

On October 9, 2020, the Bucks-Mont Collaborative, Pennsylvania Health Access Network, and Public Citizens for Children + Youth hosted a virtual Congressional Candidate's Forum for the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> congressional districts, engaging candidates on safety net and health and human service issues. The forum was moderated by Sandra Shea, managing editor, opinion for the Philadelphia Inquirer.

**Participating Candidates:**

- Candidate Christina Finello, 1st District
- Congresswoman Madeleine Dean, 4th District
- Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon, 5th District

**Invited but not attending:**

- Candidate Kathy Barnette, 4th District
- Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick, 1st District
- Candidate Dasha Pruett, 5th District

**Questions and Candidate Responses:**

- 1. In your first 90 days, please tell us what priorities, programs or policies you would support to help advance racial equity, and how will you invite nonprofit engagement in this work?**

**Congresswoman Madeleine Dean:** What my priorities will be in the first 90 days will continue to be the priorities I've stood for and values and issues that I have championed and care about for the last 10 years. First as a state representative for six and a half years and now in this one hundred and sixteen Congress, I look forward to the chance to get to the one hundred and seventeen Congress, along with Mary Gay Scanlon and Christina Finello, to work on issues that matter most to our families. This is a time of a pandemic. Number one, we have to get our arms around the public health of this country so that we will stop losing lives through a pandemic. Were the two hundred and twelve thousand people dead of COVID? We need to pay attention to the science, invest in resources, testing and tracing and the rest. And I look forward to the day when we have therapies and vaccines. So I guess COVID would tell you that I care very desperately about health care, that we have universal health care. Number two, education. Look at our children struggling to get their education. I'm a former teacher, so I care desperately about how our children are educated, that they are educated well and save the economy and jobs and infrastructure. We passed H.R. 2, a robust infrastructure package. We need to invest in our communities, other issues. I care very deeply about our environment, the epidemics of gun violence and the epidemic of opioid addiction, and I guess I'll end with the notion of the umbrella to it all is ethics and good government. We have to fight for ethics and good government. That's why I was very happy to be a part of the passage of H.R. one, which is about good government, clean elections, transparency.

**Candidate Christina Finello:** Listen, all excellent organizations that know how important it is that we work together to make sure that individuals in our community are able to thrive. When I got this invitation to speak today, I was so thrilled with my work in before I began my run for Congress here in Pennsylvania's 1st District, I was working as a deputy director of Bucks County Housing and Human Services, and that was one of the best things I've ever done in my life, working with community organizations, working on issues that are so important, things that we deal with every day and to work in the community in which I grew up. I lived and worked in Bucks County my entire life to be able to work in the community. That's given me so much and can give hope to get back to the people that I serve is what really been one of the greatest honors working for and doing that work with many, many of you. On the phone, on the Zoom

today, we worked hand in hand to work on issues to make sure that people in our community thrive. And that is the same things that I will be bringing to Washington, D.C., when I hope to be elected as the first congresswoman from District 1. You know, it's about making sure that what happens at the federal level has the impacts that we want it to. Down here on the local level, we know that everyone is struggling right now because of the pandemic. The pandemic has drawn us into such such disarray, and it's been having us make hard choices, know we're on the mom of three small children. We're home schooling our children right now. We've had to make choices that we shouldn't have had to make because of what's happened with this administration and downplaying this pandemic. But when I get to Congress, I look forward to working with folks like Congresswoman Dean and Congresswoman Scanlon. I'm working on such important issues around health care, making sure that persons have the health care that they need, that health care is not to be ripped away because of a preexisting condition. There are so many things that we need to work on. But I think what's important to keep in mind is we have to make sure we meet the needs of the community in any of the work.

**Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon:** I really appreciate being there with you. And I've worked with PCCY since I was at the Education Law Center for a decade. You're all working on the issues that are closest to my heart, which are children and families and really what I like to think of as the fundamentals. I mean, how do and that's what I guess moving forward to your question about the first 90 days, it is going to be a continuation of the work that I've been doing for my entire adult life, which is the fundamentals. It's voting. I mean, civics and voting. If we don't have a robust election protection and fair elections, nothing else gets done. That's why it was so important that we passed H.R. one. That's why we're all working so hard right now to make sure that every person's ballot counts and that everyone can vote safely. So one of the first priorities probably is going to be passing H.R. one again in the new Congress and in particular towards racial equity, making sure that we pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Act. What has happened to our country in the last decade with the incursions upon voting rights, with a disproportionate impact on communities of color is just appalling. And we've even seen it here in Pennsylvania with First District Voter I.D. law. Then the crazy gerrymandering, which still impacts our state and local sorry, so much more. You're hitting the issues that I'm very passionate about, personal security, whether from homelessness, hunger, violence or health issues and opportunity, education and economic opportunity. So with all of that nonprofit engagement, that's who I've worked with over my whole career. So that's why I've been going to in Congress, the three of the bills that I passed, we developed entirely with support from our non-profit community campaign finance bill that I passed, the disability benefits bill and Bill, addressing the abuse of children out at Glen Mills.

2. **It's been 37 years since the Reagan Administration's "A Nation at Risk" report sparked education reforms across the country. It's also been close to 25 years since President Clinton proposed massive new federal investments to make child care more accessible and affordable for working families. Yet, here we are in 2020 with two underfunded insufficient systems that are failing both our kids and families. Do you support a substantial increase in Title 1 funding to adequately support our schools and a significant investment from the federal government to ensure there is enough funding for universal affordable high-quality child care for working families? If so, how do you plan to get this done while in Congress?**

**Candidate Christina Finello:** Thank you for that question. And these are two issues that are very, very serious. I mean, with this pandemic, this industry, the child care industry, there are essential workers. Child care workers are essential workers in this industry is truly harmed by this pandemic. As the mom of two daughters and for a time before I get some more bad news for the U.S. child care system and its expensive child care is expensive for a working mom. And I can't imagine for single moms out there, women bear the burden and a lot of a lot of the economic disparities in our lives and know that child care is a huge barrier for working women and women's lives need to be able to go through the workforce. So I think this is an incredibly important issue. Education, the same education is incredibly important. We have to make sure that our schools are adequately funded. We have to make sure that our teachers have the resources that we need because the children need to have the resources that they need to have a high quality education. There was a there was a bill passed in the House that I thought was very critical to this issue, particularly around child care. And the child care is essential. And I think that is something that is should be looked at again, because any new stimulus package has to have more funding for child care providers. I also support measures like universal pre-K. I think that's incredibly important. Education is really the lifeline for so many children in our communities, particularly those in low income communities. If I didn't have an education that somebody like me did not have an education, we wouldn't have the opportunities that we have. So we have to make sure that everyone has access to a quality education right from the start, regardless of where they live.

**Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon:** Well, if it wasn't apparent before and of course it was the coronavirus pandemic has exposed the serious, serious problem our country has without having affordable child care and adequate public education. I mean, the pandemic is laid bare so many of our officials, but this one is the biggest one holding the country back. So just to peel off the public education thing, of course, I support more Title one funding. I was a school board member for a decade. I worked at the Education Law Center for an overlapping decade. I mean, it's something I feel very strongly about. I also think we should fully fund the idea, as was promised when it passed over 40 years ago. That would be huge in Pennsylvania in terms of leveling the playing field across the districts because so much cost goes into enforcing that right to public education. But I am very grateful to PCCY for its reporting, its reports that it released last fall, Underwater, that focused on Delaware County and how families here by and large are underwater at the end of every month because of the cost of child care and housing. And so I cite this report all the time in our hearings. And when we're looking at what we need to do next, as Christine mentioned, we have to pass some bills in Congress recently. I mean, the CARES Act actually got through and added money for child care. And now that you're exactly that, another seven billion to backstop what's going on right now and then add funding to moving forward on health care is essential act and the Child Care for Economic Recovery Act. Both were led by Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, who with hopefully will be head of the Appropriations Committee in the next Congress, is a passionate advocate for child care and support from Boston, who is in leadership is also there. So we've got some good building blocks. I'd also support a refundable child care credit, child tax credit, which is going to also assist with all of these issues. So we have good allies. We've got we've been able to make headway in this Congress with respect to addressing child care issues. But there's obviously a long way to go, but it's the only way we get out of the current recession. And I think that it's very important to provide that.

