

## **2025 JUDICIAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

**This questionnaire is designed to provide insight about your candidacy and to aid the various committee members in making a more informed choice when casting their endorsement vote. This will be shared with the members of the committees participating in the 2025 Judicial Candidates Zoom Conference and any other Democratic Committee/Committee member that requests copies. Your response is requested no later than: January 20, 2025. Please email your .pdf responses to: [committee@mccandlelessdemocrats.org](mailto:committee@mccandlelessdemocrats.org)**

**Name: Dan Miller**

**Campaign website: [VoteDanMiller.com](http://VoteDanMiller.com)**

**1. Have you received a rating from the Allegheny County or Pennsylvania Bar Association? If so, please state the rating and year received.  
If not, are you applying for a rating? Please state when your interview is scheduled or why you are not applying for a rating.**

I expect to be interviewed on one of their February dates.

**2. What are your qualifications to run for a Judicial Seat? What specific accomplishments in your past have qualified you for this?**

After graduating law school at Catholic University I spent 11 years as a public defender and a county solicitor protecting rights and making sure kids were not neglected at home or at school. I appeared in criminal and orphans court, but overwhelmingly spent most of my time in the Family Division. I have also practiced on the private side as a special education lawyer helping make sure kids with disabilities get the support they need at school. Over the past 11 years, I have been in the legislature, spending most of my time on the Judiciary and Labor committee prioritizing on disability, mental health, labor rights and criminal justice. I believe that my unique experience as a practicing attorney and as a legislator has provided me with knowledge of the law and its administration, as well as the issues and challenges that most often bring people before the court. If law is practiced correctly, there's opportunity. When written correctly, there's equality. When administered fairly, there's justice.

**3. Describe the nature of your legal practice since graduating from law school, including the percentage of your practice dedicated to litigation and whether you appeared in court frequently, occasionally, or not at all.**

I spent about 11 years as an Allegheny County public defender and a solicitor. In both of these roles I was in court essentially 3-4 days every week. For the past 11 years I have been in the legislature serving on committees like the Judiciary and Labor where I have used my legal experience to write bills on issues like criminal justice reform and labor rights. I am now part of Ruder Law, which is a special education law firm in Pittsburgh.

#### **4. Why are you running for this office?**

I want to become a judge because a good judge can make a difference, because a good judge is necessary to our system, and because after a decade of being in court almost daily and a decade of writing law, I believe that I offer a unique combination of skills, knowledge, and experience that can appropriately balance the cases and issues that are finding their way into our judicial system.

I believe that a good judge allows attorneys to present their case and creates and maintains the appropriate courtroom environment that allows them to do so. A good judge has knowledge of the law, but not an ego in administering it. A good judge knows temperance, but does not dissuade passionate representation. A good judge understands that the validity of their rulings is dependent more upon faith in the system rather than the mere stroke of any pen. A good judge accepts responsibility for making a tough decision and does so in a timely, yet thoughtful manner.

I wish to become a judge because I believe I can do that, and that I have a record of providing such service.

I am proud of my decade-plus service as a public defender and county solicitor, where I benefited from the perspective of representing clients as a PD on basically the same allegations that I later brought against parents for neglecting their children. I am also proud of my time as a legislator, where I have been an active member of the Judiciary Committee, winning awards for my work on disability and mental health issues, and deepening my understanding of the court system and the issues that most commonly bring people before the bench. While I acknowledge the uniqueness of my legal experience, I submit to you that I am a better attorney and candidate for judge because of it.

Being a good judge is not easy, there is a balance that can be difficult to maintain and defend. But a good judge makes a difference, and that's why I want to do it. This is the next logical step in my career and calling as a lawyer devoted to the public service. I believe my diversity of experiences—both personal and professional—will allow me to serve on the bench with distinction, dispensing equal and impartial justice; treating counsel, parties, witnesses, staff, with dignity, respect, and empathy; and working hard and humbly every day to make my courtroom one where all know that they will get a fair hearing.

#### **5. Have you ever run for or held office? If yes, what office? Why did you leave office?**

Yes.

2007-11: Elected as Commissioner in Mt. Lebanon (completed term)

2013-14: Elected to the state House for the 42nd District in a special election (completed term)

2015-16: Re-elected to the state House (completed term)

2017-18: Re-elected to the state House (completed term)

2019-20: Re-elected to the state House and elected to Chair the Allegheny County Delegation (completed term)

2021-22: Re-elected to the state House and elected into House leadership as the Minority Caucus Chair (completed term)

2023-24: Re-elected to the state House and elected into House leadership as the Majority Whip (completed term)

2025-26: Re-elected to the state House (current term)

**6. Have you ever been arrested? If yes, list the county and state of arrest, the charge, and the outcome of the case.**

No.

**7. Have you ever had a Domestic Violence Protection Order or Civil Stalking Protection Order taken out against you? If yes, list the county and state issuing the Order.**

No.

**8. Do you have any outstanding tax liabilities? Have you ever had any outstanding tax liabilities in the past? If yes, describe them and the outcomes(s).**

No.

