

## 2024 North Carolina State Office Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Ya Liu

District or Office: NC House District 21

Party Affiliation: Democrat

Current Occupation: Small Business Owner

### 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?**

Early education is crucial to the development of children. We need to make sure we fully fund the early education programs so all children can grow and prosper in North Carolina.

**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?**

We need to increase childcare subsidy rates to increase the supply of high-quality childcare, and provide higher salaries to our early childhood teachers more.

**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?**

We need to continue to fully fund Child Care Compensation Grants.

**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?**

North Carolina loses about \$1.36 billion annually in tax revenue due to turnover and absence related to childcare issues. We need to meet the childcare needs of our workforces to ensure a thriving economy.

**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 support funding for the struggling childcare facilities and childcare training programs to ensure families have access to affordable and high-quality care in North Carolina.

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

1. Fully fund our public schools. 2. Protect women's reproductive rights. 3. Fully fund early education programs. 4. Protect our clean air and water and our natural resources. 5. Build a strong economy for the middle class.