

2024 North Carolina State Office Candidate Questionnaire

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District or Office: NC House 10

Party Affiliation: Democrat

Current Occupation: Retired

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?

Children should be exposed to all form of education as soon as possible to have these types of needs met.

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?

Would try to make sure that there are that some type of incentives in place to help these parents with these excessive expenses.

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?

Would argue to reinstate these federally funded bonuses for the Child Care Compensation Grants. It is important that children be reached and educated as soon as possible, and the funds have to be available to do this. The workforce should be compensated as well since they are the ones responsible for these children and for them getting an early start.

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?

If parents don't have the proper childcare systems, they may encounter issues that prevent them from being able to work. This creates an unstable workforce, thereby causing certain dollars not to be available. I would lobby legislators for additional fundings.

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?

To increase the annual budget as much as possible, certainly more than 1%, and introduce additional dollars for this category. I would talk with early childhood consultants to determine where they think the greatest needs are.

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

1. Healthcare
2. Environmental injustice
3. Education
 - investing in early childhood education and development
 - retaining top teachers in NC by giving them competitive wages
 - don't defund public education
4. Reproductive rights
5. JOBS - Living wage for everybody