

# Vote411 Voters' Mini-Guide

*Primary Election May 17, 2022*

## Pennsylvania State Representative District 24 Democratic Primary

*This Voters' Mini-Guide is an excerpt of the [Vote411.org](https://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.*



***You must be registered as a Democrat to vote in this Democratic Primary contest. The winner of this election will be the Democratic nominee on the November ballot.***

**The 24th Legislative district contains several neighborhoods in the City of Pittsburgh, including Highland Park, East Liberty, Garfield, Bloomfield, Lincoln-Lemington, Larimar, Friendship, Belmar, Schenley Heights, the Upper Hill, Bedford Dwellings, West Oakland and parts of Homewood.**

***To vote in this election, you must register by May 2, 2022.*** 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 General Assembly is the legislative branch of government in Pennsylvania. It is composed of two houses: the Senate is the upper house, and the House of Representatives is the lower house. A majority vote in both houses is necessary to pass a law. The PA House of Representatives consists of 203 members representing one district each, with an equal number of constituents. Representatives must be at least 21 years old, have been a citizen and a resident of the state four years and a resident of their respective districts one year before their election, and shall reside in their respective districts during their terms of service..

## **Martell Covington**

**Party:** Democratic

### **Biographical Info:**

**Occupation:** Legislative Aide - Minority Leader, Sen. Jay Costa

**Education:** Howard University

**Campaign Website:** [www.martellforpa.com/](http://www.martellforpa.com/)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/Martell4PA](https://www.facebook.com/Martell4PA)

**Twitter:** [twitter.com/martellforpa](https://twitter.com/martellforpa)



### **Questions:**

**Q: What issue(s) would you prioritize, and how would you work with others in government to get legislation passed and signed into law?**

**A:** Public Health which focuses on maternal and infant health, making sure that mothers, particularly Black mothers are being supported to the fullest extent possible before, during and after birth and that their babies are given all the care available to protect their lives. Community Investment: increased minimum wage in PA, increase support to small businesses and entrepreneurs. A deliberate focus on affordable housing. Education & Equity: encourage collaboration with and between education stakeholders, advocate for increased support for socio-economic and disability focused education and out of school time. Environmental: push for infrastructural audits to ensure that our city will remain safe through varied weather conditions in our city

**Q: What changes, if any, would you support making to Pennsylvania's voting laws?**

**A:** House Bill 2090, known as the K. Leroy Irvis Voting Rights Protection Act, sponsored by House Leader McClinton, would make voting easier by providing more ballot drop locations, permitting same day registration and continuing to allow for early voting. These are all things that have been adopted in other states. I plan to sign on as a cosponsor to this bill on the first day I am able to. As representative-elect I will advocate and fight every day against the unrelenting attacks on voting rights we see happening at every turn in Harrisburg. I will take an active approach to this by collaborating with colleagues and stakeholders to pursue, create, and push legislation that bolster a defense of our voting rights against such attacks.

**Q: Article 1, Section 27 of the PA constitution guarantees the rights to clean air, pure water, and the preservation of the environment. What actions would you take to protect these rights?**

**A:** First, we have to make sure that all lead lines are being replaced in homes, schools and public serving facilities. The commonwealth also needs to work to expand knowledge around the dangers of radon and the importance of radon testing. It is about investing in education that builds mobilization, as well as investment in direct action. I also believe that the dollar amount of fines, spills and leaks should be greatly increased.

**Q: There are several pieces of gun legislation being considered on comprehensive background checks, red flag laws, and firearm safety training. What is your position on these measures?**

**A:** I support all of these measures. I believe that each of these measures is necessary. We have a duty to protect our communities especially after the increase in gun violence over the past 3 years. Firearm safety training is essential and it should be accessible and a measure of accountability to all that own guns or are considering gun ownership. I am in support of Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO) as well. If we can protect people from someone that wants to hurt them, we should do so. And we are able to, so we must do so. We must also encourage safe gun ownership, particularly for minorities such as black, queer, and disabled people through gun safety education for current and new gun ownership, legislate for the develop of "safe zones".

## **La'Tasha D. Mayes**

**Party:** Democratic

### **Biographical Info:**

**Occupation:** Community Organizer

**Education:** University of Pittsburgh, Bachelor of Science in Business Administration: Marketing, Political Science, Women's Studies (2003); Carnegie Mellon University, Master of Science in Policy and Management (2005); University of Pennsylvania, Executive Program for Social Impact Strategy (2019)

**Qualifications:** Founder, President & CEO, New Voices for Reproductive Justice (2004-2022); Commissioner, Governor's Advisory Commission on African American Affairs (2016-2021); Board of Directors, Groundswell Fund (2016-2019); Candidate, Pittsburgh City Council - District 7 (2015)

**Campaign Website:** [www.latashaforpa.com](http://www.latashaforpa.com)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/latashaforpa](https://www.facebook.com/latashaforpa)

**Twitter:** [twitter.com/latashaforpa](https://twitter.com/latashaforpa)

**Instagram:** [instagram.com/latashaforpa](https://instagram.com/latashaforpa)



### **Questions:**

**Q: What issue(s) would you prioritize, and how would you work with others in government to get legislation passed and signed into law?**

**A:** My campaign platform is healthcare access + reproductive justice, COVID-19 relief + recovery, community safety, environmental justice and voting rights. I would also prioritize equitable public education and raising the minimum wage and opportunities for workers to unionize. The legislation I would champion would be rooted in the intersectional values of racial, gender and economic justice. I have worked with my colleagues in the State House of Representatives for over a decade winning legislative and policy change and I would continue building those relationships as well as with non-elected policymakers informed by advocacy organizations and community organizers who work directly with those first and most impacted by proposed legislation.

