



# 2024 CONNECTICUT STATE WORKING FAMILIES PARTY CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for filling out the Connecticut Working Families Party Candidate Questionnaire. Please answer all the questions that are applicable. This candidate questionnaire is a form fillable PDF. If you haven't already, please download this questionnaire. You should be able to leave all of your answers inside of the PDF.

Once you are finished, please submit the questionnaire using the online form at <https://wfpus.org/endorsement-application-submission>. Please name your document "FirstName\_LastName\_Position".

If you have any questions, please reach out to Matt Cordeiro at [\[endorsements@workingfamilie.org\]](mailto:endorsements@workingfamilie.org) and James Burke at [\[jburke@workingfamilies.org\]](mailto:jburke@workingfamilies.org).

Every local jurisdiction is different. The size of budget, level of autonomy under state law, available resources, and the political landscape will vary widely. Despite these differences, we know that progressive local leaders are making changes in big cities and small towns, on school boards, and in urban, rural, and suburban counties. The following questions will help us understand your priorities and how you hope to make a difference in the lives of your constituents and amplify the goals of the broader progressive movement.

The Working Families Party was formed in 1998 by a coalition of community and labor organizations, grassroots activists, and progressive elected officials who believe that working families need a party of our own to stand up and fight for us -- and elect champions who would fight for us too.

This year WFP will endorse and elect candidates for state office who carry a fierce determination to win transformative change that will make a difference in people's lives and build the multiracial democracy that lives up to the promise of America.

If that's you, please continue to the next page and fill out this questionnaire.

## CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Position you are running for: \_\_\_\_\_

District #: \_\_\_\_\_

Political Party you are currently registered with: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list all endorsements (with name and contact) from unions, progressive organizations and progressive elected officials you have received up to this point.

## INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

1. What socioeconomic class do you identify as part of today:

- Poor
- Working class
- Middle Class
- Upper-Middle Class
- Upper Class

2. Gender (Check all that apply):

- Agender
- Gender nonconforming
- Genderqueer
- Man
- Non-binary
- Woman

- Questioning
- Two-Spirit
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to answer

**3. Race (Check all that apply):**

- Asian American and/or Pacific Islander
- Black/African-American/ Of African Descent
- Latino/Latina/Latine/Hispanic/Mestizo
- Middle Eastern
- Native American/Alaskan Native/Indigenous Person
- White/Caucasian/ Of European Descent
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to answer
- Prefer not to say
- Other

**4. Are you currently or have you ever been a member of a union?**

- Yes
- No

**5. If yes, which union?**

**6. Do you have military experience or connection?**

- Current Active Duty
- Guard/Reserve Member
- Military Veteran (Regardless of Discharge Status)
- Military Retired
- Family Member of an Active Duty Member or Veteran
- War Survivor or Refugee
- No

7. Tell us about who you are and why you are running, your core values and vision, and why you want the Working Families Party endorsement.

8. Have you previously run for office? If so, please provide details.

9. Do you intend to use the Citizen's Election Program?

Yes

No

## THE ISSUES

### AN ECONOMY THAT WORKS FOR ALL OF US

10. What policies will you support to begin to address the systemic racial and economic inequality in Connecticut? (check all that apply)

Raising income and capital gains taxes on the top 3% of earners.

Forcing large low-wage employers to reimburse the state for poverty wage jobs.

Closing the Carried Interest loophole in concert with neighboring states.

- Protecting municipal aid spending and avoid shifting costs such as pension funding to towns and cities.
- Expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to provide relief to low income households.
- Creating a 10% digital advertising tax on giant tech corporations with income over \$10 billion.
- Restoring the estate tax to pre-Great Recession levels (reducing the estate tax exemption to \$2 million, eliminating the payment cap, and increasing rates).

**11.** In 2023 the legislature passed an emergency certification to extend the “budget guardrails” previously created in 2017. This policy, leftover from a time where Republicans shared leadership of the Senate, prevents us from making the investments needed for robust public services. Our state universities, healthcare agencies, and local governments struggle with diminishing state and federal funding at a time while the state continues to see historic savings. Will you work to loosen the restrictions these guardrails place on new spending?

- Yes, I will support this legislation.
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**12.** In 2011, Connecticut became the first state to pass a statewide standard for paid sick days for employers of 50 or more and certain job classifications to receive up to five guaranteed paid days off. Since then, paid sick days has become law in 12 states, and Connecticut's policy covers woefully few workers. Will you support expanding Paid Sick Days legislation to include all business sizes and all job classifications, with a family definition that matches the one in the 2019 paid family & medical leave law?

