

2008 Pennsylvania, PA House District 157

Candidates:

Paul Drucker, Democrat

Guy Ciarrocchi, Republican

Questions:

[Electricity Deregulation](#)

[Lottery Fund & Home/Community Care](#)

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Candidates were asked to check either the support or oppose boxes.

Supports Opposes The candidate chose not to mark a box

ELECTRICITY DEREGULATION

QUESTION: Do you support or oppose legislation that will ensure that standard electric service is provided at rates that are cost-based and reasonable?



AARP supports



Paul Drucker (Democrat) supports



Guy Ciarrocchi (Republican) supports

AARP RESPONSE:

In the hope of encouraging lower prices, Pennsylvania adopted a law restructuring the state's utility industry to allow consumers to purchase electric services from competing suppliers, rather than through the traditional regulated monopoly. During the transition period to a competitive market, the state capped residential rates charged by the existing utilities. Deregulation has failed to produce any of the benefits its supporters predicted. Rates in Pennsylvania are predicted to **rise by 50%** once price caps are lifted. Similar price increases have been seen in other states with deregulated electricity markets. AARP believes that Pennsylvania should adopt restructuring reforms that are based on a portfolio of diverse contract terms and services, integrating energy efficiency and renewable resources as appropriate to ensure that standard electric service (known as Standard Offer Service) is affordable, available and reliable.

Paul Drucker (**Democrat**) **RESPONSE:**

Guy Ciarrocchi (**Republican**) **RESPONSE:**

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LOTTERY FUND AND HOME-AND-COMMUNITY BASED CARE


QUESTION: Do you support or oppose using lottery revenues to expand existing home-and-community based care programs offered by local Area Agencies on Aging?



AARP supports



Paul Drucker (Democrat) supports

 Guy Ciarrocchi (Republican) supports

AARP RESPONSE:

The Pennsylvania Lottery was established to generate funds to benefit programs for the Commonwealth's older residents. Since 1972, when its first game went on sale, the Pennsylvania Lottery has contributed more than \$17.4 billion to a wide variety of programs. Recently, because of new lottery offerings and changes in some of the programs the lottery supports such as PACE and the property tax/rent rebate program, the lottery has shown a significant surplus. Part of this surplus has been used for the long-term care Medicaid program, which funds mainly nursing home care, while another lottery program that provides home and community based care services through local Area Agencies on Aging has not seen an increase in funding.

AARP strongly supports the expansion of home-and-community based care services as an alternative to nursing home care. AARP believes lottery revenues should be used to expand existing lottery funded home-and-community based care programs instead of being diverted into the Medicaid long-term care program.

Paul Drucker (Democrat) RESPONSE:

I strongly support home and community-based services for seniors not only for the cost savings, but for the quality of life they provide. I would work with state and federal officials to increase funding for such services. I would consider supporting diverting lottery funding, however I would first attempt to secure funding elsewhere before taking funds away from other initiatives.

Guy Ciarrocchi (Republican) RESPONSE:


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HEALTH CARE REFORM

QUESTION: In the face of escalating costs, how would you reform the state's health care system to make it available, affordable and accessible for every Pennsylvanian?

Encourage employers to offer/expand coverage.

 AARP supports

 Paul Drucker (Democrat) supports

 Guy Ciarrocchi (Republican) supports

Subsidize the cost of private coverage for un-/underinsured.



AARP supports



Paul Drucker (Democrat) supports



Guy Ciarrocchi (Republican) chose not to mark a box

AARP RESPONSE:

There are over 700,000 Pennsylvanians who are without health insurance in Pennsylvania. Various proposals have been made in the General Assembly this year to help more Pennsylvanians obtain health insurance and to ensure that insurance is more affordable for individuals and for businesses. AARP Pennsylvania supports measures to achieve access to affordable health care coverage for all individuals, an approach that would address the needs of those without public or private insurance or those at risk of losing coverage. Adequate health care coverage allows patients to receive essential treatment, including preventive care that can save the state millions of dollars.

AARP Pennsylvania supports incremental reforms that significantly improve coverage options for those without public or private insurance or those at risk of losing coverage. These reforms include encouraging employers to offer and expand coverage, and subsidizing the cost of private coverage for those who are uninsured, underinsured or at risk of losing coverage.

