

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

Name: Tom Cox District: 17 Political Affiliation: R

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Campaign Video Link:

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

Vice President at Strat Property Management. 30th largest self storage operate in the US. I oversee all marketing, technology initiatives and a portion of operations for the company.

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

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:

Active attendee at Shawnee and Lenexa Chamber events, but not a member currently.

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

1. Protecting Local Government
2. Fixing the State Revenue Issue (tax policy)
3. Supporting Public Schools K-College

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

It is a disaster. The intention was good, but the execution terrible. They did not provide incentives for businesses to grow, but instead legalized tax avoidance at the State level. I do not support a full repeal, but 100% will be working on fixing the tax code to structure it to prevent abuse and tax avoidance while providing incentives and rewarding companies for growing in the state.

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):

We need to raise revenue. We cannot afford more cuts or more debt at this point.

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):

We need to find a new, long-term funding solution. I wish I knew what it was right now, but I don't. I will work to help find and support that solution. I am frustrated by the myth of "never been funded better." We all know that is not true, just manipulation of the numbers. There has been virtually no growth in funding outside KPERS and building/debt costs for the last 6 years.

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

Strong public universities create a strong job base in the State. The state needs to keep supporting its schools and allow them to bring top researchers and educators here while also keeping our schools affordable for people to attend.

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

How can we provide vouchers when we can't even fund our own schools? I do not support them unless we can fix our school funding first. Then it's a conversation worth having.

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

First of all we need a Governor who knows how to court businesses here. How to sell the state, not just eliminate taxes and expect everyone to come running. I do support tax incentives to bring businesses to the state and support their growth.

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):

I support the current process. I do not want KDOT to get politicized and projects being traded for support on other bills. We would only ever see more money disappear from KDOT at that point.

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 think we need to structure laws that discourage illegal immigration and properly punish companies that take advantage of it. But at the same time, we need to provide realistic laws to allow legal immigration. If we have a shortage in the US in a specific role, we need to have a mechanism to get people with those skills into our state/country.

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

Limited. I am a small government person. There are federal laws that regulate this mostly, we don't need to add our own state laws on top of it.

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

I could say education or infrastructure or attacks on local government, but it all comes down to one thing: Revenue shortfalls. We need to get our revenue back up and flowing or we can't fix anything else. The burden of supporting organizations will keep falling on local governments with no financial support to help them.

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

Where do I start? I show up. I am from the community I am trying to represent. I have met with local leaders, local chambers, attended events, hosted town halls. I am a member of the community trying to represent it and what is best for it. My opponent does none of these things. He represents only himself and his donors.