

# 2026 PA 3rd Congressional District Questionnaire

5th Square is Philadelphia's urbanist political action committee. Our mission is to achieve a more accessible, sustainable, and equitable Philadelphia for all residents through better mobility, public space, and planning policies.

Please refer us to any work you have done on these topics in your answers, if applicable. If you have any questions or would like clarification, please email us at [5thsq@5thsq.org](mailto:5thsq@5thsq.org)

Responses to our policy questions will be published on our website -- we will not publish contact info and financial data. If you would like us to include a photo with your response, please email it to us at [5thsq@5thsq.org](mailto:5thsq@5thsq.org)

**⚠ DEADLINE: Sunday April 5th, 2026 at 11:59 PM. Only candidates who complete this questionnaire are eligible for a 5th Square endorsement.**

## Candidate introduction

Name as it will appear on the ballot: \*

Chris Rabb

Campaign Committee Name & Address: \*

Rabb for Congress , PO BOX 4961 PHILADELPHIA, PA 19119

Campaign Website: \*

chrisrabb.com

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Candidate introduction (background, motivation for running, relevant experience): \***

I am a native of Chicago, having lived in the Mt. Airy neighborhood of Philadelphia for nearly 25 years. I am a proud father to two sons. I am a long-time genealogist and family historian who for over 30 years has traced the footprints of my ancestors, most notably my great-great-grandfather, Rev. Amos Noë Freeman, who was a radical Presbyterian minister, educator and abolitionist who worked with the Philadelphia Vigilance Committee in the fight against slavery starting in the 1830s.

I was first elected in 2016 as a progressive, anti-establishment underdog who beat a Democratic machine-backed frontrunner. I have represented Pennsylvania's 200th Legislative District in Northwest Philadelphia for five terms. The 200th is a majority-Black, economically diverse district with the highest Democratic turnout in the state, whose boundaries are entirely within the 3rd Congressional district. I am known for my deep commitment to working people, racial and economic justice, and advancing legislation that strengthens communities and protects the rights of all Pennsylvanians. I have authored over 100 pieces of bold, substantive progressive legislation and continuously been a fighter in the state house for equity and justice. I will not be seeking a sixth term in the PA legislature – the next term I will be serving as Philadelphia's movement representative in Congress.

I am running because I envision using this seat as a platform for disciplined, bold action. That means authoring and co-sponsoring legislation at the scale of our crises (eg, Medicare for All, transitioning to 100% renewable energy, guaranteed housing, a living wage for all, abolishing ICE & dismantling our immigrant concentration camps, ending imperialism, militarism and the prison industrial complex) because movements deserve champions who put real solutions on the table and force the debate. People's power doesn't come from committee chairs or seniority, it comes from a relentless constituency that makes it impossible to ignore the demands of working people.

Within the Democratic Party, I see progressives as responsible for stopping the dramatic slide toward corporate capture and complacency. I have historically been a force pushing back against party insiders in Philadelphia, holding them to account when they serve special interests over the needs of working Philadelphians. I have unapologetically pushed for reforms to democratize the party and expand civic engagement, such as open primaries and ranked choice voting. If we fail to challenge the establishment, we risk ceding ground to authoritarian forces who thrive on our despair and inaction. The job of progressives is to prove that there is another viable way forward. To build a party that serves the people who make this country work.

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**ROAD to Housing Act**

Do you support the ROAD to Housing Act? \*

Yes

No

Other: see below

Which parts of the bill do you think would be most helpful for increasing housing supply in Philadelphia and the collar counties? \*

I support and agree with the urgent need to rapidly build more housing but this bill, while maintaining bipartisan support, reflects the best of what an exceptionally Conservative Congress and national political ecosystem can accomplish. We need to do much better, including repealing the Faircloth Amendment and passing the Green New Deal for Public Housing; one of the ROAD to Housing Act's biggest shortfalls is that it offers too many loopholes to developers that would deepen existing environmental injustices and potentially create new ones.

The most helpful parts of the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act are the ones that expand material capacity to build, even if they operate through private capital's channels. That means (1) expanded and more flexible federal financing (FHA multifamily lending, LIHTC-related improvements, and gap financing tools) making stalled projects viable in weaker submarkets. Locally, we can look to competent developers and nonprofits bottomlining projects with better financing; (2) incentives tying federal funds to pro-housing policies, which will increase pressure on exclusionary suburbs to loosen zoning and allow multifamily development; and (3) resources for rehabilitation of aging housing stock, which is especially relevant in Philly's historical neighborhoods.

