

Helen Tai

PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES DISTRICT 178

SISTER DISTRICT POLICY SCORECARD

This candidate has pledged commitment to the following statements:

- ✓ We must protect a **woman's right to choose** the health care and reproductive services she wants and needs.
- ✓ We need to protect and expand our **social safety net**, not dismantle it.
- ✓ We should pursue **common-sense gun safety** policies, consistent with the Second Amendment and local community standards and needs, which vary from community to community.
- ✓ Climate change is real and we need to **protect our environment**.

TIMELINE & VOTER INFO

Election Day: November 6, 2018

Last day to register:

30 days prior to Election Day. Pennsylvania has online voter registration: register.votespa.com

Vote by mail: Must [apply for absentee ballots](#).

Voter IDs: Not required.

Nested Congressional Districts: 1

PAST RESULTS

2016 Presidential Election

Hillary Clinton (D)	18,437	46.82%
Donald Trump (R)	19,688	50%

2016 State House Election

Democrat:	15,021	38.93%
Republican:	23,567	61.07%

Cook Partisan Voting Index

1=R+1



BACKGROUND

Helen Tai was elected as State Representative of the 178th Legislative District by a 96-vote margin in a historic special election on May 15, 2018. As a public servant, business owner and community volunteer, Helen Tai is committed to partnering with people and organizations to find common sense solutions.

After winning the special, Helen resigned her position on the Solebury Township board of supervisors, where she had served for 4 1/2 years. Solebury residents appreciated her regular communications, bringing transparency to the township government, her ability to bring people together and her effectiveness in addressing local issues, such as keeping water clean and safe and eliminating government waste.

Building on her two decades of experience partnering with organizations and people to reach their goals, 10 years ago she started Enabling Innovation, LLC, a consulting firm that uses proven business improvement methodologies to drive transformational innovation. She continues to lead that company today.

Previously she was at Johnson & Johnson's consumer products division, where she trained and coached senior management in developing and implementing business vision, mission, and strategies, led global process improvement projects, and worked as a statistician. She also worked at other companies, including G.D. Searle and Company and Information Resources, Inc.

With a fourth degree black belt in the martial art of aikido, Helen and her husband founded Fearless Heart Aikido in New Hope, where they teach their students the philosophy and wisdom of aikido.

Additionally, she is a long-time Penn State Master Gardener volunteer, who educates the public about best practices in sustainable horticulture and environmental stewardship.

Born and raised in Detroit and the surrounding area, the daughter of Chinese immigrants earned her bachelor of science in statistics from the University of Michigan and a masters of arts in statistics from Penn State.

Before calling Solebury home in 2000, she lived and worked in a variety of places, in the U.S. and abroad including China and the Philippines.

Helen and her husband of nearly 30 years, sculptor John McDevitt, are frequently seen walking on the towpath with their dog Cosmo.

ON THE ISSUES

GOVERNMENT REFORM

I believe it is completely inappropriate for legislators to use their office to enrich themselves. Thus, I wholeheartedly support Governor Wolf's proposed ethics rules and would introduce legislation to make them law. Indeed, I would go further in reforming what the Bucks County Courier Times described as "the most corrupt legislature in the nation."

In addition to banning all gifts to public officials, and "no budget, no pay" for state lawmakers who can't pass a budget for the state, I support ending gerrymandering of state legislative districts, reducing the size of the legislature, shedding light on "dark money" by requiring all political ads to identify the persons or corporations providing

the funds for them, and preventing bills with substantial popular support from being bottled up in committees forever.

Gerrymandering, by either party, makes a travesty of our democracy as it allows elected officials to choose their voters rather than voters choosing their elected officials. I favor establishing an independent commission that draws district lines based on the criteria of equal population, compactness, and non-division of counties or municipalities wherever possible. "Dark money" ads are those which hide behind labels, like "Americans for Prosperity," to publish propaganda and often falsehoods for or against candidates. I would require all such ads to identify the actual sources of money behind the ads, whether it be the Koch Brothers or George Soros.

Finally, I will not be taking per diems or a taxpayer funded car.

