



PITTSBURGH CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 2 SPECIAL ELECTION -- TUESDAY, FEB 3rd

We invited all four candidates running in the special election to answer a couple of questions about themselves and their goals. We have reprinted their responses here for your information.

VOTER EDUCATION OUTREACH PUBLICATION

GEORGIA M. BLOTZER (I)



1. The City of Pittsburgh's murder rate rose 28% from 2007 to 2008 while the clearance rate dropped from 75% to 49%. What would you, as a Councilor, do to make Pittsburgh and Council District 2 safer for its citizens?

We need to: set up neighbor block watches; as a community, we need to meet regularly with our police; we need to make sure that residents have ready access to crime statistics, we need to ensure that abandoned vehicles are quickly removed, we need to educate and train people in how to partner with law enforcement to make our neighborhoods safer (example - helping residents to understand symbols of gang & drug presence in their neighborhoods), and we need to ensure that our communities are being regularly patrolled.

2. What would be your top legislative priorities for 2009?

In Pittsburgh races, there is no limit on the amount of money an individual can contribute to a candidate (please refer to my letter to the editor in the Post-Gazette 12/21/08). Checks of \$10,000 or more from one individual or developer are not uncommon. I have capped the amount of money that I accept from individuals and I am the only candidate adhering to federal campaign finance limits. My top priority would be campaign finance reform. If this can be accomplished in Philadelphia (since 2006), it can be done in Pittsburgh.

3. Why would you be the best City Councilor for the people of District 2?

I have worked on many of the issues impacting our city and my community for many years. I have been an independent democrat and if I am fortunate enough to be elected to City Council, I will offer the constituents of District 2, strong, independent progressive leadership.

Because I am neither accepting nor soliciting PAC funds (Unknowingly, I did cash one PAC check for \$250 early in the campaign), and I am adhering to federal campaign finance limits, I will be beholden to the residents, and only the residents of the District.

BRENDAN SCHUBERT (I)



1. The City of Pittsburgh's murder rate rose 28% from 2007 to 2008 while the clearance rate dropped from 75% to 49%. What would you, as a Councilor, do to make Pittsburgh and Council District 2 safer for its citizens?

I believe that it is important not only do what makes common sense, which is to invest more budget monies into a police presence on the streets. In turn it is equally important from a public safety stand point to give attention to vacant dilapidated buildings, because they are a haven for crime. We need to increase our ability to condemn them and get them off the streets. Furthermore we have to invest in our assets, especially in my district with the West End Overlook, Grandview Ave, Main Street in the Westend and the Sheraden Busway. When we do this, and build to connect the assets in the district it lifts us up, and takes a proactive and different approach to fighting crime. It is a united front standing up together as one community.

2. What would be your top legislative priorities for 2009?

There should be a three prong legislative attack for 2009, which would include a budget bill, that would take the surplus in the general savings account, reinvesting a third of the monies into the real-estate, both commercial and residential. This would be beneficial for the city, much like it was for Los Angeles, and will give us a return on our investment for years to come, especially with the low interest rates we see today. The second would be bill to allocate 1.2 million dollars to fund an automated permitting software, something that I have started in my current capacity as Zoning Code Administrative Officer, to allow our city to be not only the most livable, but most navigatable. Finally, I would present a bill, for consideration to create a district wide first and then a city wide task force for a comprehensive plan for my district and for the city of Pittsburgh.

3. Why would you be the best City Councilor for the people of District 2?

I am totally different than any other candidate in this race, my experience in city planning coupled with my youth is exactly what my district needs. We need someone that has a fresh perspective and understanding of City Planning, along with politics, to give us hope for the future. Furthermore I am the only candidate that has the foresight for the future and has the determination to not say quit until I no longer have a breath in my body. I am embarking on this journey to become a city councilman, because young capable people need not sit on the sideline while they have a vested interest and have the ability to push the envelope forward. It is time for a change from the president down to local government and I hope to be the face of that change.

*Unlike a primary election, voters can vote for anyone of any party during this special election.

Theresa N. Smith (D)



1. The City of Pittsburgh's murder rate rose 28% from 2007 to 2008 while the clearance rate dropped from 75% to 49%. What would you, as a Councilor, do to make Pittsburgh and Council District 2 safer for its citizens?

