

## 2024 North Carolina State Office Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Renée A. Price

District or Office: NC House District 50

Party Affiliation: Democrat

Current Occupation: Nonprofit Project Director

### 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?**

Let me preface my responses by disclosing that I never raised children nor am I an educator. That said, I believe that young children need nurturing and stimulating environments as they grow, develop and learn. Public funds should be invested in early childcare and early childhood education.

**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 appropriate funding to each county to subsidize the costs of child care for families that lack the financial resources, thus allowing parents to pursue their career goals and earn money for their families.

**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?**

To stabilize and sustain the early education system, I would establish a line item for early childhood education and appropriate funds annually for higher wages/salaries and increased benefits for early childhood educators and staff in accredited programs or organizations.

**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?**

Child care needs to be considered as part of our social infrastructure. As stated, people need to work and employers need employees. In certain cases, I would encourage businesses and corporations to provide childcare on site for their employees.

**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?**

Our children, our future generations are worth more than 1%, and I would have no issue in increasing the funding for essential programs such as Smart Start.

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

- 1-Protecting the right to vote and the right to representation
- 2-Assuring every child receives a sound basic education
- 3-Improving the infrastructure--including housing, urban and rural economic development, and transportation
- 4-Defending a woman's right to reproductive healthcare
- 5-Addressing climate change, environmental protection and environmental justice