ENVIRONMENT

Because the federal government is either rolling back or not enforcing many existing environmental protections, it is more important than ever that Pennsylvania step up with fair laws and do everything to protect and preserve our land, the air, and water.

We must ensure that we don't go back to the days when industry felt free to pour pollutants into the air we breathe and dump toxins into the water. We should also encourage clean energy, not only because we don't want to leave our children a host of problems that we created, but also because it makes economic sense: clean energy means jobs.

Among all of the environmental issues we face, fracking is of the most immediate concern. All residents of the 178th legislative district get their water from the ground or from the Delaware River, with 80% of the water supply for Northampton Township coming from the Delaware River via the Bucks County Water and Sewer facility at Point Pleasant. The biggest by-product of fracking is the residue of the chemicals pumped into and out of the ground. As a result, we need to prevent fracking from occurring in the Delaware River basin and ensure that chemical waste produced elsewhere does not end up in the Delaware

or any place where it could contaminate our drinking water.

EDUCATION

Helen believes that all children deserve a high-quality education. While good progress has been made under the administration of Democrat Tom Wolf, who restored \$1 billion in funding cuts made under the previous Republican administration, much more needs to be done to make sure our children and young adults have the education and skills they need to succeed in the 21st century.

Of particular importance are increased funding for Pre-K education to ensure all children are ready to learn and investments in career training and apprenticeships for those who don't go to college. Strengthening our higher education generally will ensure that more students stay in Pennsylvania once they graduate, thus attracting new businesses and expanding our economy overall. When the economy expands, so does the revenue to fund these investments.

The system for funding education in Pennsylvania must be fair to every child if our dream of a high-quality education for all is to be achieved. Currently, the state government spends too little on education, leading to a near-total reliance on property taxes, which are onerous for many. While proposals to eliminate all property taxes would threaten that predictable revenue stream, property-tax reform is clearly needed to make the financing of our schools more equitable. Compounding the issue is the penchant of the state to pass unfunded mandates that fall on the local government to finance.

The bottom line: we need to increase state funding to pay for mandates they impose and to eliminate large inequities in the system.

HEALTHCARE

Everyone, no matter their age, sex, or income level, deserves access to affordable health care, which is threatened by the Trump administration's attempts to dismantle both the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid. To ensure the best health outcomes for our children, adequate funding for prenatal care and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) should be universally provided.

Women, and especially older women, are particularly hard-hit when access to health care is threatened because 60% of Pennsylvania residents over 70 are female. Younger women are unfairly targeted when state legislators vote to undermine a woman's right to choose. Helen strongly supports the work of Planned Parenthood and will work hard to ensure that every woman retains the right to make her own decisions about her reproductive health, in consultation with her physician.

FAIR PAY

Helen believes that all workers should be paid equitably for the work they do and supports the recent increase in overtime pay for hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvania workers. In addition to improving the lives of so many who are struggling to make ends meet, increasing the minimum wage and overtime rates will improve the state's economy by reducing employee turnover, creating more competitive salaries, and keeping more high-paying jobs in the state. It will also pump more money right back into the economy.

For those currently unemployed or under-employed, Helen believes the state must help create good-paying jobs, ensure that its citizens are trained for those jobs, and pay people who hold those jobs fairly.

With regard to equitable pay for Pennsylvania women, in 2016 their median earnings were just 79% of those of men. While efforts at the federal level to rectify this are stalled, our state legislature can enact laws to make sure equal pay laws are applied to all businesses in the state, employers compensate men and women equitably for jobs that are comparable if not identical, and all employees are protected from intentional and unintentional discrimination.

BUDGET

Helen supports and will introduce legislation that if the legislature doesn't pass a balanced budget, they don't get paid.

Helen has spent much of her life helping individuals and organizations become more effective and efficient and believes there is always room for improving how our tax dollars are spent. But she is also a realist and knows that spending cuts and efficiencies alone are not the answer to

our budget mess. To fix our fiscal problems, we must also look to increasing revenue.

There is also a large source of untapped money that Pennsylvania leaves on the table every year—revenue from the gas that is being extracted from our land. The state’s Fiscal Office estimates that Pennsylvania’s effective tax rate on gas is lower than all but one other gas-producing state. As a result, we are losing hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue. According to the Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center, a severance tax could raise enough revenue to cover 20% or more of our budget shortfall. One of Helen’s top priorities will be to help form a coalition from both parties to pass a gas extraction tax.