**9. Have you ever had a malpractice claim filed against you? If yes, list the year and detail the complaint.**

No.

**10. Have you ever had a bar complaint and/or grievance filed against you? If yes, list the Bar Association which handled the matter and the outcome of the matter.**

No.

**11. Has your law license ever been inactive? If so, why?**

No.

**12. Has any professional license held by you other than your law license ever lapsed, been denied renewal, suspended, or revoked for any reason? If yes, describe the circumstances and outcome(s).**

No.

**13. Has your driver's license ever been denied renewal, been suspended, or been canceled because of unpaid tickets or for any other reason? If yes, describe the circumstances and outcome(s).**

No.

**14. Do you have or have you had any liens or judgments on any property you own? If yes, describe the circumstances and outcome(s).**

No.

**15. Have you ever sued or been sued in your personal capacity? If yes, describe the circumstances and outcome(s).**

No.

**16. Have any sexual harassment allegations and/or complaints been levied against you? If so please detail.**

No.

**17. Please provide your screen/username for all social media accounts, including but not limited to LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, etc.**

**a. Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/VoteDanMiller>

**b. Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/votedanmiller/>

**c. LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/in/rep-dan-miller-0566811/>

**d. X:** <https://x.com/VoteDanMiller>

**e. Bluesky:** <https://bsky.app/profile/votedanmiller.bsky.social>

**f. Other:**

**18. Please disclose any other matter that may be of significance in your judicial race. Include in your disclosure any information about you that could be used negatively against you or the Democratic Party.**

No.

**19. Please explain your thoughts on cashless bail? i.e. when is it appropriate and when is it not appropriate?**

In principle, and by law, bail should only be used to ensure a future court appearance. The Pennsylvania Constitution and Rules of Criminal Procedure protect the fundamental right to pretrial liberty. These rules are broken when cash bail is assigned in cases where a person is neither a flight risk nor a danger to themselves or others. The rules are also broken if cash bail is assigned without a careful, individualized assessment of the person.

I have seen many people accused of a crime waive their right to a preliminary hearing in order to get an OR bond or a bond reduction that would allow them to be released from jail. Most often than not, this forfeiture of a fundamental right to hear the evidence against them was exchanged for an otherwise modest bail amount. In more serious cases, no waiver of a preliminary hearing would be enough to get someone out of jail in the first place.

But in Pennsylvania and across the United States, the reality is that those with greater financial resources are less likely to be detained on any bail amount than those with fewer resources. This imbalance can lead to poor people spending time in jail for less serious offenses while wealthier people charged with greater offenses walk. The impact of this can be devastatingly disproportionately felt by people who are just barely keeping their head above water, where even after just a few days in jail they can lose their job, access to necessary medical care, custody of their children, and even their homes.

No doubt public safety and respect for court dates are essential considerations, but so is a just system that recognizes fairness. What isn't fair is a system that routinely keeps people in jail—not because they've been convicted of any crime, but because they simply cannot afford to pay for their freedom when compared to another similarly charged individual who just happens to have more money. I believe that cashless bail should be considered whenever appropriate and that -all things being equal- detention due to a small amount of bail seldom serves the overall public interest.

**20. Are you familiar with Senate Bill (“SB”) 752 (Expanding Diversion; Focusing Detention and Out-of-Home Placements; Related Juvenile Justice Reforms)? Please explain whether you support the bill and explain your reasoning.**

I appreciate the Senator’s effort to address challenges in juvenile justice and would consider working with her bill in some form should her party ever let it receive a vote on the Senate floor. However the Task Force recommendations referenced in her memorandum go far beyond SB 752. I much prefer my bill, HB 1381 from last session, which incorporated almost two dozen Task Force recommendations as well as some other related issues that I believe would improve our juvenile justice outcome for all parties.

**21. Is a hot dog a sandwich? Please explain your reasoning.**

At PNC Park yes, anywhere else no.

## **Democratic Values**

**22. Why are you a Democrat? What makes you a Democrat?**

I am a Democrat because I grew up poor and we didn't have healthcare until my mom got a union job.

I am a Democrat because my 4th grade social studies teacher showed me President Kennedy’s inaugural address.

I am a Democrat because of medicaid, medicare, social security, FMLA, and the Affordable Care Act.

I am a Democrat because love is love.

I am a Democrat because of Roe v. Wade.

I am a Democrat because I believe in the future, that America's best days are ahead and that we have a positive vision of an inclusive future for everyone.

**23. If you do not receive the Democratic Party Endorsement for this position, will you run against the endorsed candidates?**

I have always had the support of the Democratic Committee in my bids for office and as the former chair of the Mt. Lebanon Committee, it is not my intention to run against the endorsement.

**24. Have you ever run for political office where you ran against an endorsed Democratic candidate? If so, why?**

No, I have always had the support of the committee.

**25. Have you ever changed your party affiliation or voted in a primary other than the Democratic Primary? If so, when and why?**

No.

