

Johnson County Public Policy Council
2016 State Senator/State Representative Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Jason Graff District: 121 Political Affiliation: D

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Campaign Website: facebook.com/graff4ks

Campaign Video Link: n/a

Occupation/Work History (last five years - 25 words or fewer):

Software engineer for Xceligent, previously at Epiq Systems and Freightquote.

Other recent political/community experience (25 words or fewer):

Candidate for Olathe city council Ward 1 last year.

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:

KC IT Professionals

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

1. Restore balanced, effective tax policy to the state
2. Invest in our public schools and infrastructure
3. Improve election transparency through auditing and open-source systems

What are your views on state tax policy? (100 words or fewer):

The 2012 tax cuts and the "glide to zero" income tax scheme have proven to be unsustainable. State revenues and economic growth are best ensured by a balanced mix of income, property, and sales taxes that don't place an undue burden on one segment of the population.

If Kansas faces a significant revenue shortfall in meeting its budget, how would you proposed to balance the budget? Please be specific. (100 words or fewer):

There's not much fat to trim off the state budget without further harm to our state's residents or infrastructure. We can ease pressure on our budget by repealing the tax cuts of 2012. We need to look at our revenue forecasting model if, as seen recently, we keep failing to hit revenue targets every month.

What are your views on K-12 school funding? In anticipation of a new funding formula/process, what are your priorities?(75 words or fewer):

Our public schools are our state's greatest resource for economic development. My priorities for school funding include adequate support staff for classrooms, competitive pay for staff, and continuing education to develop great instructors.

What are your views on the state's role with respect to access and affordability of public higher education? (50 words or fewer):

The longer we can keep talented students studying in Kansas, the better the chance they will work for a Kansas employer, or start their business venture in our state. We must have the political courage to support our higher ed institutions and keep them affordable for our citizens.

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

Private schools are a choice. They do not share the same responsibilities as public schools, and are not entitled to public support.

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

Restore infrastructure investments - highways, education, proper staffing levels for state agencies. These are good jobs that create good customers for our businesses. Restore state arts funding to make our communities more attractive environments for families and businesses.

Do you support or oppose maintaining the current dedicated sales tax transfer to the state highway fund for the purpose of funding transportation projects, or should transportation be subject to the appropriations process where legislators determine funding levels entirely? Explain. (75 words or fewer):

Having consistent, fixed funding sources allows better planning of more complex or ambitious projects. I can understand why legislators would want control of the KDOT budget, but I can't see a benefit to enabling this outside of raiding the highway fund.

What is your policy position on the state's role regarding immigration and do you support employment-based immigration reforms to assist with workforce shortages in specified industries such as engineering? (50 words or fewer):

I feel most immigration issues should be addressed at the federal level. As an engineer, my experience has been that employers can supplement their workforce with off-shore or near-shore workers just as easily as they could with H1-B workers - it's just one tool that should be kept available.

What role should state governments have in determining workplace employment practices and benefits offered to employees?(50 words or fewer):

Most employment law is set at the federal level, with good reason. When a need arises for law or regulation that the federal government is unwilling or incapable of implementing, it may be appropriate for states to lead the way in establishing new standards.

What do you believe is the most pressing issue or challenge facing Kansas today and how would you address it? (75 words or fewer):

Our fiscal situation needs urgent attention. The tax cuts of the last few years have made our revenue model unsustainable, and continue to threaten funding for our government's core services. I will do everything in my power to ensure fair, sufficient revenue streams to power the resources that make Kansas a great place to live and work.

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

My opponent has been a reliable ally of our governor, voting in Brownback's bloc over 80% of the time. We need legislators willing to oppose the ultra-conservatives in Topeka, and stand up for the common-sense values we used to thrive on. This election, we can approve more of the same failed supply-side experimentation, or get back to what worked to keep our state and our economy growing.