

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

Name: Sandy Ackerson District: 48 Political Affiliation: Dem.

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Campaign Website:

Campaign Video Link:

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

Retired educator

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

President Stone Haven Homes Ass'n., facilitate Great Decisions group through Central Exchange, active long time member Civil War Round Table of Kansas City.

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:

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

1. Educational funding through new formula
2. Taxes and adequate funding of state agencies
3. Safety net funding

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

Paying a fair share of taxes is something all citizens and all businesses must do in order to have a stake in funding the business of the state of Kansas. Unless there is adequate revenue to maintain the needs of our people and the building and maintenance of infrastructure, we cannot hope to attract businesses and jobs to our 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):

Kansas must have more revenue. Our government should never borrow money but should be debt free. The tax cuts that have put resulted in monthly shortfalls must be reversed. I see this as an opportunity for Kansas to restructure its tax policy in such a way as to insure the amount of monies needed for our future needs.

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):

All stakeholders must be involved---Superintendents, teachers, legislators, and business leaders---in order to determine what is needed to restore and maintain the very best educational system possible. Educational needs are changing rapidly in our digital world. Labs and computer equipment is expensive and it is absolutely vital that districts offer a pay scale high enough to attract and keep qualified computer, math and science teachers to properly instruct students in the use of the latest technology.

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

I would like to see all students have low cost or free access to community colleges. Those institutions offer both academic and technical training that helps insure a solid, educated work force. Universities should have tuition priced within the reach of all who desire a four year degree or higher. The state must do its part to insure that.

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

Citizen's tax dollars should be spent on the public's schools.

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

Good educational facilities, a well trained work force, an attractive quality of life in safe communities with good amenities, well maintained infrastructure that facilitates easy movement of goods and services. These are the things that make people want to work and live in a community.

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 maintaining the dedicated sales tax transfer and do not believe legislators should be the sole determiners of funding. I do not approve of the stripping the KDOT of its funds as is currently being done.

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):

Johnson County relies on immigrant workers for many of its lower paying jobs. But there is too much red tape involved in securing these workers even on a short term basis. Whether it be a job mowing lawns or filling a highly skilled position in engineering or other areas requiring a well educated person, there should be reforms that allow needed immigration. We should especially make every effort to retain foreign students who train in our universities and want to remain and work here. All immigrants should be well vetted.

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

The state should determine these things for state employees but certainly not for private 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):

Economic growth. Our state is lagging badly in job creation. Revenues are falling monthly. The state keeps setting lower expectations for revenue through collection of taxes and still fails to meet that goal. An old historical adage is that taxes are the price we pay for civilization. There is truth to that as without revenue government cannot operate properly. Without a viable and dynamic government that promotes growth and attracts business, a state fails. Kansas is failing.

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

My opponent is part of the group who has actively worked with the governor to promote supply side economics and a failed economic system. Changing a tax structure from one relying on business and personal income to one based on consumption taxes simply does not work. It hurts the middle class workers and crushes the poor and vulnerable citizens.