

2024 North Carolina State Office Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Mike Colvin

District or Office: NC House District 42

Party Affiliation: Democrat

Current Occupation: Funeral Director

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?

I am a staunch supporter of early childhood development programs ranging from healthcare initiatives, preventive care measures, and educational resources for our children.

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 would advocate for the investment of resources to support access to high-quality and affordable early learning programs supporting the families and children of North Carolina.

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?

I am a proponent of early childhood development programs, and a supporter of child care initiatives that will support the positive productivity of families, children, and working parents in our state if elected to represent the residents of North Carolina.

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?

I believe that our state's investment in our childcare system is essential to North Carolina's economic viability. I would support measures to ensure that our child care system would remain sufficient enough to offer support to working families in North Carolina.

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?

I aim to advocate on prioritizing early childhood program funding to support childhood initiatives such as NC More at Four Pre-K, Smart Start, and funding for Child Care Subsidy Assistance programs if elected to represent the residents of North Carolina.

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

NC Early Educational Programs, Child Care Programs, Access to Healthcare Services, Vocational Programs,/Skilled Workforce Development, Community Development Initiatives.