

Candidates for the 6th U.S. Senate District Respond to Questions

The Huntingdon County Chamber of Commerce has partnered with The Daily News to share a series of questions with responses from the candidates for State and Federal offices. Last week and earlier this week we shared responses from the candidates for the 30th and 34th PA Senate Districts and the 81st Legislative District. We encourage everyone to vote in the May 15 primary election and want you to be aware of where the candidates stand on issues important to us. Knowledge is power and we want you to have the power to make a difference by being an informed voter.

We asked the candidates for the 6th U.S. Senate District to answer three questions. The candidates, Lou Barletta (Republican), Bob Casey (Democrat), Jim Christiana (Republican) and Dale Kearns (Libertarian) were instructed to limit their answers to 250 words each. No changes have been made to the answers submitted.

Question # 1. What legislation will you introduce that will assist Huntingdon County to retain our workforce and keep young talent?

Lou Barletta: “I believe we need to be doing more to help prepare Americans to enter the workforce with the skills they need to compete for high-skilled, in-demand jobs. As a member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, I have championed legislation to improve and support career and technical education programs, and I will continue to do so in the Senate. Trade skills offer a pathway forward for our country. The number one concern I hear from employers across Pennsylvania is that they have jobs, but can’t find the skilled workers to fill them. We need to provide our schools with the resources to equip students with the skills they will need to fill good-paying jobs. We must also continue to roll-back overly burdensome and unnecessary regulations so that businesses can grow and hire workers. These measures will make it easier for businesses in Huntingdon County to not only find the workers they need, but will also make businesses in Huntingdon County more attractive to young talent.”



Bob Casey: “My focus has always been on policies that will create jobs, grow wages, and help families make ends meet. I’ve passed into law legislation that makes targeted investments in infrastructure, expands access to broadband and helps small businesses grow. I will continue to prioritize small business development, investments in our workforce, and programs to help Pennsylvania communities retain talent and be able to compete in the 21st century economy.”

Jim Christiana: “To keep young talent in Pennsylvania, we need a robust economy and jobs. If business and industry are thriving young people will not only go to school in Pennsylvania, but they will work and raise their families here. We need to enact additional tax reforms for families and address our national debt by eliminating wasteful spending and reprioritizing how we spend federal tax dollars. Washington's old guard not only lacks the courage to cut and control spending, they continue to vote to raise the debt ceiling, which is crippling our national economy and stifling job growth in our state and communities. The good news is we have many opportunities for growth on the horizon if we embrace new industries and use smart business principles to guide our budgeting decisions. I have a record of doing just that. My legislation in state House of

Representatives helped secure a \$6 billion Shell petrochemical plant and 10,000 jobs. This plant is expected to draw even more high-wage manufacturing jobs to the Commonwealth. I also fought to derail tax hikes in Harrisburg and bloated spending in our state budget while working with my colleagues to make smart investment decisions in programs that work for our citizens and small businesses. Unlike many in Washington, I'm not afraid to fight the status quo to revive our communities, our Commonwealth and our country.”

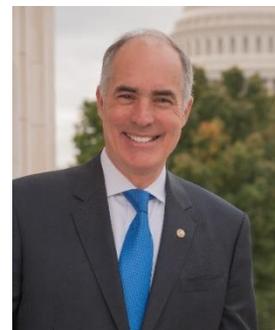
Dale Kearns Jr.: “As the United States Senator representing Pennsylvania, one of my priorities will be to eliminate barriers which prevent employers from hiring and small upstarts from competing. When Washington imposes new laws and regulations, they too often harm not the large corporations, but rather small businesses and those who are wishing to enter the workforce. While those big companies can afford attorneys, accountants, and other resources to adjust to new restrictions, they often do this by laying off the workers who can least afford it. Meanwhile, small businesses struggle to make the same accommodations, and while they can also trim their workforce and benefits, they additionally have to worry about just staying above water.

Accordingly, I will vote to simplify the corporate tax system so that there is a level playing field for large and small corporations alike. This will grant to small businesses the opportunity to enter the market and compete immediately. I will also look to rein in the regulatory state which takes away opportunities and freedoms which otherwise allow entrepreneurs to flourish. The government which governs least governs best, and when I get to the U.S. Senate, I hope that my policies which advance that credo will find their way across the country and into Huntingdon County.”