These houses cannot weather the increasing intensity of storms and local infrastructure failures. Every reasonable human being supports housing, this is the bottom of the moral barrel. This approach is simply riddled with contradictory reforms. They can increase units and relieve pressure on working-class tenants in the short term, but we still leave control of production and pricing in the hands of private capital. Under Ronald Reagan, federal housing policy moved away from direct public provision/social housing toward market-based subsidies, privatization, and reduced HUD budgets, reshaping the role of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development into a facilitator/collaborator with private capital rather than a builder!

You only need to walk the streets of Philadelphia to understand the results of this approach. The current bill largely continues that model: it expands financing tools, incentivizes private development, and tweaks existing programs, but does not restore large-scale federal commitment to building and owning social housing or materially decommodify housing. This literally translates into cities like Philadelphia taking on production of public housing without critical support offered to private capital. We cannot send our children into the future without undoing this core logic: the dominance of private capital in housing provision. None of us are home until all of us are home.

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Was the Senate right to include a ban on build-to-rent single-family housing? \*

This served as a partial check to one form of housing commodification, but it doesn't really cut underneath to where we need to surgically improve the system. For example, in Philadelphia, a true coherent approach would restrict speculative ownership while simultaneously expanding city-owned and publicly controlled housing, rather than simply removing one supply channel within the same system. I would look to amend the restriction to target speculation while preserving socially useful supply. We need to replace it with a size and ownership cap that bars large corporate/institutional capital from owning or developing build-to-rent, while promoting and supporting nonprofit, community land trusts, and local entities to build and operate it. We must push for a right-of-first-refusal for tenants, local housing authorities and municipalities when build-to-rent homes are sold. It needs affordability and stability requirements as a condition of any federal financing. We must keep the anti-monopoly intent of the restriction but redirect the model toward decommodified or quasi-public outcomes instead of shutting down a supply channel altogether.

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## Transportation and SEPTA

What are your priorities for the next surface transportation funding re-authorization bill? \*

I'll bring a Philly focus to the conversation. I want to center safety, equity, climate protection, and quality repair. Congress should build on the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act by significantly increasing formula funding for transit agencies to eliminate maintenance backlogs and expand frequent and quality service, while making permanent programs like Safe Streets and Roads for All to reduce traffic deaths through street redesign. I want to see highway funding tied to transparent, objective measurable outcomes (safety, emissions reduction, and access), prioritize transit-oriented development, and require stronger labor standards and domestic procurement.

We need New Deal levels of public investment. The bill should also accelerate modernization of buses and fleets, explore/invest deeper into ethically sourced and produced EV technology (with an emphasis on product quality, longevity and ecofootprint), and ensure climate resilience investments and public incentives. Finally and most importantly, it should reform funding formulas to direct more resources to historically disinvested communities, strengthen municipal planning, and integrate housing and transportation policy to reduce displacement and improve access to jobs and services.

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What are your thoughts on SEPTA’s Re-imagining Regional Rail vision for 15-minute regional rail service across our region? \*

SEPTA must succeed. Workers are the lifeblood of Philadelphia, and SEPTA is the vein moving them across the body. Philadelphia has tremendous potential waiting to be unleashed across the Commonwealth. SEPTA can take us there. A proposal that would supercharge the movement of people across our city and region has my support. However, we should push it beyond service optimization toward public control, universal access, and integrated planning. We’re already doing this on a local scale, through legislation championed by City Councilmember Nicolas O’Rourke, who has endorsed our campaign alongside Minority Leader Kendra Brooks.

Through Congress, I want to push for the means to fully fund 15-minute all-day service while eliminating fare barriers through low or no-fare pilots, and reorganizing Regional Rail as true rapid transit with full fare integration, electrification upgrades, and expansion. I would also pair service expansion with public or social housing development near stations to prevent transit-driven displacement, and use federal and state leverage to require transit-oriented density in exclusionary suburbs, pushing for integration. We should further prioritize democratic governance, giving riders and transit workers a formal role in planning. Who better than the people at the helm? Locally, Harrisburg must shift capital investment away from highway expansion toward rail, ensuring the system is built not just for efficiency, but as a public good that redistributes access to jobs, housing, and mobility across the region.

