



Volume 2, Issue 2

July, 2007

Philadelphia **FORWARD**

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2007 Primary Election Results: CHANGE!!!



Philadelphia Forward Executive Director
Brett Mandel

When we created *Philadelphia Forward*, we declared we would push in the short run for the reforms that could make Philadelphia the city we knew it should be, but that our longer-term goal was to establish the constituency for change that could alter the city's political landscape. Based on the election results, I say — WE WIN!

More than 60 percent of the votes cast for Mayor in the Democratic Primary were cast for candidates who were generally supportive of significant change in Philadelphia AND specifically supportive of the tax reform, ethics reform, and budget reform measures promoted by *Philadelphia Forward*. The Republican candidate for Mayor is also supportive of these measures.

The election represented a thorough dismissal of the policies of the current administration and a complete rejection of the politics of fear and culture of corruption that has been the hallmark of Philadelphia government for far too long.

Together, we have created a revolution of rising expectations. We have rejected the notion that we should accept ongoing decline, rising crime, and a political system that rewards those who go along to get along. Most important, we have infused in Philadelphians a sense of hope that we can make a difference and that we can accept the challenge of the Oath of the Athenian Citizen to "transmit this city, not only not less, but greater and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us." *Brett Mandel*

You CAN Fight City Hall Event: A KNOCKOUT!

Philadelphia Forward presented "Forward Thinker" awards at its April 12th **You CAN Fight City Hall** event at the Legendary Blue Horizon. Members of the constituency for change helped celebrate and cultivate the push for reform. Awards went to:

- **Pat Meehan:** fought corruption and won convictions against Officials
- **Tony Payton, Jr.:** fought the party machine and won election as a state rep
- **Mary Tracy:** fought offenses to the urban landscape and won court cases to stop billboard proliferation
- **Judith von Seldeneck:** fought job-killing taxes and won reductions to the City Wage Tax

Awardees joined moderator and *Daily News* scribe Elmer Smith in the ring for a panel discussion about the lessons they have learned and the prospects for fighting City Hall in the future.



The participants, joined again by former contender Marvis Frazier mug it up for the cameras as part of the post-fight celebration in the ring

For event photos and video highlights, visit:
www.philadelphiaforward.org/node/4

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The Next Mayor On Tax Reform

Tax reformers can be very happy with the results of the May 15th Primary Election. Democratic Party nominee and former Councilman **Michael Nutter** led the fight for tax reform in Council and Republican Party nominee and Greater Northeast Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce President **Al Taubenberger** was vice chair of the Tax Reform Commission. Both understand that taxes hold Philadelphia back and that tax reform can move Philadelphia forward.

On Council, two of the "Stubborn Six" that stood in the minority with the Mayor to block critical tax reform legislation will not return in 2008. We once had to fight City Hall for tax reform. It is clear that we will have sympathetic ears in City Hall when it comes to making our tax structure more fair and less burdensome.

Philadelphia Forward is working to ensure that candidates have opportunities to communicate with, and hear from, our growing constituency for change to engage them in the debate about not only who will lead our city, but also how our city will be led.



Philadelphia Forward invited each candidate to attend a tax reform meetup and asked each candidate for Mayor to record a video response to address how issues like tax reform can help reduce the cost of living and doing business in Philadelphia AND improve the quality of life and the quality of the marketplace.

You can view the videos (pictured here) and hear the candidates in their own words at:

www.philadelphiaforward.org/decision2007

BUDGETWATCH: Philadelphia Finance In Focus



BUDGETWATCH raises the level of public debate surrounding the city budget and the budgetary process.

BUDGETWATCH messages, which are posted on the web at www.philadelphiaforward.org/budgetwatch explained how recent events and mayoral politics affect the budget.

On the mayoral primary fray:

Candidates are always more than happy to discuss how we should do more to address the woes that beset the city...candidates generally offer much less detail about how they would change the priorities and assumptions in the city budget so that we can realize their visions and implement their plans.

On the city's budgetary prospects:

The city will end up with a fund balance more than \$100 million higher than budgeted...our analysis suggests that at

the end of Fiscal Year 2007, the City of Philadelphia will have more than \$242 million left in the bank.

On the next Mayor's budget challenge:

The next Mayor has a real opportunity to create a budget process that will avoid some of this annual silliness, generate an informed consensus on the assumptions used in crafting the budget and Five-Year Plan, and establish new ways to engage the public in the effort to determine how we raise and spend our public money.

Moving Philadelphia Forward: Meet Other Reformers



Philadelphia Forward Board Member Colleen Puckett

Philadelphia Forward Board member Colleen Puckett is moving Philadelphia forward. Puckett began her career as an inaugural VISTA volunteer with PhilaPOSH. She was also a labor organizer in Tupelo, Miss. where she met "real" Norma Rae.

Colleen was a night-shift machine operator at a central PA federal defense installation and an active member of AFGE Local 1156,

rising to become vice president of the 6,000-member local before moving back to Philadelphia in 1985.

Colleen is a past president of Queen Village Neighbors Assn., and a founder of the Coalition of Philadelphia Neighborhood Associations. She holds a bachelor's degree in labor studies from Pennsylvania State University. Colleen is the marketing director at Friends Select School in Center City. She is married to Jacob Cohen and has two sons, Max, 14, and Aaron, 11.

Real Estate Tax Conference Shows Issues; Solutions

Philadelphia Forward hosted a conference on Real Estate Taxation issues in Philadelphia on February 23, 2007 at Temple University to discuss crucial issues surrounding Real Estate Taxation and the transition to "full-value" taxation.

At the conference, local and national experts explained what is positive and negative about Real Estate Taxation, and how other jurisdictions have confronted issues we face in Philadelphia, to make real estate taxation fair and understandable.

