

## Responses from Phillip Fleming, Candidate in NYS Assembly District 131

### Health

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**Fleming strongly agreed that access to affordable, quality healthcare is a human right.**

The Medicaid Management Care system of health insurance in New York State has done more harm than good. NYS contracts with 4 national for-profit plans (Aetna, Amerigroup, United, WellCare), 3 local for-profit plans, and 25 local non-profit plans, though not every MCO operates in every county. The number of managed care organizations in each NYS county ranges from 7 in the five counties that make up New York City to 2-3 in counties such as Allegany, Lewis, Yates, Hamilton, Schoharie, Oswego, and Delaware. The counties that are represented by state Assembly District 131 (Ontario, Seneca, Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Chenango, and Broome) also only have 2-3 MCO insurance plans per county. Moreover, a person in one county, especially in a rural county, isn't getting the same benefits from a given MCO as in another county. Urban counties tend to have better MCO benefit coverage than rural counties. Limited options are especially prevalent for Managed Long Term Care plans in rural areas, whereas New York City; Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester counties have more MLTC plan options., single-payer healthcare!

**Fleming strongly agreed that access to reproductive healthcare is a human right -- without government intrusion.**

The government has no right to tell a woman or a teenage girl what to do with her body but I believe it's necessary for women and teenage girls to consult with the appropriate licensed clinical medical providers and, in some cases, a licensed mental health professional to weigh options and to aid in decision-making. The reversal of the 1973 landmark US Supreme Court decision in the Roe v. Wade case in 2025 should have little to no bearing on what individual states can do to preserve and advance reproductive rights of women and persons who identify as women.



**Election Questionnaire  
May 2026**

### **Fleming strongly agreed that disinformation-fueled vaccine skepticism is dangerous.**



Vaccines have been proven year after year to eradicate diseases such as measles, smallpox, and chickenpox. It will be disastrous for public health policy to change so radically as to diminish or eliminate vaccines. School-age children, I strongly believe, should still be required to have all the necessary immunizations that folks in my generation and older had when we were children. I support the research and information given by the Centers for Disease Control and its allies that continue to provide the American public with factual, scientifically proven information about vaccines.

### **Fleming strongly agreed that transgender and nonbinary individuals should have equal access to public accommodations, safety, full civil rights.**

I strongly believe that sexual orientation isn't a choice. Unfortunately, the status quo has always been hateful and discriminatory against the LGBTQ+ community. Especially the transgendered and nonbinary communities. Transgendered and nonbinary people deserve to have equal access to every opportunity that is out there and they also have the right to make decisions that are right for them. Equal access to public accommodations such as bathrooms, the right to control over their own bodies, the right to safety through tailored anti-violence and victim support policies, and civil rights guaranteed at the federal level through a designated Justice Department liaison.

## **Intellectual freedom**

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### **Fleming strongly agreed that elected leaders should recognize the public's constitutional right to free speech, to protest government policies, to practice those rights in public spaces, etc.**

Freedom of speech is guaranteed by the First Amendment to the US Constitution. The First Amendment protects freedoms of speech, press, religion, assembly, and petition from government censorship. It shields most speech, including offensive or hateful content, but does not protect obscenity, false statements aimed at destroying a person's reputation, credible threats, or incitement to violence. It applies only to government restrictions, not private employers or social media platforms. Key ways we can protect our First Amendment rights include opposing viewpoint discrimination by elected and appointed government officials (especially officials who try to censure simply because they personally don't like what is being said or done), ensuring public spaces remain open for peaceful protests, supporting free speech on campus, and using local advocacy to oppose censorship in schools and libraries.

**Fleming strongly agreed that elected leaders should ensure that diverse materials and ideas are included in school curricula and in school and public libraries.**



Equal access to diverse materials in schools ensures all children see themselves represented, improving reading engagement, empathy, and academic outcomes. Diverse libraries include varied cultures, languages, abilities, and viewpoints, fostering an inclusive environment that combats bias and supports marginalized students. Funding is necessary to provide classes in schools that inform and celebrate the many diverse cultures and walks of life as possible.

**Fleming strongly agreed that teachers and librarians have the professional expertise to choose appropriate curricula and books and should guide decisions.**

Teachers and school libraries should have more autonomy in the types of materials they can choose from and incorporate in their classrooms. The idea of this is to teach students critical thinking and reading comprehension skills.

**Fleming strongly agreed that the right is making false claims about this country's ties to Christianity; we cannot elevate one state religion.**

The teaching of US History has shown time and time again that the thirteen colonies that later became the United State of America were founded to escape the religious persecution settlers experienced when they lived in England. At that time, the Church of England (aka the Anglican Church) was the state religion of Great Britain. Church and state were joined at the hip, giving the king (or queen) of England too much power and influence over all affairs. The early citizens of the United States wanted to make sure that the church is limited in its influence over government and the rule of law. However, there has been a growing faction of people who believe that the United States was founded as a Christian nation and have been seeking to create a state religious society that every person must follow. One problem I see is what so-called Christians have been treating immigrants, the LGBTQ+ community, Americans of non-European ethnic identities (e.g., Muslim, Chinese), indigenous populations, and persons of color (especially the African American community). The teachings of Jesus tell us that we should love one another, just as we love Him. To welcome the stranger and the outcast into our midst and not turn people away, simply because of what they look like and how they speak.

