

Johnson County Public Policy Council
2018 Kansas State Representative Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Deann Mitchell

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Political Affiliation: Democrat

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District: 26

Campaign Website:

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Campaign Video Link: N/A

Occupation/Work History (last five years – 25 words or less):

Certified Financial Planner with Frontier Wealth Management and Certified Divorce Financial Planner with Divorce Care Center.

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:

Member of Olathe, Spring Hill, and MAGL Chambers of Commerce. Member of Central Exchange.

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

Member of the Kansas Credit Union Council and the Governor's Behavioral Health Services Planning Council and Board Vice President for the Veterans Voices Writing Project.

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

Top three policy issues include Public Education Funding, Infrastructure (road, highway, and bridge safety) and Medicaid Expansion. I consider all three of these critical to Economic Development.

What are your views on state tax policy, being as specific as you can? (100 words or less)

The Brownback Tax Experiment has left our state in a financial hole it will take years to dig out of. Last year, legislators repealed part of the failed "march to zero", but a full repeal will be needed to solve the state's current budget woes. Policy needs to change so that the state doesn't rely so heavily on sales tax, as Kansas sales tax is second highest in the nation. Sales tax on food and necessities puts an unfair burden on low and middle-class families who spend a larger percentage of their wages on those items.

With record low unemployment rates, what would you do to grow and develop the state's workforce? (75 words or less)

Technical training is becoming an essential component of the education need in Kansas. Working with Community Colleges to develop industry specific training, such as the Windy Energy program offered by Colby Community College, will develop a work force, and develop more industry in Kansas.

What are your views on funding K-12 education? (75 words or less)

The Constitution of the State of Kansas requires state funding for public education. Public Education must be adequately funded, not only as a required state function or as a social issue, but as

an economic development issue. An educated workforce will be an enticement to lure companies to Kansas. Excellence in education will appeal employees considering relocation.

What would your priorities be in any new statewide transportation plan? (50 words or less)

KDOT must ensure that our current roadways and bridges are safe, secure, and adequate for current usage, while at the same time analyzing future needs. District 26 has safety concerns along 169 Highway near Spring Hill. Residential growth, along with the Intermodal sight, have increased traffic and worsened road conditions.

Do you support maintaining the current dedicated sales tax transfer to the State Highway Fund for the purpose of funding transportation infrastructure, or should transportation be subject to the appropriations process where legislators determine funding levels entirely? (50 words or less)

I support maintaining the current dedicated sales tax transfer to the State Highway Fund. If highway funding was an appropriated process, I fear it could turn into a partisan issue that would not get proper funding. Infrastructure safety is too important to not have dedicated funds.

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

I will promote fiber and broadband accessibility to rural and small-town communities to encourage business, large and small, to have equal potential as businesses in larger communities that currently have access to broadband. I will also promote net neutrality so small companies have the same capability online as large companies.

What are your views on the state's role regarding immigration and do you support employment-based immigration reforms to assist with workforce shortages in specified industries? (50 words or less)

Immigrant labor is critical to the state's economy in both the western/rural areas as well as the eastern/urban areas. The state must have a role in immigration policy and I would support reforms to assist with workforce shortages.

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

I would like to see state offered technical training and/or associate degrees so young adults can develop career training without becoming immediately in debt. This would not only boost wages for young adults, but also develop the Kansas work force which will bring industry to Kansas.

What are your views on healthcare policy and Medicaid expansion? (50 words or less)

There is a gap between the ACA and KanCare in which more than 150,000 Kansans do not have ANY health insurance. Expanding Medicaid coverage under Federal guidelines would bring more Federal dollars to cover costs resulting in either a net neutral budget item or saving millions of tax dollars.

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

Employees should be safe at work and have due process. The state's role is requiring work safety guidelines, reduction of occupational Injuries and Illnesses, and attempt prevention of workplace discrimination and violence. The state should also mandate a minimum wage that allows working families to live above poverty levels.

What do you believe is the most pressing issue or challenge facing Kansas today and how would you address it? (50 words or less)

In 2017, 50% of total tax revenue was derived from sales tax, which puts the burden on low and middle-class families. I will support a reduction or elimination of sales tax on food and necessities, which will be possible only by overhauling the current tax structure.

What project have you been most proud to work on? (50 words or less)

I have served on the board of Veterans Voices Writing Project for 6 years. VVWP is a 70-year-old nonprofit encouraging veterans to write to reduce PTSD symptoms. Projects I have spearheaded: website update, social media engagement, digitization of the magazine for website viewing, and corporate sponsorships.

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

Having owned and lived in my home for 16 years, I have deep roots in District 26. My many years in the financial service industry and the obtainment of Certified Financial Planner designation, have proven my financial management skills along with fiscal responsibility. My undergraduate degree in Applied Organization Leadership and my master's degree in Business Administration have given me the tools to make sound financial decisions in Topeka.