As a representative of District 2, I would continue with several initiatives that I have been working towards to create a safer environment. I am a member of the Weed & Seed federal program designed to decrease crime and seed better crime prevention programming. We have installed security cameras and hired additional police officers through the Weed & Seed program.

In addition, I have long history of working with the Pittsburgh Public Schools. I am working with Wireless Neighborhoods, A + Schools the Pittsburgh Public Schools and others to design a pilot program called the Pittsburgh Campaign for Student Success, I serve as the District 2 coordinator. This program is designing opportunities for a multipurpose center to serve residents of all ages, initiated afterschool programs for grades k- 12 and has created job opportunities for the youth and is working to open a program called CommunityLEARNS at Langley High School to reduce the high school dropout rate; all of which can have a powerful impact on crime and crime prevention.

A bulk of the crime occurs between the hours of 3- 5 PM, we are working with 3RC's that has made data available to identify where the crimes are committed and identify where the youth committing the crimes reside. This data allows us to direct the afterschool programming to an area that will benefit the community most to reduce the crime.

2. What would be your top legislative priorities for 2009?

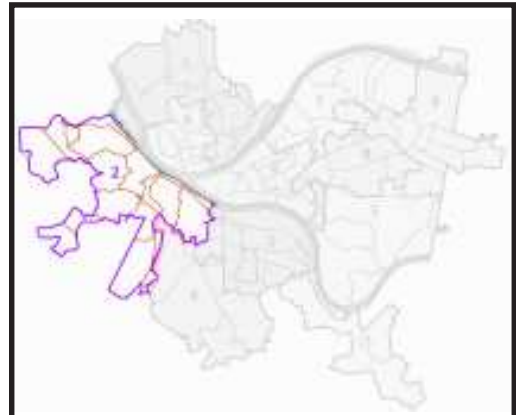
I would make recreation/multipurpose centers a legislative priority. With the program we are working on now (the Pittsburgh Campaign for Student Success) we have set guidelines for participation in our proposed multipurpose center. Adults can become members and participate in programming if they volunteer in the community and take one self help program (anger management, parenting etc...). Children can participate with an academic agreement signed between their school and the student and volunteer with one community project. These guidelines will help in several ways to reduce crime and promote a healthier environment. To help defray the cost associated with programming of this magnitude, I would work with other elected officials and the foundation community to see this to fruition.

3. Why would you be the best City Councilor for the people of District 2?

I have a history of accomplishments in District 2. I know firsthand what needs to be done in our region. I will serve as a voice for the community. I have spent countless hours volunteering on behalf of the region. I know what the programs are in place and the goals the community leaders have set for our area this will create an easy transition. I have received awards for my work in the community including the Education Law Center's Community Champion for Change award. We need a voice for the community - a person that has time vested in evening meetings, projects and relationships within the community that enforces your accountability. We need to be more aggressive in seeking resources for our area and I have bought resources to our area from across Pittsburgh.

Christopher Metz (R)

At the time of this publication, candidate Christopher Metz had not responded to our questionnaire. Repeated contacts and requests were made by our office to obtain his response.



Why is it important to vote in the Special Election?

On February 3rd a special election in Pittsburgh's City Council District 2 will decide the district's councilor for the next eleven months. Over the next year council will be making decisions about the City's finances that will have repercussions for years to come.

It is important for the neighborhoods of Banksville, Chartiers City, Crafton Heights, Duquesne Heights, East Carnegie, Elliott, Esplen, Fairywood, Mount Washington, Oakwood, Ridgemon, and Sheraden to think carefully in choosing their next representative.

Unfortunately, special elections are for a single office and fall on days when people are not accustomed to voting, and as a result are poorly attended even by active voters. The PA League is going to change that this year by talking to young people in District 2 and providing information about the candidates and then reminding them to turn out to vote. This is the year that we show that special elections matter just as much as every other election.

Mac Booker, Field Director
PA League of Young Voters EF
mac@paleague.com, (412) 362-7927



DON'T FORGET TO VOTE! -- TUESDAY, FEB 3rd

PDF Created with deskPDF PDF Writer - Trial :: <http://www.docudesk.com>