**Congresswoman Madeleine Dean:** I echo what the other two women have talked about to support a much more robust funding for education, one for a so that we live up to the promise

of our Constitution. I was a state representative for six and a half years in the Pennsylvania Constitution, says every child in this commonwealth has the right to a thorough and efficient education. What I found as a state representative in the minority sitting on appropriations was that in our budget, we didn't always reflect that value. I found that we inadequately put resources toward education and we inequitably put resources toward education. But I think we have to do is reimagine if we invest more in education, I'm certain that it's going to be key to many of the other issues and ills that face our country. As Mary pointed out, so many of these fault lines exposed grievously as a result of a pandemic. Education is among them. So I support universal pre-K, quality day care and pre-K. More money for Headstart. The care sector designates seven hundred and fifty million dollars more to early childhood education. I introduced a bill which is called Restore America's Main Street, which would be direct liquidity to the smallest of businesses are not placed in direct liquidity, and many of those small businesses are gatekeepers. So I think it's not only the constitutional right thing to do, it is the morally right thing to do and certainly how we educate our children, not just their future, but our own. And I say that as a mom and as a grandma, we have to rethink how we educate our kids and put our money where our mouth is.

3. **Health care in America is under attack again. We've had the best advance and health care team and the last administration, but it's health care. Access to health care today is critical. There is a patchwork system that currently leaves twenty seven million people uninsured and tens of millions more underinsured and high co-pays, high prescription drugs and other expenses. With the Affordable Care Act being challenged in the Supreme Court. And if it is found to be unconstitutional, what will you do to protect access to quality, affordable health insurance for everyone who needs?**

**Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon:** Well, as we've seen with the pandemic, all of the gaps in our health care are really being exposed in my district, we've been particularly focused on the impact on communities of color because they don't have access to the testing and more at the front lines. So it's exacerbating an already bad situation. The Supreme Court case is the culmination of a debt, not a on an attack upon the Affordable Care Act. Now, it's been a death by a thousand cuts strategy. If the Supreme Court were to move to invalidate the ACA, it's obviously devastating for tens of millions of Americans. But it's because it was the individual mandate was unfunded. That's the only wedge they have right now to force this declaration that it might be unconstitutional. So if that happens, I think the first thing we do is we move in Congress to reauthorize a new version to fund that mandate, to repair much of the damage that has been done, things like reinsurance pools and such that is driven up the cost because they've been eliminated over the last few years. So there's a repairing and then how do we move forward? Because what the Affordable Care Act is done has forged a man and a mandate, a first in America for universal health care. We still have a lot of arguments going on between people of goodwill about exactly how we get there, but we have a good basis to expand it. So if the Supreme Court does this, then we immediately do what happened last time Congress tried to eliminate the Affordable Care Act and might I add, without a plan to replace it, we need to flood everyone's office, all the elected officials offices, both sides of the aisle, with calls, with contact, because the American people want universal health care. Now, we just have to make sure that all of Congress knows that.

**Congresswoman Madeleine Dean:** Well, I want to say something, and certainly I echo everything that Representative Scanlon just spoke about, but let's recognize this is not normal.

We are in the midst of a global pandemic and we have an administration that for the past four years has been in effort to tear down the Affordable Care Act without a single proposal for a replacement. If they think it's so lousy, why wouldn't they put their best minds to a better system of health care? Should be universal. Health care should be considered an absolute right. And we have to make sure that everyone equitably. We're not doing that in this country. And so what has the president decided he wants to ram through a Supreme Court nominee so that someone will be seated at the table when the Affordable Care Act comes before the Supreme Court on November the 10th? Can you imagine the cruelty of making people unsure whether or not they will have health care, whether pre-existing conditions will be covered, whether they're young adults will remain on their policy? How about those who have had covid they will now have a pre-existing condition? How about women? We can be considered a pre-existing condition under the old laws. I agree with Mary Kay Scanlan that what will happen if somehow this administration is successful in doing any harm to the Affordable Care Act will be that Congress will robustly and quickly come back with new legislation to protect America's families? We have to think of ways to make health care better. We have to think of ways to make health care for everyone. And one way to do that would be to expand a public option. That's something that I support. Some of the other things that we have passed in Congress is a way to reduce prescription drug pricing. But again, I just want to point out, this is not normal. We're in a pandemic with two hundred thousand plus people dead in this country and a president and an administration hoping to take away your health coverage.