On a scale from 1 - 5, how much of a priority is winning funding for Re-imagining Regional Rail in Congress over the long-term? \*

1      2      3      4      5

I will not seek funding for this in Congress                                    This is my top priority in Congress

How will you use your position, if elected, to build long-term support within the southeast delegation for funding Re-imagining Regional Rail? (Our ideal candidate will be a leader and a strategist for this effort—not just a passive supporter.) \*

This will go beyond me. I will use my position to help build a disciplined, working-class bloc within the southeast delegation that treats funding for SEPTA's Regional Rail as a non-negotiable priority, not a discretionary project. That means organizing alongside transit workers, their unions, and community organizations to create sustained political pressure on elected officials, and coordinating that pressure inside Congress by forming a caucus willing to condition support for major transportation or budget legislation on robust, long-term transit funding. I would work endlessly to reframe Regional Rail as more than essential public infrastructure; it is one step forward. I will aggressively expose austerity and suburban obstruction as political choices that harm working-class mobility. As Philadelphia's next member of Congress, I will maintain ongoing relationships with the organized base driving the campaign, so that the delegation is not just persuaded, but compelled to act.

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### Economic and population growth

The Sun Belt states have seen significant growth in both housing and population, while Pennsylvania and other states in the northeast have experienced stagnant or shrinking populations. Does this trend concern you? \*

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Please explain why or why not \*

Yes; I am concerned with Philadelphia losing population because of the underlying (even international) class dynamics: workers are being displaced or forced to migrate in search of affordable housing and employment, while regions are pitted against each other in a race to the bottom. Nobody wins when that happens.

The response should not be to compete on those terms, but to reinvest in public goods, rebuild industrial capacity under real democratic control, strengthen labor power from the ground up, and expand social housing and transit so that places like Pennsylvania are livable and stable for working-class people. We want folks to live in cities, but the system capitalizes on the appeal of cities and makes them so unaffordable that working people can't live here. This trend is a symptom of uneven capitalist development. This is not something to accept, but something to politically challenge and reverse. We don't need to keep atomizing our communities at the behest of the markets. It's not bad that other states are growing, but it shows we need to do more to ensure there are good paying union jobs, deeply affordable housing, and walkable neighborhoods with free and fast public transit. We can keep people on the move, and communities grounded.

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Pennsylvania is the only state in the northeast with a growing economy, most of which is concentrated in SEPA. Would you like to see Pennsylvania's share of the nation's population grow? \*

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

Would you like to see Philadelphia's share of Pennsylvania's population grow? \*

- Yes
- No
- No opinion

In your view, what should be the strategy, if any, for growing PA's population again? What can you do as a federal representative to help support this? \*

Cities are a good thing, and the federal government should support their growth – including through proportional representation in Congress – rather than act at every turn to undermine their independence and ability to self-govern. Pennsylvania's growth has stagnated as cost of living has grown and infrastructure including transit and housing stock deteriorated; I've seen first-hand in Harrisburg that Republicans actively seek out that municipal deterioration, because it's good for their local politics and even better for national politics – population decline keeps Pennsylvania purple.

The goal is making Pennsylvania a place where working-class people can live, work, and stay with stability and dignity. We know we've suffered from deindustrialization, rising housing costs, weak public services, and lack of worker power. In Congress, I would fight to direct large-scale public investment into unionized industrial policy, social housing construction and mass transit, while conditioning federal funds on labor standards and anti-displacement protections. Strategically, this requires building a bloc in Congress willing to challenge austerity and demand sustained reinvestment in older regions, while organizing with labor and community groups to ensure those investments are accountable to working people. In this framework population growth follows from rebuilding the material conditions of life, not from competing in a race to the bottom with low-wage, anti-union states.

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## CLOSING STATEMENT

**17.** Is there anything not covered above that you would like 5th Square members to know about your candidacy or your approach to urbanist issues?

I approach urbanist issues from a perspective that treats land, housing, and transportation not as markets to be optimized but as public goods to be democratized and decommodified. For Philadelphia, that means pairing pro-density policies with social housing at scale, strong tenant protections, and anti-displacement measures, so growth does not (predictably) translate into higher rents and speculation. I support building out frequent, electrified transit through SEPTA and linking transit expansion directly to public land use. New development around stations must be publicly controlled and serve working-class residents. More broadly, my approach is to organize alongside tenants, transit riders, and workers to build the political power needed to win these changes, rather than relying on technocratic reform alone, and to ensure that urban policy is accountable to those most affected by inequality.

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Please click "Submit" below to submit your responses.

**Thank you for completing our questionnaire! 5th Square members look forward to learning more about your candidacy.**

Policy responses will be published at [www.5thsq.org](http://www.5thsq.org) – contact/financial data will not be published.

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