Question # 2. As federal employment opportunities become available how would you use your position to ensure that Huntingdon County is considered?

Lou Barletta: “As the congressman for the 11th District, I use my position to advocate for grant funding provided by federal appropriations for my constituents. Should Huntingdon County approach my office requesting a grant, I will advocate to ensure they receive consideration from the top levels of the federal government. For example, I was the first Pennsylvania representative to advocate in support of a Department of Energy program, investigating whether Appalachian coal fields throughout northeastern Pennsylvania contained what are known as Rare Earth Elements. There are 17 of these elements, which are critical components of high-tech equipment used in healthcare, transportation, and defense industries. The Chinese currently provide over 85% of the world’s supply, and the United States is 100% dependent on Chinese production. After the submission of my letter, the Department of Energy awarded Penn State a \$1 million grant to research Rare Earth Elements in Pennsylvania anthracite. Recently, research discovered significant quantities of such elements in Pennsylvania coal.”

Bob Casey: “It’s critical that communities large and small have a fair shot at employment opportunities. My office, which has locations in each region of Pennsylvania, will continue to seek and encourage job applicants from all Pennsylvania communities for federal employment.”



Jim Christiana: “When I was elected to the state House of Representatives in 2008, we were in the middle of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Many people I represented were unemployed and struggling to find work. I made it one of my missions to communicate about the jobs available locally and at the state level. I hosted regular job fairs in my district which brought ready-to-hire employers into our community and posted jobs on my website and social media channels. I plan to do the same with job openings at the federal level. I also think connecting regularly with local job creators and groups like the Huntington Chamber of Commerce will allow me to understand the skills this region has to offer so I can work in the U.S. Senate on more comprehensive solutions to bridging the gap between workers and job opportunities.”

Dale Kearns Jr.: “In my U.S. Senate office, I plan to first consider Pennsylvanians when taking on new staffers. My team will be lean and well trained to put forward an agenda which protects liberty and assures that the voices of the Keystone State are heard. It is important to me that since I will have been elected to represent the state, I keep a keen ear affixed to the problems which troubles which they might face. I will never sacrifice my principles, but that does not mean that I will not always first and foremost represent Pennsylvania. Because I have committed to not taking a pension, not taking the Cadillac health care plan given to our elites on capital hill, and serving only one term, voters in Huntington County and across the Commonwealth can rest assured that I will be concerned first with doing my job and never about wasting my time on reelection plans.”



Question # 3: How will you play an active role in Huntington County?

Lou Barletta: “As a former mayor of Hazleton in Luzerne County, I understand that elected officials must always have their thumb on the pulse of the communities they represent. As a congressman, I conducted more than 30 “Main Street Tours,” where I visited local businesses, fire departments, and community groups throughout my district and talked with residents about the issues impacting their community. I brought my staff from Washington to the district so that they would see firsthand how the issues they work on directly affect constituents, and also to provide local residents with a direct contact to the people who can help assist with their issues. As a member of the Senate, I plan to continue holding Main Street Tours across Pennsylvania to always ensure that I am staying in touch with the people I represent.”

Bob Casey: “I will continue to visit the region, including Huntington County, to discuss with local leaders how we can best create and retain jobs, grow local economies, and improve our communities. I will also continue to deliver federal investment into this Huntington County and make sure its people have a voice in Washington. “



Jim Christiana: “A productive relationship starts with a willingness and commitment to partner with Huntingdon County. We've had too many politicians just show up when they want something (like your vote). I have loved each of my visits to Huntingdon County and I will continue to meet with business, community, religious, and political leaders in Huntingdon County.”

Dale Kearns Jr.: “When I am elected, I will not forget my roots. I plan to regularly return to Pennsylvania to both keep in touch with my hometown and all of the citizens who voted for and against my candidacy. I find that too often, the two old parties find themselves lost in Washington, D.C., beholden to lobbyists and special interests. I can make a pledge that as a regular middle-class Pennsylvanian with a beautiful family, I will be different. I pledge to visit every county at least once per year if elected (67 counties in all). I will hold regular town halls in different parts of the state in order to hear the concerns of my constituents. Also, unlike many Senators, I will not have a separate residence outside Pennsylvania or outside the district. I will reside with my family, at my place of residence.”