**Candidate Christina Finello:** This is an issue that is particularly personal to me when I hear about the things that are happening and the congresswoman kind of told you why we are where we are so eloquently. Let me just add that this is this is not normal times. This pandemic has devastated us. But even more so than that when you have an administration that their priorities are already and I mean and this is this is how this is how disgusting this is to take away health care. This was on their agenda from day one, was to take away health care from individuals. And let's think and let me tell you about where we are with this, why we're here, that the tax or the Trump tax bill that not only benefits the wealthiest and corporations, but also is the basis for that lawsuit that the congresswoman spoke about in the Supreme Court that if a congressperson voted for that tax bill, they voted with the intent to take away health care from millions of individuals with preexisting conditions. My opponent was one of those individuals who voted to take away health care. And that is where we are at. And I have and I have experience with this when I was pregnant with my daughter. They told me that my pregnancy might be considered a pre-existing condition and they were going to take away my health care and I didn't know what I was going to do. So when I hear folks telling me in the district, when I talk to them and they say how afraid they are because health care is under attack, I know exactly what they're thinking. I know exactly what they're going through. This I've been there myself. That fear, that anxiety. We cannot you know, this happens if this happens. And the Supreme Court day one, and I hope to be in there and Congress working with these five women on this call because day one, the priority has to be making sure that we expand and protect those protections in the ACA. We have to make sure people have the health care that they need. People like my daughter, who was also for the preexisting condition, people in this district won three hundred thousand people. They need their health care to thank you.

4. **With the US incarceration rate the highest in the world and with most of those incarcerated people returning to the general population, what will you do**

- to support inmate services to help them heal from the psychological trauma and mental illness so prevalent among them
- and, upon release, to support successful re-entry into society by removing the barriers to success (housing, job acquisition, transportation, and more) to build safer communities, healthier individuals and families, and reduce recidivism.

**Moderator:** And each one has an hour to answer this question. I know we're going to know you probably need an hour. This is a very rich and multidimensional question, but it's also a rich topic. So two minutes each:

**Congresswoman Madeleine Dean:** First to read my mind. Sandra, how do you tackle all of this? Criminal justice reform is something that I have been working on and care deeply about since the time I was first trained as a lawyer. But certainly in the Pennsylvania House and now in Congress, I have the honor of serving alongside Mary Kate Scanlon on the Judiciary Committee. And this is one of the issues we've been working on. The George for Justice and Policing Act is a robust piece of criminal justice reform as well as policing reform. But in terms of reentry and in terms of our incarceration rate, what I have had the pleasure, really and honor of introducing alongside Elijah Cummings, the late Elijah Cummings was the promoting reentry through Education in Prisons, the act, which would ensure educational opportunities for inmates so they could successfully re-enter our communities after their sex. So often incarcerated people, if they participate in education programs, if they participate in rehabilitation programs and connections to housing and education and training, the recidivism rate drops. Dramatically, one of my passions that, as you may know, is tackling our opioid addiction crisis, so many of the folks who are incarcerated have struggled with substance abuse disorder. We have to make sure they are connected to recovery so that they can be successful upon reentry. That's something I'll continue to work on. Also, we have to decriminalize nonviolent small possession cases, which we know only disproportionately affects people of color, derailing them in their careers, derailing them from their connections to their family and raising their children. There's so much we can do. What I hope to get to start with Elijah Cummings, prepacked.

**Candidate Christina Finello:** Thank you so much, and Sandra stole my joke because that was going to be how much time do we have today? This now the issue is what I've been working on most of my professional career. My first job was at an extended internship at a federal correctional facility out in Springfield, Missouri, where I interviewed and perform psychological evaluations on incarcerated individuals in our federal system. And then I got the opportunity to return back home in Philadelphia where I was. There was a policy position created for me to be able to work on issues, on bolstering our relationship between the behavioral health system and the criminal justice system in Philadelphia. No, we weren't. We were able to work on bolstering services to our drug court, to our veterans court. We had in Philadelphia is one of the finest veterans courts in the nation and is a real model that courts should look to, to see how we help our veterans who come back, who sometimes get involved with our criminal justice system. We were the poster services to our mental health services in Philadelphia. So people get the care that they need and we continue that work. When I was able to work up here in Bucks County and I know I work with many partners and folks that are on this call today where we were working to make sure that we got continued funding to programs that we knew were for individuals that we knew, got them the services that they need. We also have to make sure that with the congresswoman saying and I know the work that her and Congresswoman Scanlon has

done, we have to make sure that we get continued funding for these types of programs, give formerly incarcerated persons job training, transportation, health care and other tools they need to reintegrate into society and thrive. We also know we have to do more to prioritize mental health and substance abuse, particularly in our community. We have to treat sex abuse and mental health at the same level of care and resources that we treat physical health. That is incredibly important. We need to ensure insurance coverage is available for mental health treatment and substance abuse treatment. Congress has to hold insurance companies accountable for providing a full coverage for mental and physical health.

**Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon:** Thank you. Yes, as with the others, we could go on at length about this. But I mean, what is so clear is that our prison system has become the repository for people who are not being served elsewhere, that it's being it's become a repository for people suffering from mental illness, from trauma, from abuse, from addiction, far from defending funding the criminal justice system. We have funded that at the expense of all these other social services, which could address these issues short of incarceration. So much of the work that I did as a pro bono attorney, a public interest attorney over decades had to do with this population, whether directly or indirectly. And they're wonderful examples of how we can address these things in our region. One of the model reentry courts in the country was started by two of our federal judges, Judge Restrepo and Judge Rice. So I represented folks in that reentry system and finding things like the fact that their licenses had been pulled in connection with criminal issues was preventing them from reentry, inability to get help, their inability to get housing. So all of those issues around the table, the school to prison pipeline as an education advocate, disrupting the school to prison pipeline and then mass incarceration under the Obama administration, the groundwork was laid for what became the first step act, which Congresswoman Dean and I were able to vote on this term. There's so many avenues to go. Support for Pell Grants is part of the reauthorization of the Pell Grants that prisoners can access is part of the reauthorization of the Higher Ed Act, the George Floyd bill, as was mentioned, to reduce incarceration. I had one success already this past term, which was great. We passed the Fair Opportunities for Seniors for Seniors Act as part of the Older Americans Act reauthorization, actually got it signed into law this term, which would allow access to benefits for seniors. Under that, they previously been excluded if they were former inmates. So we were able to get that passed through and provide relief for seniors. Many of the people who are coming out of jail are seniors because they've been incarcerated for so long because of these harsh laws that were put into effect with mandatory sentences.

5. **PA is facing a \$5B revenue shortfall, with states across the country facing fiscal crises. What priorities are you advancing to ensure that safety net programs and services remain available to address the needs of all residents?**

**Candidate Christina Finello:** Such an important question. I appreciate the time to be able to talk about it. For the last 10 years, I've worked to improve government systems for care delivery, first in Philadelphia County as their criminal justice policy coordinator and then as the deputy director of Bucks County Division of Housing and Human Services. I've gone through with budgets. I've had to make hard choices, but through all that I've had to work. Prided myself on working with our partners to have these crucial and hard conversations about how we make sure that we stretch every dollar to make sure that people have what they need to have the

resources that are available to them. When we have the resources come down to the federal government and the state government falling to the local government, very important to realize that a lot of times the locals have to make up that shortfall. There are sacrifices that have to be made, but we have to reorganize our priorities have to be reorganized. And we have to make sure that. People have what they need right now is coronavirus, as been mentioned before, I shine the light on things that we already knew was happening, that families were struggling, that their needs that they had, there's always been food insecurity. Unfortunately, there is always been shortfalls in places and not enough money to cover all the needs that we have. But now we see how prevalent this really is, and it's really important that one of my priorities going to Congress will be to make sure that the families that are struggling have immediate relief. My opponent voted against extending relief for hardworking families in the midst of this pandemic, voted against extending moratorium and foreclosure relief. And these are the things that people need at this moment. We have to make sure that the federal government steps up and allots additional money for state and local government. And when I'm in Congress, that would be my priority.

**Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon:** This is this is our last eight months of our lives is trying to make sure that we preserve the social safety net for everybody. And what's been so frustrating is that so much of the damage that has been done could have been avoided if our federal government, if the administration had taken the lead to make sure that the states and local government had the supplies they needed instead of pitting them against each other. If the Defense Production Act had been invoked, if there had been full blown administrative support for getting this relief out there. Instead, they have said, states, localities, you're on your own, figure it out, not my problem. And that's caused enormous costs, plus the continuing damage, which is limited revenue. So that is why we've been fighting so hard for passage of the Heroes Act. The Heroes Act, which passed the House. The Senate refuses to negotiate on it, meaningfully had a trillion in state and local funding. I met with mayors throughout my district about a month ago and they all said we need money to stay afloat because we're providing food and diapers and extra PPE and medical care to our residents because the federal government didn't do it. So it's it's so important we're going to keep fighting for that. I anticipate that a new administration would take a much more robust and immediate approach to this, and I look forward to that. But in the meantime, we're going to keep funding it or keep fighting for that funding and its funding for the local governments, its funding for essential services. And as Matt knows, we were out yesterday fighting for one of those essential services that requires funding the post office. We have a post office system that is being undermined by this administration and it's impacting receipt of people's medication. It's impacting our election. These are not normal times, as my colleagues have said.