GUN SAFETY

Because of the failed leadership in Harrisburg, a myriad of gun safety bills are stuck in committees and not coming to the floor of the House for debate. There is a bill implementing universal background checks for gun purchases (HB1400), a bump stock ban (HB1872), a bill banning terrorists from purchasing weapons (HB528), and so many other commonsense reforms that are being blocked by the politicians in Harrisburg. The children, parents and grandparents who live in Bucks County deserve those reforms.

Helen supports the rights of individual gun ownership and the right to self-defense provided for by the 2nd Amendment AND she also supports common-sense legislation that protects the public. Therefore, Helen would make the following a priority :

- Preventing known and suspected terrorists, those convicted of violent hate crimes and those with a history of domestic abuse from legally buying guns,
- Ensuring that background checks are required on all gun sales, including online and at gun shows.
- Preserving the provisions of the Pennsylvania Instant Check System (PICS) which provides instant access to background records,
- Funding research into the effects of gun violence and gun safety technology,

- Banning the sale of bump stocks, assault weapons and high capacity magazines

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Governor Wolf has stated that opioid addiction is “the worst public health crisis in Pennsylvania,” and the federal government has declared it a national emergency. Pennsylvania has the eighth highest number of opioid-related deaths in the nation, and in Bucks County alone, there were 185 such deaths in 2016.

Efforts by Governor Wolf and the legislators have done a lot to fight this scourge by:

- Ensuring the opioid-reversal drug Naloxone (Narcan) is available to all residents;
- Funding drug courts so addicts are given a chance to turn their lives around instead of being condemned to a life of crime and addiction;
- Creating Centers of Excellence, which ensure comprehensive referral services for those seeking treatment; and
- Establishing a prescription drug-monitoring program to help physicians and providers monitor drug usage and cut down on the spread of opioids by prescription.

While these programs are effective and essential, we need to do more to target the causes of addiction, fight the spread of the drugs, and provide resources for abusers seeking treatment. Specifically, Helen advocates for:

- Programs that improve Social Emotional Skills in childhood
- Better control of the availability of prescription pain medications.
- Protecting and expanding Medicaid because it is the biggest treatment resource for the vast majority of addicts who do not have other medical coverage.
- Safeguarding the provisions under the Affordable Care Act that require insurers to provide substance abuse coverage.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT & TRAFFIC

As a supervisor in Solebury, Helen has consistently supported its land preservation program, which is recognized as a model, locally, statewide and nationally. Over its many years, this program has resulted not only in preserving Solebury's rural character and reducing traffic, but also in keeping overall property taxes the fourth lowest in the county. In fact, for every dollar spent on preservation, approximately \$3 are saved in school taxes. Where development is appropriate, any adverse impacts must be minimized by making accommodations for additional traffic, ensuring that existing properties are not affected by stormwater run-off, and making sure that groundwater is recharged.

The residents of Solebury originated the land preservation program, and Helen believes that local residents generally know best how to direct their future, through zoning, stormwater, agricultural soils protection, and other tools. Because the state grants this power to local residents, it can also take that power away. As your state representative, Helen will work to ensure that the principal that local jurisdictions are generally in the best position to decide land use issues is enshrined in the Municipal Planning Code. She will also work hard to ensure that the state provides the authority and resources to local jurisdictions to address issues like traffic and overdevelopment.

ENDORSEMENTS

Elected & Public Officials:

US Vice President Joe Biden
Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf
US Senator Jeff Merkley (Blue Wave Project)
Former Maryland Governor and 2016 presidential candidate Martin O'Malley
Former US Congressman & Acting Army Secretary Patrick Murphy
New Hope Solebury School Board Director Deirdre Alderfer
Upper Makefield Township Supervisor Kris Ballerini
Solebury Township Supervisor Noel Barrett
Solebury Township Supervisor Mark Baum Baicker
Council Rock School Board Director Denise Brooks
State Representative (141st AD) Tina Davis
Former New Hope Boro Councilwoman Geri

