

Johnson County Public Policy Council
2018 Kansas State Representative Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Fsehazion Desalegn

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Political Affiliation: Republican

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District: 49

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Campaign Video Link: N/A

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

Currently a student at KU studying Supply Chain Management while holding a part-time job as a teaching assistant.

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:

N/A

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

None.

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

My top three policy issues are: Infrastructure, Education, and a Stable Budget. I believe these three items are vital to make Kansas attractive for businesses and people to move here.

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

I believe that having a high sales tax disincentives people to spend on goods and services. I would be in favor of slightly raising income taxes if it meant the sales tax would be greatly reduced. I am in favor of providing businesses with tax credits if they create high-paying jobs that remain in Kansas. I am opposed to using other departments to cover up deficits caused by poor tax policy. Under the Brownback administration, I didn't agree with using KDOT funds to shrink deficits because I believe that deferring infrastructure will only carry a higher cost later on.

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

I would be in favor of creating tax credits for people who go into vocational schools because the job outlook is very promising for those professions.

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

I believe that K-12 education is vital to ensuring that Kansas is raising productive and engaged people. However, I am concerned with the sustainability of the current education budget because it currently takes approximately 60% of the annual budget. We can find cost savings by reducing the size of administrative personnel and ensuring that rural and urban school systems are held to the same standards.

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

My priorities in a new statewide transportation plan would be: fund Phase 3 of the JOCO Gateway Project, expand US-69 to six lanes from 119th St to 159th St, and replace structurally deficient bridges across Kansas.

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)

No, because it is a poor measure that does not allow KDOT to adequately plan for future projects. Allowing legislators to determine KDOT's funding would provide stability and prevent fund transfers that would prevent KDOT from fulfilling its obligations.

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

I would support tax credits for businesses that create high-paying jobs that stay in Kansas, tax credits for businesses that invest in their workforce (i.e. M.B.A. programs, continuing education), and reduce regulatory costs of doing business.

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)

I would support employment-based immigration reforms if businesses would ensure that they have exhausted all possibilities in the domestic employment market. However, I also understand that some skills are in high-demand that domestic labor is unable to fulfill.

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

I believe that the state plays an important role in providing access to public higher education because employers have indicated that they value college graduates. I believe that we can find cost savings in higher education that can be passed to students in the form of lower tuition costs.

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

I do not have enough information to have an informed policy position on healthcare yet. I am still researching all the viewpoints.

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

State government should intervene when businesses fail to agree on common workplace practices. I believe that state government should provide a common space where businesses work out differences rather than giving them more regulations to follow.

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

The most pressing issue facing Kansas is infrastructure spending. I would address this issue by making transportation funding subject to appropriations so that legislators can adequately fund KDOT. Several hundred million dollars are needed for deferred projects and that cost will only increase if we fail to adequately fund KDOT.

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

My current campaign. I have been continually impressed by the locals' activism and knowledge of state politics. Meeting people across the district and spreading my message has given me hope for the future of Kansas.

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

I believe what distinguishes me from my opponent is my focus on infrastructure. I strongly believe that if we don't tackle this issue now, Kansas will become less attractive to businesses and as a result, we will struggle to grow the economy.