

## 2024 North Carolina Congressional Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Frank Pierce

Congressional District: House of Representatives District 13

Party Affiliation: Democrat

Current Occupation: Small business owner

### 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 strongly in support of the years of research that shows that early childhood education provides social and emotional growth, prepares our children to be ready and successful in school, predicts the success of future academic, social, and emotional lives of children. I will support universal pre-K whenever I get the opportunity. I am proud to be from North Carolina, where our own former Governor James B. Hunt is a pioneer and leader, as the champion of the "Smart Start" Program.

**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 support the child care tax credit, which the Congressional Republicans just blocked again. It should not be more expensive to put a child in child care than send them to college. Parents who work outside the home provide the financial and emotional stability needed to thrive in our society. They are role models for their children to see happy, successful, and strong families.

**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?**

Our priorities in this country are not in tune with the most important values we have. Our children are our future. Child care providers and teachers should be the most highly paid professionals in our society. We need to put our money toward our principles...not just talk.

**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?**

Corporations and businesses should be rewarded for efforts to keep parents in the workforce, especially the women who often sacrifice career and future income to be stay-at-home mothers. It should be a choice in the US as to whether a parent works outside the home, not a given. Families sacrifice much to survive in our society. The government should do its best to assist whenever possible. Socially-responsible businesses know that caring for their employees means caring for families. That means loyalty. That is good for business. That is good for families and children.

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

Economy, Education, Voting Rights, Healthcare, Social Security.