

Question 1, Proposed Constitutional Amendment 1

Termination or Extension of Disaster Emergency Declarations

Shall the Pennsylvania Constitution be amended to change existing law and increase the power of the General Assembly to unilaterally terminate or extend a disaster emergency declaration—and the powers of Commonwealth agencies to address the disaster regardless of its severity pursuant to that declaration—through passing a concurrent resolution by simple majority, thereby removing the existing check and balance of presenting a resolution to the Governor for approval or disapproval?

AFT Pennsylvania Commentary: In the case of an emergency like a hurricane or blizzard or industrial accident or a global pandemic any governor can declare a disaster emergency to protect lives and make sure state agencies and resources are moved quickly to do the most good, the fastest. This question is to preserve the state's constitution, or change the Constitution to allow the state legislature unilaterally end the disaster declaration.

AFT Pennsylvania Position: Vote “No”

Question 2, Proposed Constitutional Amendment 2

Disaster Emergency Declaration and Management

Shall the Pennsylvania Constitution be amended to change existing law so that: a disaster emergency declaration will expire automatically after 21 days, regardless of the severity of the emergency, unless the General Assembly takes action to extend the disaster emergency; the Governor may not declare a new disaster emergency to respond to the dangers facing the Commonwealth unless the General Assembly passes a concurrent resolution; the General Assembly enacts new laws for disaster management?

AFT Pennsylvania Commentary: In the case of an emergency like a hurricane or blizzard or industrial accident or a global pandemic any governor can declare a disaster emergency to protect lives and make sure state agencies and resources are moved quickly to do the most good, the fastest. This question is to preserve the state's constitution or change the Constitution so an emergency declaration only lasts 21 days, no matter what kind of a disaster, or how bad it gets. This is unless the state legislature is able to get together *during* that disaster and *agree* the governor should be allowed to keep the disaster in place.

AFT Pennsylvania Position: Vote “No”

Question 3, Proposed Constitutional Amendment 3

Prohibition Against Denial or Abridgement of Equality of Rights Because of Race or Ethnicity

Shall the Pennsylvania Constitution be amended by adding a new section providing that equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged because of an individual's race or ethnicity?

AFT Pennsylvania Commentary: This would add a new section to Article I of the Pa. Constitution, creating a prohibition against denying an individual equal rights because of their race or ethnicity. While there are some federal laws and Supreme Court precedent that provide equal rights, this would explicitly prohibit racial discrimination at the state level.

AFT Pennsylvania Position: Vote “Yes”

Question 4, Statewide Referendum

Making Municipal Fire and Emergency Medical Services Companies Eligible for Loans

Do you favor expanding the use of the indebtedness authorized under the referendum for loans to volunteer fire companies, volunteer ambulance services and volunteer rescue squads under 35 PA.C.S. §7378.1 (related to referendum for additional indebtedness) to include loans to municipal fire departments or companies that provide services through paid personnel and emergency medical services companies for the purpose of establishing and modernizing facilities to house apparatus equipment, ambulances and rescue vehicles, and for purchasing apparatus equipment, ambulances and rescue vehicles, protective and communications equipment and any other accessory equipment necessary for the proper performance of the duties of the fire companies and emergency medical services companies?

AFT Pennsylvania Commentary: As it stands, Pennsylvania only allows volunteer fire and EMS companies to apply for money through a state-run loan program. Voting “yes” on this referendum allows paid fire and emergency medical service companies to be eligible for the loans, in addition to volunteer companies.

AFT Pennsylvania Position: Vote “Yes”