**26. Have you ever volunteered for a Democratic campaign? If yes, what candidate and what year?**

Yes, I have volunteered for countless Democratic campaigns since college. Most recently as the Democratic Whip I door knocked and attended events for candidates throughout the state. Locally this included Hadley Haas, Bill Petulla, Angela Girol, and Rob Matzie. I also did an event in my district for Bob Casey and another one with Chris Deluzio.

My first campaign involvement in Pennsylvania was Bob Casey's run for governor. I then served as a campaign manager for a Commission race in Mt. Lebanon where we flipped the seat, and then for Matt Smith in 2006 where we flipped a state House seat.

Additionally, I joined my Democratic Committee back in 2003 and became the chair of it in 2005.

**27. What personal experiences have you had that you believe will shape your judicial temperament?**

My legal experience has been one of balance. I have served as a public defender and a county solicitor in essence representing two sides of the same coin (not in the same case of course). I know what it's like to argue passionately in defense of your client, and then sit down for lunch with opposing counsel. Temperament and balance must remain important characteristics of the legal profession, both before the bench and on it.

Additionally as Democratic Whip last term with only a 102-101 majority I had to work hard to find compromise and votes across our political spectrum in order to advance meaningful legislation. Maintaining a degree of temperance while also working hard to do my job was a necessary and constant effort.

**28. What does it mean to have a commitment to diversity and inclusion? In your personal, professional, or civic life have you demonstrated that commitment? If so, how?**

A commitment to diversity and inclusion means that you recognize that not all doors to opportunity have been open wide enough for everyone, and that some have technically been open but perhaps not as inviting as they should be.

Professionally I have focused a lot of my work in the disability and mental health arena. While there has been progress made since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, we are still a nation where roughly 65% of people with disabilities are not engaged in the workforce, we are still a state that does not fund special education appropriately, and we are still a county where the largest daily mental health provider is our county jail. Inclusion in this context must mean more than simply allowing someone to share a physical space. It must mean accepting that they have the right to full opportunity, economically, educationally, socially- in every aspect that makes life worth living.

This is why I host my Disability & Mental Health Summit annually, which has become the largest collection of related resources in western PA. Additionally, I have been honored to receive awards from disability and mental health organizations like Achieva, the Arc of PA, the PEAL Center, Mental Health America, Unique Source, etc. The intersection of disability and mental health and our courts remain a primary reason why I seek to serve on the bench.

**29. Have you previously represented any clients where you had to take a position adverse to any Democratic values or core constituencies (ex. representing an employer during a union busting campaign, representing a white supremacist)? If so, please explain.**

As a public defender it was possible that some of my clients were alleged to have acted in a way that would be adverse to our party values, but otherwise no.

**30. Have you ever taken a public stance for or against the following? If so, please detail your position at the time of the public statement and where the statement can be found (if published or recorded):**

As a state representative I have voted for and supported all of these issues on more than one occasion. You can view related videos, see the bills I have authored and research my voting record at [legis.state.pa.us](http://legis.state.pa.us). Additionally if you visit Rep. Dan Miller on facebook and click on events you can see a list of the hundreds of events that I have hosted, many of which have discussed aspects of all of these issues.

**a. Women's Reproductive Rights**

I have been publicly in support of women's reproductive rights and I have been endorsed by Planned Parenthood in numerous state House races.

**b. LGBTQ Rights**

I have publicly supported expanding LGBTQ rights and protections and I have been endorsed by the Stonewall Democrats in numerous state House races.

**c. Marriage Equality**

I have publicly supported marriage equality and I have voted for it on the floor of the House and have been a member of our Equality Caucus.

**d. Right to Work Legislation**

I am a former member of the USW and NEA and I have publicly spoken out against right to work legislation countless times. I have also been endorsed for every state House race by the AFL- CIO.

**e. Collective Bargaining**

I have always been a strong advocate for collective bargaining rights and organized labor priorities and I voted to enshrine the right to collectively bargain in our state constitution.

**f. Second Amendment**

I have voted for several common sense gun safety measures and was the House Whip on the floor last session when we passed a red flag bill and universal background checks.

**g. Vaccinations or other public health measures**

I have publicly supported vaccinations and other public health measures as recommended by public health officials, and I have offered them at several of our district Senior Fairs.

**h. The validity of any election or election process**

Core to our Democracy is respect and trust in free and fair elections. I have spoken against attempts to undermine that process, particularly in the last few election cycles and I have voted on measures that would better fund county election offices and would adopt recommendations from counties that would approve the election process (like pre-canvassing).

**31. If you believe that gender, racial, ethnic, class or other forms of bias can infect the justice system, how will you work to keep your courtroom as bias-free as possible?**

I do believe that gender, racial, ethnic, class, and other forms of bias can affect the justice system. It is incumbent on all those working in our courts to foster faith in our judicial system. All must receive consistent training and continuing education on these matters and everyone



who enters a courtroom must be treated fairly and equally. Anytime a bias of any type impacts a case the legitimacy of the entire system is undermined.