congress who trade stocks have a clear conflict of interest — they need to work for the people they represent, not for their own portfolios. I also want to enforce real ethics requirements, end lifetime appointments, and expand the federal courts so that right-wing extremists can't sell our freedoms to the highest bidder. As I said, we also need to get money out of politics more fundamentally.

**Q: What legislation would you support to protect voting rights and safeguard access to free and fair elections?**

**A:** I support the Freedom to Vote Act, which improves access to the ballot for Americans, advances commonsense federal election standards and campaign finance reforms, and strengthens our democracy. I've also cosponsored the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2023 to protect voting rights against attacks by Republican state legislatures and right wing judges by revitalizing the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and

strengthening legal protections against discriminatory voting policies and practices. By improving access to the ballot and passing legislation against discriminatory voting practices, we can protect voting rights for citizens all across the nation and make elections fair and free.

**Q: How do you view the role of the US in responding to challenges facing the international community?**

**A:** We are a pro-peace office that believes the United States has a crucial role in the world. The United States must be a global leader in fighting climate change, promoting global economic justice, and creating a more peaceful and just world for all.

**Democratic Primary Ballot:** Choose 1 of 2

**Bhavini Patel**

**Party:** Democratic

**Biographical Info:**

**Occupation:** Previously: Allegheny County Community Outreach Manager; Currently: Edgewood Borough Council

**Education:** University of Pittsburgh (BPhil International Area Studies, Sociology, Africana Studies); University of Oxford (MPhil International Relations)

**Qualifications:** Edgewood Borough Councilperson, Pennsylvania Medical Marijuana Advisory Board, 2020 Democratic National Convention Joe Biden Delegate, Monroeville Rotarian, FBI Citizens Academy Graduate, Pitt MA of Quantitative Economics Program Board, Pitt Alumni Association Board, Sustainable PGH Board

**Campaign Website:** <http://patelforpa.com>

**Facebook:** <http://facebook.com/PatelForPA>

**X Handle:** [twitter.com/patelforpa](https://twitter.com/patelforpa)

**Instagram:** <http://www.instagram.com/patelforpa/>



**Questions:**

**Q: What do you see as the most pressing issues facing the country, and how would you address them?**

**A:** We must mobilize to reelect President Joe Biden and Senator Bob Casey. We have zero margin for error and democracy depends on it. Being anti-Trump is not the same as being pro-Biden. We must champion the work President Biden has done with the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, CHIPS and Sciences Act, Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. I would have represented PA-12 by voting in favor of raising the debt ceiling in July 2023 because voting records are an important reflection of the electorate. Our fundamental freedoms depend on 2024, including advocating for reproductive justice, protecting our LGBTQ+ communities, holding big corporations accountable, and ending systemic racism.

**Q: What changes, if any, would you support that would help Congress function more efficiently and effectively?**

**A:** I grew up in a working-class family and believe in the power of the American Dream - we must protect it. I was raised by a single-mother from India, who dreamed of a better future for my brother and I. She became a small-business owner when she opened a food truck on Pitt's campus - my family has been running this business for 25 years. I became the first in my family to graduate from college by attending Pitt and earned my Master's from Oxford. Democracy is fragile and fringe extremism erodes the ability to deliver on the very issues uplifting working-class communities. To hold onto the promise of our shared American Dream requires uplifting diverse voices, building on collaboration and rejecting extremism. We have zero margin for error.

**Q: What legislation would you support to protect voting rights and safeguard access to free and fair elections?**

**A:** Our elections must reflect the values of Americans and not big corporations. I'm committed to fighting to restore and protect the fundamental right to vote attacked by Republican legislators all across the nation. We must fight back against Republicans committed to disenfranchising communities of color, low-income people and individuals with disabilities. I will fight restrictive voter ID laws and closures of polling places that

disproportionately impact low-income communities and college campuses. I'm committed to investing in modernized voting infrastructure to protect against cyber threats, increase funding for election administration and so much more. Americans should not have to wait long hours to exercise the power of their vote.

**Q: How do you view the role of the US in responding to challenges facing the international community?**

**A:** In our interconnected world, challenges such as supply chain dependencies with China and the need for domestic semiconductor manufacturing are economic and national security issues. It's important to strengthen our domestic capabilities to ensure economic resilience and technological growth, while also competing effectively on the global stage. I support aid for Ukraine and Israel, alongside humanitarian aid for regions like Gaza and the West Bank. The support for aid has been met with opposition from some within our party, notably from more 'fringe' members. I believe it's crucial to deliver on America's commitment to global stability and democracy. This underpins our strategic alliances and moral obligations on the international stage.

**Republican Primary Ballot:** Choose 1 of 1

**James Hayes**

Party: Republican

**Biographical Info:**

**Occupation:** Chief Financial Officer

**Education:** B.S.F.S., International Economics, Georgetown Univ.; M.P.A., Economics and Policy, Princeton Univ.; M.B.A., Finance and Accounting, Univ. of Chicago; D.B.A., Management, Case Western Reserve Univ.

**Qualifications:** Accomplished business leader with extensive international business development, risk management, marketing, financial analysis, and strategic planning experience. Progressive leadership roles at prominent organizations, focusing on driving business growth and collaboration.

**Campaign Website:** <http://jameshayesforpa.com>

**Facebook:** <http://facebook.com/jameshayesforpa>

**X Handle:** [@jameshayesforpa](https://twitter.com/jameshayesforpa)



**Questions:**

**Q: What do you see as the most pressing issues facing the country, and how would you address them?**

**A:** 1. Loss of control of the southern border. I believe that the U.S. House's HR2 needs to become law so that the asylum loopholes are closed and there are meaningful and effective controls at the border. 2. Restoring energy independence/dominance. Congress should eliminate the restrictions placed on the energy industry, including restoring strategic pipeline infrastructure. We need permitting reform to remove the delay and uncertainty plaguing new projects and the industry needs to be free to grow while respecting environmental rules. 3. Education reform. It isn't fair that a zip code determines the quality of education a child receives. We need to implement School Choice to allow the funds to follow the child.

**Q: What changes, if any, would you support that would help Congress function more efficiently and effectively?**

**A:** I think that Congress functions exactly how the Founding Fathers intended. There are legitimate policy differences between the two major parties and Congress provides a forum for these differences to be debated, developed into a consensus position and passed into law. It isn't meant to be easy and shouldn't be because the outcomes impact the lives of so many.

**Q: What legislation would you support to protect voting rights and safeguard access to free and fair elections?**

**A:** I believe that it is not too much to ask for voters to be required to provide a photo ID when they go to vote. This requirement exists for many less important things that we do in our daily lives. I think a photo ID requirement would go a long way to reassure voters that only legitimate votes will be cast and counted. In general I would support any measure that creates more transparency in the process between when a vote is cast and when it is counted and recorded. Such measures can include improved cyber and physical security for the voting process.

**Q: How do you view the role of the US in responding to challenges facing the international community?**

**A:** I believe that the constitution establishes a contract between the Government and the people of the USA. That contract is for those who are public servants to advocate for the interests of our country. The role of the US in responding to challenges facing the international community should be to always work toward ensuring the safety and prosperity of our nation's citizens.