

## 2024 North Carolina State Office Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Cristal Robinson

District or Office: NC House District 68

Party Affiliation: Democrat

Current Occupation: Attorney

### 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?**

As a past certified Preschool Montessori teacher, I believe in the absorbent mind and that the first 6 years of a child's life is very important to lifelong learning. We should strengthen the funding of learning centers and move away from day care to store kids while parents work outside the home.

**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?**

We should fund learning centers for all children from birth on.

**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. This summer, the NC General Assembly appropriated funds to extend the grants for a short time, while also recognizing the need to explore long-term solutions to attract and retain a qualified early childhood workforce. 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?**

We should also look into pushing employers to subsidize child care through matching and 100% employer funded care centers under federal and state tax incentives like the 529 plans.

**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?**

If we do not have child care then parents are unable to work. If people are unable to work, they cannot make money to spend in the economy. The economy stalls without money flow. We need tax incentives for employers, subsidies for families, and a well regulated day care system for the kids to be safe.

**5. North Carolina currently spends approximately 1% of the annual state budget on early childhood programs, including Smart Start, NC Pre-K, and Child Care Subsidy Assistance. Nearly all early childhood programs in every county of the state have waiting lists and only serve a fraction of eligible children and families. What are your goals for overall early childhood funding and/or what types of early childhood programs would you support making an investment in at the state level?**

We need more funding to help low and middle income workers to obtain safe child care for their children.

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

Education

Health care

Safety

Transportation

Financial Mobility