

Generational Alliance Voter Guide Questions

Answers from Howie Hawkins, Green Party candidate for Governor of New York

1. It is November 3rd and you've just been elected- what are the first concrete actions you take to support underrepresented and low-income youth in your state?

Former Governor Spitzer established a Children's Cabinet to raise the profile of children's issues within the state government. The Cabinet has had limited impact to date. I would increase its profile. I would also create a Youth Advisory Council to the Cabinet composed of representatives of youth organizations.

I would create Youth Advocacy positions within the various state agencies that serve low-income youth, including Housing, Health, and the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance.

The Green Party has always been a youth oriented party. Our biggest base of support is among young people below the age of 30. In many states we are the majority party among that age group. My first experience with electoral politics was at age 14 when I encouraged adults to register into the anti-war, pro-civil rights Peace and Freedom Party in California so it could have a ballot line for the 1968 elections. The voting age was 21 at that time. The Greens support reducing the voting age to 16. In Syracuse in 1997, I helped a 17-year old Latina run for County Legislature as a Green (she was 18 by election day and therefore eligible).

2.What systems and programs would you develop and/or support to help increase access to higher education for all students especially low-income and undocumented students?

Hawkins for Governor advocates for free tuition at public college in NYS.

Free tuition for CUNY was approved by the voters in NYC in 1834. The bankers forced lawmakers to violate the vote as a condition of bailing out NYC when it was bankrupt in 1975, even though it was the financial elites machinations that was the root cause of the fiscal crisis. That decision was legally and morally wrong.

We also need to fully fund our public schools in accordance with the NYS Court of Appeals decision on school funding won by the Campaign for Fiscal Equity's lawsuit.

I oppose charter schools as undercutting the public school system. Innovation is needed in public schools, but it should be done within the public schools system where the parents and community have the right to elect school boards and hold the schools accountable. I oppose a local property tax cap which will lead to further cuts in school funding.

3.Currently college students are graduating with an average of \$23,000in student debt right now- what new or existing programs would you invest in to decrease the financial burdens of higher education?

I would invest in free tuition at all public universities in NY – CUNY, SUNY, and community colleges.

At the federal level, the Greens support restoring financial aid as grants rather than as loans.

Assuming that the Democrats and Republicans will continue to resist the Green agenda for free tuition, we would seek to increase the funding levels for the various financial aid programs both for students in general (e.g. TAP) as well as though aid based on need. We would also make it much easier for part-time students to receive financial aid, reflecting the real life challenges many low-income and working-class students face in trying to complete their college education.

4.Right now, across the country over 27% of youth are unemployed, summer jobs programs are being cut and jobs training programs are being reduced in size - what programs you develop or invest in to support unemployed and underemployed youth?

I advocate for a WPA-style public jobs program at the state level. If you can't find a job in the private sector, you go the employment office – not an unemployment office – and get a living wage job in public works or services that meet unmet community needs.

I would fund this by making the wealthy pay their fair share of taxes, including an immediate halt to the \$16 billion annual refund to Wall Street speculators of the stock transfer tax. Much of its costs would be covered by the reduced need for expenditures on safety net programs like unemployment insurance, cash assistance, and food stamps that now go to unemployed people.

5.Even with the recent healthcare reform some key healthcare issues are not being included or addressed. Do you support increasing healthcare benefits to cover reproductive healthcare and healthcare for undocumented youth?

Yes. Health care should be a human right. The recent congressional health bill went in the wrong direction, mandating that individuals buy expensive, inadequate private health insurance if they are not covered by an employer or public plan.

Instead, I want to provide health care to every person in New York State through a single payer, Medicare for All, program that would save billions by eliminating the administrative overhead, profits, and exorbitant executive salaries of health insurance companies. Single payer would save New Yorkers \$28 billion a year by 2019 compared to the individual mandate system enacted by Congress last March, according to a 2009 study financed by NYS but ignored by the Democrats and Republicans.

The Greens support full access to reproductive health care for everyone.

6.Do/Will you support abstinence only education? Why or why not?

No. Sex education must include a full discussion and support for birth control.

7.Youth violence is the second leading cause of death among young people; what other community led or other youth violence prevention and intervention programs do you support?

If there are none in existence - what programs will you create and support?

We have to redress the adverse conditions that foster youth alienation, hopelessness, and violence, including poverty, under-resourced and under-served schools, youth unemployment, lack of youth-oriented recreational and cultural programs, racial profiling by police, and racial bias in the criminal justice system. Our Green New Deal including full employment and fully funded schools and colleges will help address these adverse conditions. The public services employing unemployed people in the public jobs program should include staffing of athletic, cultural, and other recreational programs after-school, evenings, and weekends in the schools, parks, and community centers. In addition, programs specifically aimed at violence prevention and crisis intervention should be fully funded.

8. Do you support giving subsidies to the fossil fuel industry? Why or why not? And do you take campaign contributions from the fossil fuel industry?

No. No. No.

The Greens support a rapid conversion to a carbon-free economy in 10 years by urgent and massive investments in renewable energy, energy conservation, mass transit, and green buildings.

We oppose cap and trade as a Wall Street scam to skim off commissions and speculative profits that will do little to curb carbon emissions because market volatility makes investments in renewables and efficiency risky, as experience with the European carbon market has shown. We did support a carbon tax rising over time to create stable, predictable market signals that will make carbon-free alternatives cost-effective. One portion of the revenues of the carbon tax will be rebated to consumers on a per capita basis to minimize the impact of rising energy costs on working and middle class households and the other portion used for public investments in the transition to a carbon-free energy system.

We reject the notion that natural gas is a bridge to the renewable future. That bridge is out and if we take that path we will over the cliff of climate catastrophe. Natural gas is a dirty fossil fuel. If hydrofracking for natural gas is allowed in New York State, it will threaten our valuable abundant clean water supplies as well as contribute to global warming. The Greens support a permanent ban on hydrofracking, not the temporary moratorium the Democrats are advocating to get them through this election, write regulations, and allow “regulated” hydrofracking to proceed next year.

We accept no contributions from corporations – and certainly not from the fossil fuel industry.