- Yes, I will support this legislation.
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**13.** The landmark 2019 law to incrementally raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour has given hundreds of thousands of CT workers a desperately needed raise. However, this law made no change to the tipped wages and some workers continue to make as little as \$6.38. Do you support legislation establishing one fair wage for all workers, with tips on top, so no employee makes a subminimum wage?

- Yes, I will support this legislation.
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**14.** Throughout Connecticut, more than 350,000 low wage hourly shift workers, mostly people of color, in retail, food service and hospitality industries, many earning poverty wages, struggle to earn a stable income because of unpredictable and erratic work schedules. Recently proposed legislation would provide workers with two weeks advance notice of schedules, a rest period of 9-11 hours between shifts, some predictability pay for canceled shifts, first right of access to additional hours when they become available, and regulates practices like on-call scheduling that force workers to come in to work with no notice and lets workers refuse unscheduled hours without fear of retaliation. Would you support "fair workweek" legislation that provides workers more control over their schedules with predictable, stable hours and opportunity to work full time?

- Yes, I will support a "fair workweek"
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

## **SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION**

**15.** With federal aid soon expiring, our schools will be seeing shortfalls in funding. Will you support the state increasing funding for local school districts by expanding Education Cost Sharing?

- Yes, I will support this legislation.
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**16.** At a time where local public schools are facing unprecedented financial hardship, charter schools continue to siphon public money which could be better spent bolstering public education funding. Often built in low-income communities, these schools offer a few students an alternative by diverting funding from the public schools where the vast majority of students will continue to receive their education. Additionally, charter schools are not held to the same level of accountability as public schools and their employees are less likely to be union members. Will you pledge to oppose the creation of any new charter schools and fight against increasing state funding for any charter school already in operation?

- Yes, I will support this legislation
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**17.** Right-wing activists have recently targeted school policies that support trans, non-binary, students and/or sought to place new restrictions on them. If elected, will you protect and implement protections for LGBTQIA+ students?

- Yes, protect LGBTQIA+ students
- No
- I am unsure - please explain



## DEFENDING OUR DEMOCRACY

**18.** Connecticut's landmark Citizens' Election Program, which provides candidates to state and legislative offices with public financing, has successfully curbed the influence of private money in our government. The program allows any candidate to run for office, regardless of their personal wealth or connection to wealthy individuals and corporations. But the legislature has created loopholes to the program, which would have eliminated the program. Would you commit to protecting the Citizens' Election Program from further cuts, and fighting to expand the program? Please elaborate with specific policy proposals on how you would defend the program and your ideas to broaden its impact beyond state races.

- Yes, I will defend and expand the CEP
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**19.** This year CT will allow voters to vote early for the first time. Any new program often faces initial challenges and financial strains. Will you support additional funding for the Secretary of State's office to ensure this program is successful and relieve the burden of funding from local budgets?

- Yes, I support additional funding for early voting
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**20.** Connecticut currently grants voting rights to incarcerated folks only charged with a misdemeanor, with no prior felony conviction or with unsentenced status, as well as people with a felony conviction who are on parole. Restoring voting rights to everyone regardless of their criminal history or incarceration will strengthen our democracy. Do you support restoring voting rights to all people despite their criminal history or current incarceration?

- Yes, I will support this legislation.
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**21.** Communities benefit from democratic input from all their residents. Will you support legislation that allows local municipalities to enable non-citizen voting in their local elections and referendums?

- Yes, I support voting rights for all residents
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

## HOUSING

**22.** Local zoning laws often prohibit the creation of more affordable types of housing by requiring minimum lot sizes, expansive set-back requirements, and single-family only housing areas. Would you support state legislation that establishes local zoning code requirements to allow for a greater diversity of housing types?

- Yes
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**23.** Do you support “inclusionary zoning” policies to require that some percentage of newly developed housing is set aside for low- and moderate-income families?

- Yes
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**24.** Do you support policies that would push communities to develop more transit oriented development?

- Yes
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

25. What policies would you support to facilitate more housing construction both across the state and your own community? (Open Ended)

26. Many renters in our state have faced step rent increases. What policies would you support to keep housing affordable for renters in Connecticut? (Open Ended)

## **WORKER'S RIGHTS**

27. Do you support allowing striking employees to access unemployment benefits after a period of two consecutive weeks on strike?

- Yes, I will support this policy
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**28.** Protecting our system of Binding Arbitration, through which collective bargaining negotiations for public employees are resolved, prevents strikes and helps maintain the rights of workers, and also avoids an interruption in crucial services. When negotiations reach an impasse, both sides submit their last best offer to an independent panel of arbitrators to review and accept, and both sides are bound to that decision. Will you protect this standard?