Paul Drucker (Democrat) RESPONSE:

One of my base issues is helping families secure affordable health care and health insurance. This is an issue that as a state and a country we can no longer turn our backs on. I support Governor Rendell's "Cover All Pennsylvanians" reform package.

Guy Ciarrocchi (Republican) RESPONSE:

(help with group buying, etc.)

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PROPERTY TAX

QUESTION: What do you propose to do to lower the property tax burden on older Pennsylvanians yet still provide support for our schools?

Broaden the method of financing public education



AARP supports



Paul Drucker (Democrat) supports



Guy Ciarrocchi (Republican) supports

Reduce burden of property taxes



AARP supports



Paul Drucker (Democrat) supports



Guy Ciarrocchi (Republican) supports

AARP RESPONSE:

As the Commonwealth's support for public education has fallen to a statewide average of approximately 35% of a school district's budget, property taxes have become the main source of funding for Pennsylvania's schools. Disparities in funding across Pennsylvania mean that some school districts rely on local funding, mainly property taxes, for over 80% of the district's budget. AARP believes we should broaden our method of financing public education, taking some of the burden off the regressive property tax, which is the single-most burdensome tax for many low-income and older people, and shifting to less regressive taxes, which are better correlated with the ability to pay.

Paul Drucker (Democrat) RESPONSE:

The state should carry the heaviest burden of financing our public school system I believe that by practicing fiscal discipline and creating the new revenues to fund our public schools we can lessen the burden of property taxes on our citizens, particularly seniors.

Guy Ciarrocchi (Republican) RESPONSE:

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CONSUMER PROTECTION

QUESTION: Would you support or oppose the creation of an Insurance Consumer Advocate?

- AARP supports
- Paul Drucker (Democrat) supports
- Guy Ciarrocchi (Republican) supports

AARP RESPONSE:

Insurance products have become increasingly complex and expensive. Currently, the Department of Insurance is charged with both regulating the insurance industry and protecting consumers, putting them at odds with both groups on certain issues. AARP supports the creation of an Insurance Consumer Advocate within the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office that would function similar to the Public Utility Commissions Office of Consumer Advocate and represent the interests of the consumer in hearings.

Paul Drucker (Democrat) RESPONSE:

I would support HB 1121 that would establish an Office of Consumer Advocate for Insurance within the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General. This legislation would provide for a consumer watchdog who will fight for every Pennsylvanian faced with the challenges of rising health care costs.

Guy Ciarrocchi (Republican) RESPONSE:

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WINTER UTILITY SHUT-OFFS AND LIHEAP FUNDING

QUESTION 1: Do you support or oppose requiring utility companies to get PUC approval before cutting off service to residential customers in the winter months?

- AARP supports
- Paul Drucker (Democrat) supports
- Guy Ciarrocchi (Republican) chose not to mark a box

QUESTION 2: Do you believe Pennsylvania should contribute state funds to the LIHEAP budget?

- AARP supports
- Paul Drucker (Democrat) supports
- Guy Ciarrocchi (Republican) supports

AARP RESPONSE:

Home energy costs make up a considerable portion of household budgets. Exceedingly volatile natural gas, electricity and fuel oil prices in recent years have significantly increased energy costs facing many consumers. Older Americans are particularly vulnerable to rapid increases in energy prices. Older low-income households spend a higher percentage of total income on energy costs than do other households. AARP supports state programs to address energy affordability including bill payment assistance programs for low-income residential customers; automatic enrollment of electric and natural gas customers into assistance programs; and prohibitions on utilities from disconnecting or refusing to reconnect electric or natural gas service to low-income households during times when weather conditions threaten health and safety.

Paul Drucker (Democrat) RESPONSE:

I support the state contributing state funds to the LIHEAP budget.

Our seniors should not have to choose between buying their prescription drugs and keeping warm in the winter. No senior who is truly needy should have their utilities shut off. The first course of action for needy seniors should be to work directly with the utility company. I would consider requiring PUC approval if presented with evidence that utility companies were not placing the needs of truly needy seniors first.

Although I would consider state funding of LIHEAP, I would also consider the rationale of carrying such a large balance from year to year in the LIHEAP budget. Many more seniors could be offered assistance annually if the large balances were not maintained.

Guy Ciarrocchi (Republican) RESPONSE:

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