

2024 North Carolina Congressional Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Alma Adams

Congressional District: House of Representatives District 12

Party Affiliation: Democrat

Current Occupation: U.S. Representative

Questions for 2024 Candidates for State Office in North Carolina

1. The most rapid period of brain development happens in the first five years of life, laying the foundation for all future learning, health, and success in school and life. What are your views on the needs of young children (prenatal to age 5) and what steps would you take to address these needs?

My focus has been on my priority issues referred to as the 4H's; Housing, Healthcare, Hunger and Higher Education. Three of these are basic needs for every child. I will continue to advocate for, and support the increase of funding allocated to, programs that address the needs of children, prenatal to age five.

2. Every county in North Carolina is considered a "child care desert" with not enough supply to meet the demand. When parents do find child care, the average cost is nearly \$10,000/year, which is higher than the cost of public college tuition. What steps would you take to ensure that families have access to high-quality and affordable early learning programs for their children?

I believe that every child deserves to have access to affordable, stable, and high quality early childhood learning programs. I will continue to support initiatives that aim to provide and expand resources that improve the chances for every child to thrive before entering kindergarten.

3. Currently, child care teachers in North Carolina earn an average of \$14/hour, less than most retail or service workers. Since 2021, federally-funded Child Care Compensation Grants have provided higher wages and bonuses to more than 40,000 North Carolina early educators, but that funding has expired. Without additional funding, child care providers have said that they will have to reduce teacher wages, raise parent tuition, or close their programs. What steps would you take to stabilize and sustain North Carolina's early education system and child care workforce as we approach the end of Compensation Grant funding?

Congress determines funding levels for various programs including those that support the care and education for children from birth through age five. I serve on the Education and Labor Committee and one of our four principles is "Education and Opportunity for Every Student". I will continue to push for additional flexible funds to North Carolina to address the needs and help stabilize our early education system.

4. Working parents depend on child care, and businesses in nearly every sector have identified child care as a critical factor in their workforce challenges. A new study from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation found that insufficient child care is costing North Carolina about \$5.65 billion each year. What are your views on how the issues facing our state's child care system impact the state's economy? What specific steps would you take to ensure that our child care system can keep up with the demand as more working families need child care in North Carolina?

Childcare is essential to North Carolina's economy and the shortage of childcare options is hurting all of us. Without access to affordable, safe, high-quality childcare, parents cannot get back to work or stay in the workforce, which means that employers will continue to struggle to hire the people they need. Almost half of all working parents say that the number of hours they can work has been compromised by a lack of child care options, and one-fifth say they have had to leave the labor market entirely. A recent study estimated that the child care crisis costs North Carolina \$3.5 billion each year in lost earnings, productivity and revenue. I was a co-sponsor of the Child Care for Working Families Act and I will always work to increase the availability of affordable child care services.

5. If elected, what would be your top 5 priorities for 2025?

In 2025, I will continue to advocate for, and support the increase of funding allocated to, programs that address
access to higher education,
access to affordable, quality healthcare,
eliminating hunger and poverty,
access to decent, safe, affordable housing,
access to affordable, safe, high-quality childcare.