Attendees learned how other jurisdictions made the transformation from a broken system to fair system of real estate taxation. Over lunch, Wharton's Robert Inman explained the economics of local taxation and suggested that we should avoid taxing businesses and commuters and concentrate Real Estate Taxes on the value of land.

Board of Revision of Taxes chair David Glancey explained how full-value reassessment will set proper

home values but elected officials would have to lower tax rates so the city won't see a windfall. City Controller Alan Butkovitz expressed his concerns that the Mayor and City Council would not reduce taxes and that full-value reassessment would then dramatically increase tax bills. But, Philadelphia Real Estate Tax law authority Joseph Bright warned that assessing at full value is the law. If we do not set fair and accurate values, the courts will force us to do so.



What is wrong with this picture? *Philadelphia Forward* Executive Director Brett Mandel illustrates the problem: in Philadelphia similar properties pay different Real Estate Tax Bills.

The final panel of presenters addressed how Philadelphia can protect vulnerable homeowners and ensure that no Philadelphians will be forced out of their homes because of high taxes. It was a lively way to conclude the day and attendees asked probing questions to ensure that panelists answered their concerns.

For event photos and highlights, visit: www.philadelphiaforward.org/node/590

The R.E.F.O.R.M. Agenda: Historic Citizen Engagement



An exciting effort that was co-sponsored by *Philadelphia Forward*, and hosted online at www.reformballot.org allowed reformers from every corner of the city to define the principles of a reform agenda for Philadelphia. Combining the power of wikipedia with growth in the constituency for change, the experiment in deliberative democracy gave citizens the

opportunity to edit and vote on a R.E.F.O.R.M. Agenda for Philadelphia focused on how the public participates in public decisions.

After reformers edited and voted to establish the R.E.F.O.R.M. Agenda, candidates for Mayor and City Council weighed in with their responses. Philadelphians were able to see which candidates are REFORMERS and which candidates are NOT REFORMERS based on the responses —

citizens could then print a REFORM BALLOT to take to the polls.

The effort inspired much news, generated hundreds of thousands of "hits," and helped make big change. Each of the incumbent candidates who were defeated failed to respond to the R.E.F.O.R.M. Agenda — they each lost to a candidate who participated! Now we must work with the new Mayor and Council to implement change.

Show That Philadelphia Is Now Engaged And Encouraged



Corrupt and contented? That is so 20th Century! Philadelphia is now ENGAGED AND ENCOURAGED! Show your neighbors and friends that we have turned things upside down with our ENGAGED AND ENCOURAGED trinkets and our ENGAGED AND ENCOURAGED wear.



The ENGAGED AND ENCOURAGED logo is offered on a t-shirt, a polo shirt, a hoodie sweatshirt, and a fridge magnet. Each makes a great gift! Reformers can go online to the *Philadelphia Forward* superstore located at www.cafepress.com/philafoward to do all their ENGAGED AND ENCOURAGED shopping!

Show Philadelphia that you are ENGAGED AND ENCOURAGED.

The **FORWARD** Thinker

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Philadelphia Forward is a citizens' organization formed to build a diverse constituency for change to promote the policies that can make Philadelphia a vibrant city that is a preferred place to live, work, and visit.

For more information about getting involved with the push for reform, visit: www.philadelphiaforward.org

Philadelphia Forward Making News & Change

Philadelphia Forward continues to make news and extend the reach of its work through the local media. The groundbreaking R.E.F.O.R.M. Agenda effort and www.reformballot.org received a lot of positive attention. Reform was in the air during the election season this spring...especially when a rented plane circled Center City with the message...



The good-government agenda that the group behind ReformBallot.org will eventually deliver to those running for office won't be developed by a small group behind closed doors. Anyone with ideas for cleaning government and Internet access will have a chance to weigh in to the reform compact, make changes and vote on which ones become part of the final plan...

The group of reformers behind the effort will accept changes to its compact — which comes with a set list of ideals including open, credible and responsible government — until the end of March, when it will be edited and then voted on to establish the final product.

"There's always the danger when you open up this to everyone that someone will write something silly," said Brett Mandel of Philadelphia Forward. "Not only has that not happened, but as a rule, without exception, everything that's been put up has been thoughtful." (March 22, 2007)



If you log on to reformballot.org, you can read a long list of suggested reforms related to restoring credibility, engaging neighborhoods, responding to citizen input and modernizing city services, and to fiscal responsibility and open government. Plus, you can add to it and edit it. This is a wonk's dream. But reformballot.org is also an interesting experiment in democracy—at least for those who can access the Internet —and we encourage all voices to make themselves heard. (March 20, 2007)

The Philadelphia Inquirer In what may well be a first in the nation, the government-reform group Philadelphia Forward is developing a to-do list and set of governing principles for City Hall via the Web. Using the same "wiki" software technology that created Wikipedia — the online encyclopedia that anyone can edit — Forward is inviting citizens to go online and contribute ideas to its Reform Philadelphia platform at www.reformballot.org...

Brett Mandel, head of Philadelphia Forward, contrasts this initiative with the writing of the Constitution "behind closed doors under a veil



Thanks to technology, and the advent of "Wikipedia," which allows many voices to enter the fray, there's a new channel for the public to voice what it wants out of the next administration. The reform group Philadelphia Forward has created a Web site that invites citizens to actually write and edit the agenda of the next chapter of civic leadership.

of secrecy," and asks what "our governing document would have looked like if all citizens could have been involved."

Maybe a free-for-all? Well, the Philadelphia Forward effort isn't entirely unstructured. Mandel and other contributors have set out benchmarks, creating six core principles: integrity in government, neighborhood empowerment, fiscal responsibility, openness, citizen input, and modern city services. (March 19, 2007)