

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

Name: Joy Koesten District: 28 Political Affiliation: R

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Campaign Website: www.joyforkansas.com

Campaign Video Link:

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

Lecturer at KU Edwards and Lawrence Campuses; Adjunct Assistant Professor at Johnson County Community College.

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

Founding member of the Greater Kansas City Mental Health Coalition and NAMI volunteer/educator. Current Board Member of Jackson County CASA.

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:

Current member of Leawood Chamber of Commerce

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

1. Restoring the tax policy to levels that will serve all Kansas.
2. Funding our schools adequately and equitably.
3. Resoring local control.

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

Kansas needs to go back to the balanced approach to tax policy that existed before the governor and his allies set off on the March to Zero. The current system benefits just a very few at the top, at the expense of everyone else. And, the current policy has continually failed to bring in the revenue that was promised. The tax cuts of 2102 are the primary reason we have such stunning revenue short fall and this needs to be fixed before anything else.

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):

Again, Kansas tax policies have to be revisited and restored to a level that can sustain our State services and obligations without robbing Peter to pay Paul. This will mean raising taxes and finding a balance between income taxes, property taxes and sales taxes. While it's important to hold down spending where possible, the fundamental problem at this point is that we have cut too far and need to restore our revenue stream.

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):

Education is the economic engine of our state and we need strong schools to prepare students at all levels to compete in the 21st Century. My priorities are to ensure that we fund education adequately and equitably so that all Kansans get the education they need to compete anywhere.

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

Our state research and teaching institutions serve the state by training and educating research scholars and professionals that can help solve complex problems in the world. In order to train the best and the brightest, we must support these institutions financially through adequate state funding. We also have to make higher education affordable for all Kansans by lowering tuition rates. This is possible with adequate state funding.

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

I am opposed to individual tax credits and voucher-like programs for 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):

No doubt, the STEM discipline related jobs will be important in the 21st Century. But, so will the need for preparing a workforce that can communicate, collaborate, and negotiate within a diverse population. Companies looking to relocate here will want a ready workforce, sound infrastructure and a low cost of living. Getting back to these basics will go along way to stimulating job growth and business expansion.

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 a dedicated sales tax transfer to the state highway fund for the purpose of funding transportation projects - without a sound infrastructure businesses can't move their goods and services to the marketplace. In addition, businesses and citizens want safe roads and bridges.

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 has always been part of the fabric that made our county stronger. I support employment-based immigration reforms to assist with workforce shortages, but not at the expense of supporting current citizens who could be trained or educated to do the job. And, not simply because an industry wants to pay lower wages and can do so by hiring immigrants. Finding that balance is an important part of immigration reform.

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

As business owners, my husband and I have always upheld high standards for employment practices and offered (and paid for) great benefits to our employees - even without a mandate from the state (or federal) government. The public and private sectors should work together to find that balance where best practices can be employed, without placing an undue burden that could stifle small businesses.

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 tax policy is the most pressing issue. No other issue in Kansas can be addressed without fixing our tax policy and our state will continue to decline until this is restored. Unfortunately, this will take years. But, it can be restored and it must be restored.

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

Aside from the fact that I'm not beholden to any outside interest groups, I'm ready to go to Topcka and work with people who are willing to take an honest look at the realities of our current situation. We can build coalitions around our shared values as Kansans and we can make the hard choices that will be necessary to put us back on the right track.