## Equality and rights

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**Fleming strongly agreed with all eight questions in this section.**

**Fleming strongly agreed that elected leaders should recognize the basic human rights of everyone in this country to bodily autonomy, reproductive freedom, access to healthcare, housing, education, work.**

Kindness, compassion, and respect are the cornerstones of humanity. Humans need to eat, have a place to live, to be educated, and have meaningful/gainful activity employment. How can human beings can get well and stay well if they don't have adequate, accessible healthcare (physical and behavioral health). The taxes that working people pay every time they earn a paycheck is to pay for all of these services. What right of elected legislators and executives to go against the will of the people who pay taxes and say that we don't need basic human right services and supports.

**Fleming strongly agreed that elected leaders should be aware of the institutional bigotry embedded in our country's laws, policies, institutions, and police actions.**

Systemic racism in the U.S. is the in-grained, structural discrimination and prejudice within policies, institutions, and societal norms—such as housing, education, healthcare, and criminal justice—that perpetuates racial inequality. Solving it requires moving beyond individual action to dismantle structural barriers through policy reform, economic investment in marginalized communities, and rigorous equity audits. It requires both individuals and institutions to first admit their wrongdoing and to turn away from such practices and create a new system that respects and celebrate all racial and ethnic communities.

**Fleming strongly agreed that elected leaders should ensure residents and visitors safe and equitable access to all public and commercial attractions in our communities.**

Ensuring safe and equitable access to town infrastructure and attractions for all residents and visitors, regardless of physical ability or identity, is a fundamental responsibility of local government and a crucial aspect of fostering thriving, inclusive communities. Creating these spaces involves going beyond basic compliance (state and federal laws like the Americans With Disabilities Act) to ensure that public life is barrier-free and welcoming to everyone. These places include public transportation, housing, public buildings, landmarks, and sidewalks. Accessible spaces, including downtown shopping and restaurants, benefit local businesses. People with disabilities and their families often choose to spend their disposable income at businesses that are easy to access. When everyone can fully participate in daily life—attending parks, libraries, and events—it increases community cohesion and reduces social isolation. Designing for diverse needs fosters creativity and results in better, more usable spaces for everyone, including the elderly, parents and caregivers with strollers, and those with temporary or permanent injuries.



**Fleming strongly agreed that action from governments and agencies at all levels is needed to increase affordable housing.**

In July 2025, I was one of 53 households that were displaced at Geneva Gardens Apartments in Geneva NY. The property was sold by the then-landlord to Hobart and William Smith Colleges. The residents were given a short amount of time and very limited financial and emotional resources to relocate. Fortunately, a small group of community folk came to the rescue. Providing emotional support, as well as resources to help residents relocate. Unfortunately, some of my neighbors ended up relocating outside of the city of Geneva. One person I know ended up moving outside of Ontario County. Local housing crises can be mitigated by increasing housing supply through zoning reform (e.g., severely limiting single-family-only zoning) and streamlining permits for developers. Key strategies include building diverse housing types, creating more opportunities and resources for home ownership, investing in affordable housing, strengthening tenant protections, and using community land trusts to keep housing affordable.

**Fleming strongly agreed that elected leaders should address increasing costs of food and rates of hunger in our communities.**

Addressing rising food costs and hunger requires a mix of immediate relief and long-term structural changes, including expanding SNAP benefits and repeal most of the federal mandated requirements for SNAP recipients, supporting food banks, strengthening local food systems via community gardens, farmers markets, and co-ops, and implementing nutrition education. Key strategies include reducing food waste, promote things like composting and recycling, enhancing food distribution networks, and fostering local partnerships to ensure equitable access to affordable nutrition.

**Fleming strongly agreed that elected leaders should avoid local cooperation with federal efforts to unjustly detain and deport immigrants, to maintain the Finger Lakes as a safe, healthy, and prosperous community.**

Severely limiting ICE activities in local communities involves enacting local "ICE-free zone" policies, ending law enforcement collaboration (such as 287(g) agreements), and building robust rapid response networks. Communities can protect residents by restricting city property use for arrests, prohibiting data sharing, and training residents to document, verify, and resist raids through legal, community-led strategies. Provide community residents with information on what to do and who to turn to, should ICE agents do come to communities.

**Fleming strongly agreed that elected leaders should decry hatred and bigotry in all forms and should support corrective efforts like DEI.**



Combating hate and discrimination in local communities requires a proactive approach: speaking up against bias, supporting victims, and fostering unity through education and community events. Actionable steps include reporting incidents, organizing local task forces, building inclusive networks, and utilizing public campaigns to promote solidarity

**Fleming strongly agreed that elected leaders should disavow the “Big Lie” that the 2020 election was stolen, disavow the false claim that there is widespread voter fraud in this country, and protect the right to vote.**

## **Global Issues**

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**Fleming strongly agreed peoples experiencing genocide... deserve recognition and support, and that discussions of genocide [should] not be discouraged, silenced.**

**Fleming strongly agreed that elected leaders should recognize the human cost of loss of international aid programs decimated by current regime.**

**Fleming strongly agreed that people everywhere have the right to clean air, water, land, and a food supply free from toxins; important to uphold standards.**

**Fleming strongly agreed that elected leaders should recognize importance of green spaces and support protecting public lands.**

**Fleming strongly agreed that the true threat to prosperity is billionaire class, not immigrants, transgender people, etc.**

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