

2024 North Carolina Congressional Candidate Questionnaire

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Congressional District: House of Representatives District 11

Party Affiliation: Democrat

Current Occupation: NC House 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?

Investing in early childhood is one of the most impactful strategies due to the significant brain development that occurs during this period of growth. This investment begins with providing parental leave followed by ensuring access to affordable childcare. In North Carolina, stabilization grants have been crucial and I've strongly supported them. Additionally, supporting programs like WIC, FNS, and Medicaid is essential to guarantee that children have a healthy and strong start in life. Reinstating the childcare tax credit is another important step to support families during these critical years.

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?

Continuing federal funding for stabilization grants is vital to reducing the cost of childcare and making it more accessible for families. Supporting cost-sharing programs with businesses can further alleviate the financial burden on parents. Additionally, reinstating the Child Tax Credit is crucial to providing parents with the financial support they need to manage childcare expenses effectively.

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?

Continuing federal funding for stabilization grants is essential to reducing the cost of childcare and ensuring that families have access to affordable options. Supporting cost-sharing programs with businesses for childcare can further alleviate the financial burden on parents. Additionally, reinstating the Child Tax Credit is a critical measure to provide direct support to parents, helping them manage the costs associated with raising children.

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?

Investments in childcare are investments in the future of our state, our families, and our economy. Just as we fully fund and support our public schools, we should do the same for childcare. It is also essential to bring in more investment and commitment from corporations and industries that rely on workers. These businesses should

contribute their fair share through taxes and other forms of support, helping to sustain and strengthen childcare systems that are crucial for the workforce and the broader community.

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

Prioritizing healthcare, housing, and human rights, alongside environmental conservation, is essential for a healthy and equitable society. Additionally, reinstating the Child Tax Credit is a critical step to support families and ensure that children have the resources they need to thrive.

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