- Yes, I will support current policy
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**29.** Right wing groups funded by the Koch brother and his ally are doing everything they can to weaken the voices of working families. Would you support legislation that:

- Requires public employers to give unions who are the certified collective bargaining agents access to orientations of new employees to speak to them about the bargaining unit and the contract;
- Provides unions up-to-date bargaining unit lists with worksite locations and contact information;
- Clarifies the authorization process for employee payroll deductions and recognizes that the financial relationship exists between the employee and the union, not the employer;
- Codifies the right of unions to meet with their members during the workday to investigate and discuss grievances, workplace complaints and other workplace issues

- Yes, I will vote for this legislation
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**30.** So-called Right To Work legislation entitles employees to the benefits of a union contract without paying any of the cost to get there. At their core, these laws seek to hamstring unions' ability to help employees bargain with their employers for better wages, benefits, and working conditions. Will you oppose any Right To Work Legislation in Connecticut?

- Yes, I will oppose this attack
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**31.** Department of Transportation highway maintainers keep our roadways safe and efficient, going above and beyond when our state experiences storms and other crises. Over the years, several employees have been killed while performing their duties in highway work zones. Dozens more have been injured. Would you support legislation and programs that ensure work zone safety?

- Yes, I will support this legislation
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**32.** Will you support efforts to protect defined benefit pensions for workers who have them and advocate for the creation of defined benefit pension plans for those who do not?

- Yes, I will protect and expand pension benefits.
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**33.** Will you oppose efforts to increase employee contributions to the Connecticut Municipal Employee Retirement System, especially for the lowest paid workers, so that they can continue to invest in their own retirement security?

- Yes, I will oppose increases
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**34.** Will you pledge to use the visibility of your position to publicly support union organizing drives, contract campaigns and strikes?

- Yes, I stand in solidarity with unions
- No
- I am unsure

## **RACIAL JUSTICE**

**35.** Undocumented individuals lack equitable access to healthcare, despite the fact that they pay roughly 145 million dollars per year in state and local taxes. These undocumented taxpayers are funding state healthcare systems,, but cannot access them due to their status. Would you support expanding access to the state's HUSKY healthcare program to all undocumented individuals, regardless of age?

- Yes, I will support HUSKY for all no matter their immigration status
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**36.** Many times non-violent offenses or misdemeanors have immigration consequences that are much more severe than the actual criminal penalty. For immigration purposes, a state misdemeanor that carries a potential sentence of 365 days is treated like a felony, which makes an individual deportable. While these draconian laws were created by Congress, as a state we can reform our criminal laws to mitigate the harsh immigration consequences of some state convictions. Would you support reducing the maximum misdemeanor sentence by one day to avoid deportation as a consequence of minor convictions?

- Yes, I will vote for this legislation
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**37.** Most immigrants who come in contact with the criminal justice system are not offered adequate advice about the immigration consequences of a criminal conviction. Would you support providing immigration resources to public defenders' offices and legal services?

- Yes, I will support this legislation
- No
- I am unsure - please explain



**38.** Under the 2019 CT TRUST Act, state and local authorities cannot cooperate with ICE, save for very limited circumstances, in the arrest of any individual unless a judicial warrant has been issued. Still, violations of the TRUST Act persist. Would you protect the TRUST Act and use your office to oppose any form of state complicity with ICE's campaign of terror on immigrant communities?

- Yes, I will protect the TRUST Act
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**39.** Around Connecticut, the environment where children grow up is fundamentally unequal. In many wealthier communities, our kids have access to open fields to play in, clean beaches to explore in the summer, and recreational hiking trails to enjoy with their families. These opportunities are healthy and produce vibrant kids. In other communities, kids are exposed to the choking smog of a coal-fired power plant, or the asthma attacks brought on by nearby natural gas plants, or have to live within walking distance of a dump. These inequities are particularly stark along racial lines. How would you propose addressing these environmental injustices? (Open Ended)

**40.** Do you believe Black lives matter? What policies do you support to protect and support Black lives? (Open Ended)

### **SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES**

**41.** We have a gun violence crisis in the country, and shootings seem to be pervading our streets, schools, and public places. In 2013 Connecticut passed some of the strongest gun regulations in the country in response to the mass shooting at Sandy Hook School. But gun violence still ravages too many communities and families. Do you support existing gun safety legislation and what else would you support as a legislator to make our communities safer? (Open Ended)

**42.** What additional steps will you take to make quality affordable healthcare available to everyone? Please speak specifically about your position on universal healthcare. (Open Ended)

**43.** With Roe V Wade reversed it is critical that CT stand in opposition to any restrictions on folks' right to an abortion. Will you ensure abortions remain legal and safe in CT and make sure we remain a safe place for folks from other states traveling here for reproductive health care and protect healthcare workers against retaliation for performing abortions?

