

2008 Pennsylvania, PA House District 165

Candidates:

Tom Quinn, Democrat
William Adolph, Republican

Questions:

[Electricity Deregulation](#)
[Lottery Fund & Home/Community Care](#)
[Health Care Reform](#)
[Property Tax](#)
[Consumer Protection](#)
[Winter Utility Shut-Offs & LIHEAP Funding](#)

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
- Tom Quinn (Democrat) supports
- William Adolph (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) are affordable, available and reliable.

Tom Quinn (Democrat) RESPONSE:

This is a priority so that the consumer does not suffer the consequences of a mistake by the legislature. This needs to be recognized and the state needs to find a way to not push this kind of jump in prices on people who can not plan for such and increase. This is an example where our government needs to be accountable for what was clearly an error.

William Adolph (Republican) RESPONSE:

I support electricity restructuring reform legislation.

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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



Tom Quinn (Democrat) supports



William Adolph (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.

Tom Quinn (Democrat) RESPONSE:

I have seen the value of in home care in the quality of life it can provide. Nothing takes the place of “home” and we should assist people in making that choice.

William Adolph (Republican) RESPONSE:

I support using lottery revenues to expand (existing) home-and-community based care options.

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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



Tom Quinn (Democrat) chose not to mark a box



William Adolph (Republican) supports

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



AARP supports



Tom Quinn (Democrat) chose not to mark a box



William Adolph (Republican) supports

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.

Tom Quinn (Democrat) RESPONSE:

To me this is the issue of our time. All stake holders- employers, the state, and its people need to work together to see that we all have coverage. I would favor any and all means to get this done. There is no easy answer and all of us will have to be a part of the solution. When Bobby Kennedy talked of Universal Care in the 60's someone asked him who pays for it and he said, "You will." A tough answer, but a real one and we need more of that kind of honesty in our politics.

William Adolph (Republican) RESPONSE:

I support encouraging employers to offer/expand coverage.
I support subsidizing the cost of private coverage for un-/underinsured.
I have always supported the Chip Program as well as Adult Basic.

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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
- Tom Quinn (Democrat) chose not to mark a box
- William Adolph (Republican) supports

Reduce burden of property taxes

- AARP supports
- Tom Quinn (Democrat) chose not to mark a box
- William Adolph (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.

Tom Quinn (Democrat) RESPONSE:

I think a tax shift is appropriate either in the form of an increase in the sales tax or a specific kind of consumption tax or an increase in the upper tax bracket. We can not fund our schools on the backs of home owners and force our schools to go back to the same source again and again. We need to overhaul our property tax system.

William Adolph (Republican) RESPONSE:

The taxpayers that are having difficulty paying property taxes are also opposed to other new taxes. This year, the PA state budget increased the state share more than ever before. Continue to expand the income criteria for the Property Tax Rebate Program

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CONSUMER PROTECTION

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



AARP supports



Tom Quinn (Democrat) supports



William Adolph (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.

Tom Quinn (Democrat) RESPONSE:

I strongly agree with this as consumers need someone on their side to deal with the kinds of fraud and abuse we see in the industry. We are never more vulnerable when we are in need, and all too often people are taken advantage of.

William Adolph (Republican) RESPONSE:

I support the creation of an Insurance Consumer Advocate.

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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
- Tom Quinn (Democrat) supports
- William Adolph (Republican) opposes

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

- AARP supports
- Tom Quinn (Democrat) supports
- William Adolph (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.

Tom Quinn (Democrat) RESPONSE:

We can not turn off the heat in the winter. We just can't and to that end we need to help those who can not pay with the kinds of increases we have seen in oil and natural gas costs. The state must be better than cutting people off and we have to have compassion in our government.

William Adolph (Republican) RESPONSE:

I oppose requiring utility companies to get PUC approval in winter cut-off services. Getting PUC approval is too cumbersome. Reasonable payment plans should be set up.

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