

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

Name: Dorothy Hughes District: 21 Political Affiliation: R

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Campaign Video Link:

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

Healthcare consultant, Pershing Yoakley & Associates; previous: government relations liaison, KU Hospital; earlier: fiscal analyst, Kansas Legislative Research Department

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

Vice Chair, Johnson County Friends of the Library Board; Member, SMSD Committee for Excellence; Graduate, Kansas City Tomorrow (Civic Council) program

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:

Past Chair, Kansas State Affairs Committee, Greater KC Chamber; represented KU Hospital at KCK Chamber, Greater KC Chamber, and Overland Park Chamber

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

1. Fiscal responsibility: revenue reform and funding essential public services
2. Public education: K-12 funding and new school funding formula
3. Transportation: restore KDOT funds

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

The current tax structure has failed. I support real revenue reform that is stable and sustainable, meaning a fair distribution across the three-legged stool of income, sales, and property tax.

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):

I support rolling back policies in the 2012 tax plan. While reforming the revenue side, we also have to be responsible on the expense side, meaning funding essential public services that are the state's responsibility while appropriate finding efficiencies (including those within the Legislature itself), and taking advantage of federal funding such as the matching funds, savings, and positive economic impact of expanding KanCare.

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 are not currently adequately funding public K-12 education. The special session yielded a temporary fix regarding equity, but work is far from over. My priority will be addressing equity and adequacy not only in the short-term but also long-term, so that as we determine a new funding formula, we arrive at a sustainable solution that provides stability to the education community and all Kansans.

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

Public higher education is a public good, and it should be supported meaningfully with public dollars. The state should support public higher education institutions financially but also collaborate on and support their existing and planned efforts to improve performance.

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

I do not support diverting public dollars intended for public education toward private school tuition.

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

While tax incentives are sometimes appropriate, I do not support the 'border war' tax incentives, which do not result in new jobs and merely shift businesses across the state line. I also support KanCare expansion, which would have a positive impact on economic development, especially in the healthcare sector.

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):

My understanding is the sales tax transfer for transportation projects was put into place at a specific level for a specific amount of time. Recently, though, transportation funds have been irresponsibly borrowed by appropriators, resulting in diversion of these previously-dedicated sales tax dollars. I support fulfilling previously made transportation project commitments and repaying borrowed KDOT funds.

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):

Immigration is primarily a federal issue. That being said, if Kansas businesses make the case that employment-based immigration programs are necessary at the state level in order to address specific workforce shortages, I am open to those conversations.

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

This issue, too, falls largely under federal jurisdiction. Plus, private businesses ought to have latitude to determine their workplace environments and benefits. After federal policy and the businesses' own decisions, there is not much of a role left for the state to play beyond issues of basic fairness and safety.

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

The state's dire fiscal situation is the biggest challenge. If revenue shortages continue to be ignored, we will continue cutting essential services to the detriment of all Kansans. I will support revenue reform, as previously discussed, provide public K-12 funding, and repay transportation funds, and in doing so restore stability and certainty for businesses, communities, and families.

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

My opponent supports the Governor's failed tax policies and does not see a problem with the direction our state is going. I do not support our current tax structure and absolutely believe the state needs to get back on track utilizing a common-sense, collaborative approach to revenue reform and responsible funding of essential services.