**Q: What changes, if any, would you support making to Pennsylvania's voting laws?**

**A:** I have organized for voting rights focused on building the voting power of Black women since 2004. I led the creation of the New Voices Voice Your Vote! Project in 2009 in collaboration with the PA Center for Women in Politics. For the past eight (8) years, VYV! has outreached millions of times to voters across Pennsylvania turning out 80% of the voters we engage. From my direct experience with voting laws, I would maintain vote by mail, early voting centers, dropboxes that made it easier for Pennsylvanians to vote in 2020 and I would support pre-registration for youth and same-day voter registration. I would advance legislation to combat voter suppression, increase penalties for voter intimidation and increase election worker pay rates.

**Q: Article 1, Section 27 of the PA constitution guarantees the rights to clean air, pure water, and the preservation of the environment. What actions would you take to protect these rights?**

A: If you ask Alexa about the weather, she will talk about air quality alerts before telling you the forecast for the day. Pittsburgh is one of the worst metro regions in the nation for poor air quality with high levels of particulate matter that impact the health of largely Black and poor communities. Pollution from toxic waste, trash and sewage overflow, privatization of our water and increasing water rates impact all Pennsylvanians. Our natural environments which are public spaces should be enjoyed by all. I would support legislation to ban fracking statewide, transition to renewable energy, support just transition for workers, emissions from public transit and to provide incentives for higher education and employment in the green economy.

**Q: There are several pieces of gun legislation being considered on comprehensive background checks, red flag laws, and firearm safety training. What is your position on these measures?**

A: Gun violence is impacting our cities from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia and this public health crisis is driven by access to guns within the compounding effects of abject poverty, unaddressed trauma, social inequality and under-funded services. I support comprehensive background checks for all firearms. Pennsylvania currently has not passed SB 88 and HB 235 leaving a critical loophole not requiring a background check for military-style assault rifles. Pennsylvania also has not passed red flag or extreme risk laws which saves lives by temporarily reducing access to firearms that could reduce domestic violence, suicide and mass shooting deaths. I support a requirement for gun owners to have gun safety training and to safely store their firearms.

**Randall Taylor****Party: Democratic****Biographical Info:****Occupation:** Organizer**Education:** University of Pittsburgh B.A. Urban Studies,  
B.A. History**Qualifications:** 12 years on Pittsburgh Board of Education**Campaign Website:**[www.facebook.com/RandallTaylorForStateRepresentative](https://www.facebook.com/RandallTaylorForStateRepresentative)**Facebook:**[www.facebook.com/RandallTaylorForStateRepresentative](https://www.facebook.com/RandallTaylorForStateRepresentative)**Twitter:** [twitter.com/RandallforPA24](https://twitter.com/RandallforPA24)**Questions:****Q: What issue(s) would you prioritize, and how would you work with others in government to get legislation passed and signed into law?**

**A:** Those of us who wish to live in cities, do so because we are attracted to the diversity and vibrancy of city life. If we are to maintain that diversity we must address our current lack of affordable housing units in the City of Pittsburgh. We need housing policies and strategies that ensure that all our people can afford to rent or buy homes in this City, if they desire. To remain a vibrant city also need a living wage, supported by strong unions, to be able to pay for housing and live in dignity. A diverse and vibrant Pittsburgh must be a welcoming place for all our citizens, regardless of age, race, gender, or orientation. We start with respect and communication. Disagreement is not the end of discussions, but a way to build common ground.

**Q: What changes, if any, would you support making to Pennsylvania's voting laws?**

**A:** The Vote should be considered sacred in our democracy. In order to protect it we must make registration and voting easy and accessible. We can do this through: (1) Legislating against any and all voter suppression, and prosecuting any and all voter intimidation tactics and activities. (2) Making Election Day an holiday or move to Saturday. (3) Allow for no excuse mail-in voting. (4) Expand secure ballot drop boxes. (5) Portable registration, which means voters stay registered when they move within the State. (6) Allow for early voting.

**Q: Article 1, Section 27 of the PA constitution guarantees the rights to clean air, pure water, and the preservation of the environment. What actions would you take to protect these rights?**

**A:** We must acknowledge climate change is real and has begun. We can not selfishly pass the enormous costs of warming the planet to future generations. It is our actions in 2022 that will determine the fate of generations yet to be born. We must immediately begin wean ourselves off of fossil fuels. We must immediately begin serious investments in renewable energy, which includes training a new green energy workforce. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania should support a policy that all new housing and buildings construction must incorporate renewable energy.

**Q: There are several pieces of gun legislation being considered on comprehensive background checks, red flag laws, and firearm safety training. What is your position on these measures?**

**A:** We must first allow cities and counties in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania home rule in determining our gun laws. Pittsburgh and Philadelphia should not be governed by the same gun laws as Elk and Potter Counties. I support universal background checks for gun purchases. I support the banning of automatic weapons on our city streets. I oppose no excuse concealed carry policies. I support red flag laws. And we should be aggressively organizing gun buy back events.