

Vote411 Voters' Mini-Guide

Primary Election May 17, 2022

Pennsylvania State Representative District 30 Democratic Primary

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.



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 30th Legislative district contains Kilbuck, McCandless, and Ohio Townships, the Boroughs of Ben Avon, Ben Avon Heights, Emsworth, Franklin Park, and parts of Hampton Township.

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.

Arvind Venkat

Party: Democratic

Biographical Info:

County: Allegheny

Occupation: Physician

Education: A.B. and A.M., Harvard University, 1996, M.D., Yale University, 2000

Qualifications: Attending Physician and Core Faculty, Department of Emergency Medicine, and System Chair of Clinical Ethics, Allegheny Health Network, and Professor of Emergency Medicine, Drexel University College of Medicine

Campaign Website: www.VenkatforPA.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/VenkatforPA

Twitter: twitter.com/VenkatforPA

Other websites: @VenkatforPA



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: First, we need to make healthcare more affordable and accessible by reducing patient costs, increasing Medicaid resources to allow aging at home, and developing programs to incentivize nurses and other health care professionals to remain in the acute care settings - ERs, hospitals - that we all depend upon. Second, the infrastructure in my district - roads, sewer systems, bridges, among others - have not kept up with population growth. I will fight to bring resources from the recent infrastructure bill to my district. Finally, the pandemic showed how we have under-resourced our vital public services - schools, police, EMS, and fire. I will work to increase resources for these services so they can be there for all of us in our time of need.

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

A: We should make voting easy and secure as democracy works best when all voters participate. I am in favor of enacting same day voter registration, pre-registering 16-17 year-olds so that they are on voter rolls at age 18, and preserving no-excuse mail-in voting that worked well in recent elections. I also believe we should enact in-person voting days prior to election day to maximize participation in our electoral process and allow pre-processing of mail-in ballots by county election offices to allow efficient and rapid reporting of results.

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: I believe we must preserve and advance our environmental quality as it is fundamental to public health. If elected, I would be the only physician in the General Assembly and will bring that perspective to this issue. I would emphasize looking at the scientific and medical data for assessing the need for environmental interventions while recognizing that all regulations and government actions have a cost - intended and unintended. My hope is that my healthcare and

scientific background will help finding the right balance in meeting the constitutional mandate to ensure clean air, pure water, and a preserved high-quality environment for the residents of the 30th District and all Pennsylvanians.

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 look at gun legislation through the lens of public health of preventing gun violence, not prohibiting gun ownership - which does have a constitutional basis. I believe there is an individual right to own a gun under the Second Amendment. No right, however, is absolute - one cannot scream 'fire' in a theatre, for example. I am therefore in favor of legislation that would mandate background checks, red flag laws with rigorous due process protections, and robust firearm safety training. None of these would prevent law-abiding citizens from owning guns while also mitigating intentional and accidental gun violence.