

2024 North Carolina State Office Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Susan Harman-Scott

District or Office: NC Senate District 1

Party Affiliation: Democrat

Current Occupation: Attorney

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?

Promote high-quality day care availability and pre-K availability. Make resources available for parenting education and consultation.

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?

Allow daycare expenses to be fully tax-deductible; mandate calculation of the full cost of daycare into child support calculations. I have an open mind as to other solutions.

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?

Renew the Child Care Compensation Grant funding indefinitely until the adequate solutions for the shortfall are studied and implemented..

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?

There should be business investment as well as government investment in that the business community is affected by child care shortages.

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?

Smart Start, NC Pre-K and Child Care Subsidy Assistance should be fully funded so that there are no waiting lists.

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

Reproductive health; full funding of public schools, community colleges, and public universities; infrastructure, including broadband, utility services, and roads; rural health access, business innovation. Early childhood would be included under infrastructure and school funding.