- Yes, I support an individuals right to an abortion
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**44.** In the insurance capital of the world, our healthcare system and our policy makers are often held hostage by corporate lobbyists who put CEO profits before affordable healthcare for *all* Connecticut residents. One of the policies designed to make healthcare more affordable is a Public Option. Do you support creation of a Public Option health insurance program? If so, how will you work with us to publicly champion its creation?

- Yes, I will support and champion a Public Option
- No, I will not support this
- I am unsure - please explain

**45.** What measures do you think Connecticut should take to work towards 100% renewable energy and a world without fossil fuels like coal, oil, and natural gas? (Open ended)

## WFP'S POWERBUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

46. Connecticut is one of the states that allow candidates to be "cross-endorsed" by more than one political party. This gives voters more meaningful choices, enables minor parties to grow, and is part of an open electoral process where parties have the freedom to endorse whichever candidate best advances their agenda. How will you continue to support minor parties, and what would you do if legislation to ban cross-endorsement, aggregate minor party votes, or weaken the rights of minor parties be raised in the future? (Open Ended)

47. Independent expenditures have been used in Connecticut in recent years by lobbying groups to influence the outcome of elections and grow political power for corporate interests. Will you reject the endorsement and denounce any independent expenditures made for your benefit by the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA), the National Rifle Association, or any PACs associated with the Koch brother?

- Yes
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**48.** WFP encourages aligned elected officials to work within existing power structures to move towards tangible policy goals to benefit working people in our state. This strategy sometimes means compromising with moderate colleagues to get something done, and other times it means organizing your colleagues to take aggressive stances and hold the line on important votes. Can you share your thoughts on the balance between working within existing power structures to build political capital vs. challenging powerful colleagues in the legislature and Governor's office when their stance is in opposition to our policy goals?(Open Ended)

**49.** While we have worked to build progressive power in our legislature, we are often challenged by the Moderate Caucus who have organized against us in our fights for increasing minimum wage, expanding healthcare to undocumented immigrants, expanding paid sick days, and establishing a fair work week. If (re)elected will you pledge to not join the moderate caucus?

- Yes, pledge not to join the moderate caucus
- No
- I am unsure - please explain

**50.** The Working Families Party sees our endorsement as the first step in a relationship with elected officials who we will continue to work with on mutual priorities. A real partnership beyond winning the election helps all of us accomplish more towards our goals of economic, racial and social justice. Will you be proactive in seeking support and input from the Working Families coalition in the legislative process? Which of the issues on this questionnaire do you intend to make a top priority in your work as a legislator? (Open Ended)

- 51.** As an elected official, which of the following will you pledge to do in order to build the Working Families Party?
- Speak to constituents and voters in your community about the WFP endorsement during your electoral campaign, and include the WFP logo on campaign materials.
  - Encourage voters to support you on the WFP ballot line, Row C
  - Meet regularly with WFP staff, affiliates, and other WFP aligned legislators
  - Co-sponsor and support all WFP priority legislation
  - Work with staff and other endorsed legislators to develop a WFP caucus in the state legislature
  - Recruit municipal candidates to help WFP expand ballot access in municipalities in your district

52. Briefly, what is the fundamental message you want your campaign to be about? (Open Ended)

## **INVESTING NOW TO MAKE OUR SOCIETY MORE RESILIENT TO FUTURE STRENGTHENING THE MOVEMENT**

Please tell us in which of the following ways you are willing to help build the Working Families Party. Please check all that apply.

- I will publicly describe myself as a Working Families Democrat, Working Families Party-endorsed candidate or Working Families Party member.
- I am (or will become) a dues-paying member of WFP.
- I will meet with Working Families Party members and leaders at least once per year.
- I will publicly commit to taking action at the request of the WFP on issues where we are aligned.
- I will encourage my supporters to become WFP members and activists.
- I will list the WFP endorsement (and logo when appropriate) in campaign communications.
- I am interested in discussing and exploring a deep partnership with WFP to win my campaign and build the WFP.
- I am not interested in any of these actions.

**THANK YOU FOR FILLING OUT THE CONNECTICUT WORKING FAMILIES PARTY LOCAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE.**

Once you are finished, please submit the questionnaire using the online form at <https://wfpus.org/endorsement-application-submission>.

Please name your document "**FirstName\_LastName\_Position**".

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