

Johnson County Public Policy Council  
2018 Kansas State Representative Candidate Questionnaire

**Name:** Joy Koesten

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**Political Affiliation:** Republican

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**District:** 28

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**Campaign Video Link:** N/A

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

For the past two years I've served as the State Representative, District 28. Prior to that I taught at the University of Kansas & JCCC.

**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:**

I am a member of the OP Chamber and Leawood Chamber.

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

I am founding member of the Greater Kansas City Mental Health Coalition and have served on the board of Jackson County CASA.

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

Developing opportunities for economic growth through: Education funding across all ages to ensure a ready workforce, protected funding for transportation infrastructure, and medicaid expansion.

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

Our state tax policy has been upended over the past 8 years & we need to get back to a stable, three-legged stool approach. I support a return to a balanced, state tax policy that provides core services to all citizens without shifting the burden to our local governments. Our local governments have also been ham-strung by tax-lid policies that limit their ability to serve the needs of their citizens and their growing communities. I support repeal of the tax-lid. Finally, I do not favor unfunded mandates that shift the burden of responsibility to local governments.

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

According to Jim Edwards, editor of Business Insider, the supply-and-demand model of the labor market is broken. If we want to grow and develop the state's workforce we have to begin talking about wages. I know it's heresy, but we cannot attract the best and brightest to our state if we aren't willing to push this envelope.

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

Education is the foundation to keeping our workforce ready for every shift that comes our way. We can't compete in the fast-paced, changing economy if every citizen of Kansas isn't a life-long learner.

And, we need to champion that from early childhood initiatives to re-tooling the skills of those whose jobs have disappeared due to technology. We must fund education at all levels.

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

I support the Joint Legislative Transportation Vision Task Force, which will evaluate the progress of the current transportation program and make recommendations for the future. Most important, we must commit to dedicated funds that can't be swept for other uses.

**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)

Yes - I support maintaining a dedicated sales tax transfer to the SHF to fund transportation infrastructure.

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

First, we need to restore our Commerce Department so that we can begin to explore ideas for an innovation-led economy in areas such as: Transformative Transportation Technologies; a 21st Century Water and Food System; and Health Care. Kansas cannot succeed without a coordinated vision from all sectors and communities.

**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)

We can't compete in the 21st century without robust and sound immigration policies. Workforce shortages can also be mitigated by lifting wages to bring folks out of the "gig" economy and back into full, gainful employment. These two shifts will assist in meeting the workforce needs of our state.

**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 make community college FREE - as they did in Tennessee. It is a brilliant investment. Community colleges are nimble, they work closely with business & industry to understand the shifts happening on the ground & stand ready to re-tool & re-train. Four-year institutions must also be better funded.

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

I support Medicaid expansion. The influx of new dollars (estimated to be \$975 million in 2019) would mean an investment in our health care system across the state (including maternal & child health; including mental health & addiction services). And, it would mean JOBS.

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

The state has an obligation and responsibility to work with business and industry to craft sound policy that serves the needs of both employer and employee when it comes to employment practices, though I am not in favor of mandating what benefits an employer should offer.

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

To restore fiscal certainty. Bad policy produced bad outcomes, leaving us unprepared for the future. Turnover rates are high, morale is low. Our ability to care for citizens has been compromised. We're so busy finding ways to make ends meet we can't begin to discuss the most important thing: jobs!

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

My work with the mental health caucus and opioid crisis as we tried to advance a bill that would have addressed current deficiencies in the current K-TRACS system. While my bill didn't get out of committee, we advanced conversations with stakeholders that were long over due.

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

Our democracy is weakened when all we do is compete between rigid ideologies and unrealistic promises, rather than finding common ground to solve problems with practical solutions. Our world and our problems are complex. Political leadership requires educating, uniting and inspiring others to consider different points of view. As a pro-problem solving, consensus-seeking moderate, I strive for bipartisanship and look for that rational middle ground where the vast majority of us live and thrive.