

**Johnson County Public Policy Council**  
**2014 State Senator/State Representative Candidate Profile**

Election: August 5, 2014

Please return your completed form by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 1, 2014 to  
[asherard@lenexa.org](mailto:asherard@lenexa.org).

Name: Linda Gallagher

Political Affiliation: Republican

District: Kansas House of Representatives District 23

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Campaign Website: [www.lindagallagher.org](http://www.lindagallagher.org)

Occupation/Work History (last five years – 25 words or less):

I am a free-lance journalist and communications professional. From 2000-2012, I was executive director of a trade association for heating and cooling contractors.

Other Recent Political/Community Experience (25 words or less):

Republican Precinct Committeewoman - six terms; Volunteered extensively in PTAs and booster clubs at Shawano Elementary, Trailridge Middle and Shawnee Mission Northwest High Schools; Girl Scout troop leader for 14 years

If you are or have been affiliated with a chamber of commerce or other business organization please list which organization(s) and any leadership positions you have held:

I did three temporary stints at the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce in the 1990's, filling in for the communications director. I also did numerous free-lance writing projects for the Chamber. The Chamber's BizPAC has endorsed me. I also had a temporary position with the Kansas Bankers Association in 2000, again filling in for the communications director.

As a candidate, what are your top three policy issues (10 words or less per issue)?

1. Education - public education should be supported and adequately funded.
2. Economic Recovery - an unbalanced tax system has hurt the Kansas economy.
3. Embarrassment - legislative votes on extreme issues have caused embarrassment for Kansas.

What are your views on state tax policy (75 words or less)?

The three-legged stool of taxation - property, sales and income - is horribly out of balance, as we have seen in our property tax bills and grocery store receipts. It's time we took a pragmatic, reasoned approach to taxation that reflects Kansas common sense and makes the tax burden more fair for all. The state has passed many costs down to local governments, forcing 86 of 105 counties to raise property taxes to maintain essential services.

If Kansas were to face a significant revenue shortfall in meeting its budget, how would you propose to balance the budget? Please be specific (75 words or less).

First, we would need a more accurate picture of the revenue situation than the fiscal 2014 budget projections provided. To balance the budget in the case of a significant revenue shortfall, in the short term there would likely have to be cuts in spending that would be very difficult but necessary to make. And, it would require a reassessment of the income tax glidepath to zero and implementation of a more pragmatic and realistic tax plan.

What are your views on the possible imposition of a sales tax on professional services, such as architects, lawyers, engineers, doctors – a significant economic base in Johnson County (25 words or less)?

I am opposed to such a tax. In Johnson County, that would drive business for professional services into Missouri, hurting a key part of our economic base.

What are your views on K-12 school funding, including local control over funds raised and spent (75 words or less)?

We need to work toward restoring K-12 school funding at least to pre-recession levels. I support local control over whether to increase local funding for schools. But, local money should be local money and should not count toward the state's contribution, nor should the state have any say over where and how those local funds are spent. Local school boards are accountable to local voters for those tasks and for how much they should get to spend.

What are your views on the adoption and implementation of the Common Core State Standards (50 words or less)?

Common Core has already been implemented in the Shawnee Mission District since 2012. In talking with teachers, they tell me they favor it because it allows them to teach topics in ways that work best for their students and are more interesting for them. Teachers no longer just teach to the test.

What is your position on individual tax credits and other voucher-like programs for private school tuition (50 words or less)?

I am against such programs. Public funds should not be used for private schools. The last education funding bill took funds from at-risk students to provide tax breaks for corporate billionaires, and that is wrong. As the percentage of at-risk students in Shawnee Mission increases, those funds are more needed than ever.

What types of economic development policies will you support to encourage job growth and business expansion in Kansas (50 words or less)?

I support the existing Promoting Employment Across Kansas (PEAK) program and reinstatement of the High Performance Incentive Program (HPIP), both within the Department of Commerce. And, schools are one of the main drivers of economic development in Kansas, so maintaining good quality K-12 schools and diverse higher education opportunities is essential.

Do you support or oppose the diversion of the dedicated state highway fund for any use other than the funding of the transportation projects for which it was created? Explain (75 words or less).

I oppose such diversion of funds. Voters trust legislators to do what they say they are going to do with public funds, and playing shell games to move money in and out of the state highway fund for other uses is not honest or good policy. This contributes to lack of public trust in government institutions and an unstable transportation industry, which counts on those funds to provide jobs and safe transportation infrastructure for commerce and leisure.

What is your policy position on the state's role regarding immigration (50 words or less)?

Immigration is a federal issue, and local law enforcement does not have the authority to usurp the federal government's role.

What are your views on energy policy (50 words or less)?

I support the renewable portfolio standard and I am glad the Legislature defeated numerous attempts to overturn the RPS this year. Wind energy is a resource that Kansas has in abundance, and it makes sense to harness it. Wind energy creates Kansas jobs, reduces dependence on foreign oil and will cut future utility costs.

What do you believe is the most pressing issue or challenge facing Kansas today (75 words or less)?

The bleak budget outlook is the most pressing challenge facing Kansas today. The 2014 fiscal year ended with the state taking in \$338 million less than the latest forecasts. The state does have reserves to provide a cushion, but that won't hold out very long. Individual income tax receipts are down 24% from fiscal year 2013 due to the irresponsible income tax cuts. There are no quick or easy fixes for this budget situation.

What do you believe most distinguishes you from your opponent(s) in this race (75 words or less)?

I have lived in this district for 32 years, owning a home, paying taxes, raising two children, volunteering in their schools and supporting local businesses. My opponent moved into the district just a few months ago to run in this race. I know this district, its history, its people and their concerns from years of experience; my opponent does not. I believe that, as a moderate Republican, my political views more closely match those of this district's voters than do hers. I also have more of a business background than she does.