

2024 North Carolina State Office Candidate Questionnaire

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District or Office: NC Senate District 49

Party Affiliation: Republican

Current Occupation: Corrections Counselor

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?

Secure bonding, structure, predictability and engagement are key to healthy child development

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 look to the budget to ensure that the funding for quality child care is available to all parents especially working class parents.

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 would continue pointing to the empirical evidence that indicates the need for sustained support during the critical early years

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?

We must create a social climate that empowers parents and financially supports educators. Our harsh economy demands that both parents work at a time when only 46% of children are living in a two parent home. We must support the single parent family while we're building the two-parent family.

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?

My goal is to help parents raise stable adults. I understand how important early childhood development really is. I would support and work with any group seeking to stabilize the lives of children in our state. There is funding on a

state and federal level that can be accessed to ensure that we are doing the right thing by children and parents in North Carolina

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

Addressing the cost of housing, formulating a living wage, build the nuclear family, improve education (including early childhood) , reduce violence and addiction-driven crime.