Delevich
Former New Hope Boro Police Corporal Frank DeLuca
Bucks County Controller Neale Dougherty
Former Upper Makefield Township Supervisor Betsy Falconi
State Representative (140th AD) John Galloway
Former Solebury Township Supervisor Patricia Knight
Former Solebury Township Supervisor Dennis Mankin
Bucks County Commissioner Diane Ellis-Marseglia
Solebury Township Supervisor Robert McEwan
New Hope Boro Tax Collector Liz Miles
Solebury Township Supervisor Kevin Morrissey
Bucks County Prothonotary Judi Reiss
Bucks County Recorder of Deeds Robin Robinson
Northampton Township Supervisor Dr. Kimberly Rose
Former State Representative Steve Santarsiero
Former New Hope Boro Council President Bill Scandone
New Hope Solebury School Board Director Dana Schwartz
New Hope Solebury School Board Director Liz Sheehan
Former Solebury Township Supervisor Bill Tinsman
State Representative (31st AD) Perry Warren
Former Solebury Township Supervisor Ruth Ann Wilson

Unions & Organizations:

IBEW 269
International Union of Operating Engineers Local 542
Northeast Regional Council of Carpenters
Pennsylvania AFL-CIO
Pennsylvania State Education Association
Plumbers Local 690
SEIU Pennsylvania State Council
Sprinkler Fitters 692
Teamsters Local 830 and Teamsters Joint Council 53
Transport Workers Union Local 234
UFCW 1776
90for90.org
Ascend PAC
Americans for Democratic Action Southeast PA
Association of Pennsylvania State College & University Faculties

Conservation Voters of PA
Daily Kos
Emily's List
Equality Pennsylvania and Equality PA PAC
Flippable
Humane PA
Keystone Progress
MoveOn
PennEnvironment
Planned Parenthood Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania State Education Association
Represent PAC
Sierra Club, Pennsylvania Chapter
Southeast Pennsylvania National Organization for Women PAC
178th Assembly District Democratic Organization
Indivisible Lambertville New Hope

ABOUT THE OPPONENT:

Republican Wendi Thomas is running against Helen Tai in the 2018 General Election. Thomas lost to Tai in the special election held in May 2018 by 96 votes.

ABOUT THE DISTRICT

The 178th Pennsylvania House of Representatives District is located in Bucks County and includes the following areas:

- New Hope
- Northampton Township
- Solebury Township
- Upper Makefield Township
- Wrightstown Township

WHY IS THIS RACE IMPORTANT?

All 203 seats in the General Assembly (GA) are up for election in 2018. Republicans control 119 seats of 203 seats, and have controlled the GA since 2011. 18 seats in the GA voted for Clinton, but are represented by a GOP legislator.

Pennsylvania has been critical to the "Blue Wall," of Democratic Presidential candidates and up until 2016, had voted Democrat since 1988.

Pennsylvania is an important place to engage new voters and winback old Democratic voters who veered into Trump's camp due to his "support," for unions and trade protection.

Pennsylvania has many legacy industries and strong unions in coal, steel, and energy extraction. Pennsylvania's legislature, due to its geographic location and population size, has a lot of responsibility for environmental quality issues such as Great Lakes health and Chesapeake Bay Health. Pennsylvania also has very important Congressional, Senate, and Statewide elections in 2018 where they'll be choosing AGs, Governors (D-Incumbent), Senator (D-incumbent), and Congressional representatives.

Lastly, and most importantly, Trump won PA by a mere 70k votes out of over 6 million votes cast. Had Democrats been able to overcome this narrow margin—and even narrower margins in Michigan and Wisconsin—we may not have a Trump presidency. The path to 270 in 2020 starts with Democratic gains in our Blue Wall states in 2018.

REDISTRICTING IN PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania's legislative and congressional districting is a masterclass in partisan gerrymandering. The Pennsylvania State Supreme Court struck down multiple GOP-led Congressional redistricting maps due to their gerrymander. The State Supreme Court finally approved a map for PA's congressional districts.

CANDIDATE LINKS

Website: www.helentai.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/giveemhelentai

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/giveemhelentai>

SDP ActBlue: <https://secure.actblue.com/donate/sdp-pa-tai>