

## 2024 North Carolina State Office Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Caroline Warren

District or Office: NC House 75

Party Affiliation: Democrat

Current Occupation: Teacher

### 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?**

Young children need safety and security from parents, guardians, caregivers, and society at large. They need safe and secure housing, nutrition, and interactions. They need safe and quality child care so their parents/guardians/caregivers can work to provide for them, or at least get a break from time to time. In the General Assembly, I will fight for a \$20 an hour minimum wage, collective bargaining rights for all workers, investment in child care, and paid parental leave. I will also fight for universal pre-k.

**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?**

Child care needs to be subsidized by the state, as it is in most other developed countries. I will settle for nothing less.

**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 will fight for a \$20 minimum wage and state subsidization of child care, period.

**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?**

Our economy suffers when women and caregivers who wish to are not able to fully participate in the workforce due to lack of childcare. I would talk with child care providers to learn more about what they need to continue providing care and to expand access.

**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 would propose that we allocate a larger portion of the budget, and start there.

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

\$20 minimum wage, full unionization and collective bargaining rights for all workers, increase the budget allocation for childcare to 5%, universal pre-k, and full funding for public schools, in compliance with Leandro.