**Congresswoman Madeleine Dean:** Well, thank you for the question. It is an essential question that Pennsylvania faces really a five point five billion dollar budget deficit. As I talked with Chairman of Appropriations Matt Radford, my former colleague, and as I said on appropriations at the Pennsylvania House for several sessions, wouldn't win. A state like Pennsylvania has a five point five billion budget hole through no fault of its own, through a global pandemic and an economic paralysis, the federal government must step up and guess what? We have and we had a partner in Fed Chairman Powell. But the recovery is incomplete. Through the CARES Act, we were able to take more than a billion dollars worth of resources and get them to Pennsylvania. But that still leaves us with a four point five billion dollar budget hole, as Mary Kay points out. And the Heroes Act, we sent nearly a trillion dollars and it was our ambition and our passage, which would have sent nearly a trillion dollars in relief to state and local government by Mitch



McConnell saying it's OK for states to go bankrupt. It's extraordinarily irresponsible statement because what does that reality look like? It looks like our schools are not supporting, our municipalities are not supporting. Our public health system is not supported. Social services is not supported by our police departments are literally defunded. So if anybody wants to talk about those issues, it is this Republican majority in the Senate that is refusing to send relief to our state and local government. What I have been trying to do, both legislatively and on my constituent services side, is to connect folks to the relief that they need to connect folks to their unemployment compensation, to their direct cash relief. The action from the Senate and the president during a time of a global pandemic. We know it was irresponsible. Pennsylvania families are hurting. Pennsylvania parents are worried about the education of their children. So what we need to do is, number one, get our hands around this pandemic, which is the president at the top has failed to do a number to boost our economy through federal support. Thanks.

[Final Question not asked]

6. We know that many people are benefitting from protection under the eviction moratorium right now. When this moratorium expires, possibly at the worst time of year, there will be significant human and financial impact faced by individuals directly, as well as challenges to landlords, property values and property tax revenue, and our larger community. What are your concerns and plans to address this issue proactively?

### Candidates' Closing Remarks

**Moderator:** I'm amazed that we have kept to pretty much on our time schedule. So thank you all for that. I'm going to now give the candidates a chance to share their closing remarks, but I'm also going to take advantage of the fact that I have the microphone now and I'm going to co-opt this a little bit. And I'm going to ask each candidate to do in your closing remarks is incorporate one element, and that is why should we remain optimistic that Congress is going to be a solution to these very huge and looming problems that we're all facing here? Because I think we've talked about problems all morning. You are all eager members up and running for Congress. So can you weave that into your closing remarks?

**Congresswoman Madeleine Dean:** I thank you and I think the forum for putting this together and giving us the opportunity to talk about things we care so much about, I am optimistic. So I'll end by closing remarks with a sense of optimism for the future, as dark as these days are now. I am very optimistic that this election cycle will bring forth robust voices by way of our efforts to redirect the direction of this country so that we, the people, will actually include all the people. Here's what gives me that optimism and I remind myself of it every day. We have a new majority in Congress on the one hundred sixty Congress, the most diverse Congress in our history, and it's a Democratic majority. Guess what happened with a Democratic majority, with diversity of women and gender and ethnicity, religion and everything. What happened is we passed some amazing bills. They happened to sit dead in a cynical Republican led Senate. But we have a robust Congress and we imagine and vote in some other members of the Senate. And we have a President Biden and a Vice President, Kamala Harris. Those good tools like H.R. one good government will move forward, H.R. five equality deals to structure H.R. eight, one that I care desperately about for the first time in 20 years, February a year ago, our Congress and our Judiciary Committee passed two bills to reduce gun violence in this country. It was a remarkable recovery. Remember, we went on and on with John Lewis recognizing that finally this Congress will do something about. But for now, we knew that the Republican led Senate won't do anything about it in a new Congress. These bills will pass the House again and they will pass the Senate really, and the president will sign them so that we'll be able to make sure that this 4th Congressional District has the protection of

its government, that we remind the rule of law that we will take care of our precious constitution for all. Thanks for the chance to be with you

