

Voting: the ballot questions

[The Bethlehem Gadfly](#) [Uncategorized](#) April 28, 2021

“Our democracy is only as strong as our will to be involved.”

*Alison Steele is a Liberty High School alum who traveled the world looking for adventure and purpose before finding it in Pittsburgh. She has made it her mission to help others make more informed decisions around how they interact with people and the planet. She publishes the **Radical Moderate** blog that Gadfly has often recommended to you.*

The Gadfly household mail-in ballots arrived yesterday. Gadfly’s giving himself 10-14 days to think about his choices. He hopes you are loading up on info about the candidates like he is.

But here Alison takes on the question of the ballot questions, which, she reminds us, even independents can vote on in the primary.

Thank you, Alison. Gadfly must admit that he usually never gives such questions much thought, or does so only when it is very late in the game — like when he’s in the polling booth!

May 2021 Election Guide — Pa Primaries, Part 1

Ballot Question 1: Proposed Constitutional Amendment — Article III, Section 9

This question deals with the termination or extension of disaster emergency declarations and stems from the conflict between Governor Wolf and the state legislature this past year regarding COVID-19 emergency declarations (e.g. stay-at-home orders, school and business closures, etc.). The amendment would change existing law to give the General Assembly the power to terminate or extend a disaster emergency declaration made by the governor through a simple majority vote. . . .

continue on Alison’s blog . . .

Ballot Question 2: Proposed Constitutional Amendment — Article IV

This question deals with disaster emergency declaration and management, and it also stems from the conflicts between Governor Wolf and the state legislature over the COVID-19 response. This amendment would change the length of a disaster emergency declaration so it would expire after 21 days, regardless of the severity of the emergency. After the declaration has expired, the governor would not be able to declare a new disaster emergency unless the General Assembly passed a resolution allowing him to. . . .

continue on Alison's blog . . .

May 2021 Election Guide — PA Primaries, Part 2

Ballot Question 3: Proposed Constitutional Amendment – Article I

This question deals with equality of rights based on race and ethnicity, and it was introduced in the wake of the instances of police brutality and resulting protests in 2020. The Pennsylvania constitution and federal laws currently provide broad protections against discrimination “against any person in exercise of any civil right.” This proposed amendment specifically focuses on protecting individuals from racial and ethnic discrimination by Pennsylvania governmental entities and solely on the basis of race and ethnicity. . . .

continue on Alison's blog . . .

Ballot Question 4: Statewide Referendum – Act 2020-91

This question is not a constitutional amendment, but a statewide referendum, and it deals with making municipal fire and emergency medical services companies eligible for loans. It was introduced because the General Assembly determined there was a need for these emergency responder companies to update their facilities and equipment. At the moment, only volunteer fire and EMS companies are authorized to apply for loans from this program. . . . *continue on Alison's blog . . .*