

## 2024 North Carolina State Office Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Matthew Wood

District or Office: NC House District 26

Party Affiliation: Democrat

Current Occupation: Insurance Agent

### 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?**

Individual Prenatal Nutritional education for the mother is essential. Continued education surrounded early childhood development strategies in the early years. Most essentially, food for mom during pregnancy and plenty of fresh food for the early years.

**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?**

Fully fund prenatal nutrition program. In the long run this will allow for an individual to be much more productive teachable and healthy, therefore being a less of a burden on social safety nets

**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?**

In a state with a Billion dollar surplus, supporting working families with an extension of this support seems commonsense. In this economy where two parents have to work, it cripples them to have one child's cost equal to a mortgage.

**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?**

I would immediately work to Levy .5% tax on the highest income earners and businesses to fund this.

The lack of a progressive tax system, which historically enabled the United States to prosper like no other, is crippling the commons in order to support a commercial endeavor.

**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?**

The amount needs to be doubled. All educational programs, including expectant mothers nutritional efforts, should be a priority. Without, we lack capable workers. Without, our babies are not developmentally ready to learn. Without, an unnecessarily neglected child becomes reliant on support to survive in an economic landscape.

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

These are in no particular order...

1. Moratorium on Vouchers
2. End Gerrymandering/Voting rights
3. Fair Taxation (progressive)
4. COMMON SENSE GUN LAWS
5. Codifying Womens Reproductive rights