**Candidate Christina Finello:** Thank you very much. And again, I thank you, Sandra and the other co-hosts of this event for allowing me some time to talk to folks about our campaign and what's important to our campaign. No, I can feel optimistic because here in congressional District one, the voters here have an opportunity to use their voice, to use their vote, to change their representation, to elect me to the office, to go down to Washington, to have their best interests at heart, not only to be an advocate for them, which they so desperately need, but to be a champion, to be a champion for those in our district who do not have a voice, for those who are long forgotten sometimes and for those who this pandemic has hit the worst, we are better when we help. Our most vulnerable citizens are better for it. And for myself, who has worked for many years in this industry, who is working hand in hand with many of the partners and many of the people that are on the scene today. It has been the privilege of my life to be able to work in public service, to work in the community that has given me so much. And the people of Congressional District One had the opportunity to use their voice, to use their vote, to elect me, to put me into office as their representative, to make sure that they have somebody in myself that will go down to Washington and never forget where they came from, understand the struggles that they go through and make sure that critical legislation is passed. And you come back here to that. We have this place district and all families and individuals can thrive. It would be my honor and privilege to serve you. And I appreciate the opportunity to get to ask for your vote and hope that I can do right by you, just like I tried to do right by fellow members of my community for all these years. Thank you very much.

**Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon:** Thank you. And I do want to thank the forum for providing the opportunity to take a break from the overwhelming and endless news cycle, which seems to be about every 30 seconds on this morning and talk about the issues that matter and is an integrated and holistic way know and especially for recognizing that complex problems that we're facing that we really need to tackle can't be solved in many different ways and that they do take work and they do take. Mission building, you know, that I share, but we came in with is amazing, so many people who were successful in a variety of ways, non profit with small businesses in public health. Just right and amazing and such diverse backgrounds and providing us with the ability to do things like form the Black Maternal Health Caucus, first time in the history of this country to tackle one of the most pressing issues in our communities. So the good news is over the last two years, at least in the House, we've laid a lot of groundwork and we have really strong allies. The Senate has essentially been on break for two years, except for confirming every federal society member with a pulse. But the House has held hundreds and hundreds of hearings. We've passed over 700 bills into law, most of them with bipartisan support. One hundred and fifty of them have been signed into law. So most of those that didn't advance could have advanced under other presidencies, ones that aren't driven by polarization and pitting people against each other. You know, there are bills waiting to be passed to through the Senate, waiting to be signed into law that can move if we don't have a president who's jamming up the works. And we've seen that time and again when this president stays out of the way, legislation happens. So I am looking forward to seeing all these newly engaged folks in our political life get to the polls and start a new day. Thank you.

#### **Background on Hosting Organizations:**

**Bucks-Mont Collaborative** is a 501(c)3 membership organization comprised of more than 90 nonprofit organizations, school districts, hospitals, funders, and community-minded businesses. We cover Bucks and Montgomery Counties with the exception of Norristown and Pottstown. Our mission is to identify gaps in services and take steps to collaboratively solve problems that no one agency can achieve alone.

We celebrate 33 years of serving our communities. We aim to improve communities and strengthen nonprofits.

**PHAN (Pennsylvania Health Access Network)** is Pennsylvania's only statewide consumer-driven organization working to expand and protect access to high-quality, equitable, affordable healthcare for all Pennsylvanians. Since 2007, PHAN has brought together health care consumers and community organizations across the state to advocate for expanded access to health care in Pennsylvania. To achieve this, PHAN blends coalition-building and policy advocacy with our unique model of community health organizing that focuses on supporting and empowering consumers to get the treatment they need and become advocates for better healthcare in their local communities and statewide.

**PCCY (Public Citizens for Children + Youth)** works to improve the lives of our region's children by developing initiatives and advocating for quality health care, child care, public education and family stability. Childhood is fleeting, there are no do-overs. That's why with one hand, PCCY offers direct help to children – one at a time; and with the other hand we apply pressure to government officials to persuade them to do what is necessary to give every child the basic ingredients for a lifetime of success.