

Johnson County Public Policy Council
2018 Kansas State Representative Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Matthew Calcara

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Political Affiliation: Democrat

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District: 30

Campaign Website:

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Olathe, KS 66062

Campaign Video Link: N/A

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

Digital producer - self-employed Digital Project Manager - Disney Digital Project Manager - Capitol Group Digital Producer - Disney (again)

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):

Board member - Equality Kansas Event organizer - Kansas Voter Registration Project Precinct committeeman, Olathe 4-14 - Johnson County Democrats

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

Education - invest in universal pre-K & 2 years of post-secondary education Healthcare - expand Medicaid, end Colyer experiment Transportation - end KDOT sweeps, push innovative new policies

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

If tax policy is a "3-legged stool" then the income tax leg is too short. We need to create additional income tax bands to raise (modest amounts of) revenue in a progressive tax structure in order to end the Brownback experiment once and for all. This will lower our borrowing costs, allow us to properly fund state government, and enable a reduction in sales tax rates, especially on food and other necessities.

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

As a highly-educated Millennial who moved back to the state in 2016, I am well-placed to understand what it would take to lure back more 'expats' to their home state. Additionally, providing two years of free post-secondary education (community college, vocational training or public university) has been tried in other states, to general acclaim from the business community.

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

Great schools are absolutely crucial in attracting businesses, creating a well-educated workforce, as well as luring new residents. Recent reports have indicated that Kansas schools are operating at

heroic levels of efficiency. As responsible stewards of our tax dollars, we should look closely at targeted investments that would get us closer to having a world-class educational system.

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

Maintaining the infrastructure we have and ensuring necessary upgrades should be the top priority over building out new roads and highways. We should also look at targeted investments in transit innovation to provide alternatives to automobiles.

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)

We need to end KDOT sweeps and put transportation funding back where it belongs: funding transportation projects. Unless there is a dramatic change in the composition of our Legislature, having legislators determine funding levels entirely is a recipe for disaster.

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

Ending the border war would be a good start. Changing tax incentives to industry-specific ones, instead of project-specific ones, as has been done in Iowa, would enable us to attract the types of businesses we want to attract.

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)

The state should strive to provide a welcoming climate for all residents, which will have the added benefit of making it a more attractive place for immigrants. While much would depend on the details, I could support employment-based immigration reforms to address 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)

Universities are the state's economic engines as well as its main drivers of socioeconomic mobility. We need to ensure that they are accessible and affordable for all Kansas students who are qualified to attend and ideally, make them attractive to folks from out of state as well.

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

We should expand Medicaid immediately, as we are simply throwing away money by not doing it. Furthermore, the disastrous privatization of KanCare under the Brownback/Colyer administration should be reversed as it is delivering terrible and expensive outcomes--ones so bad they could not even properly audit them.

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

The role of state government should be fairly minimal--it should ensure that discrimination is disallowed and that basic fairness and safety standards in employment practices are upheld. Beyond that, the state government should do its best to stay out of the affairs of private businesses.

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 addition to issues previously discussed, I would say transparency is the biggest issue facing our state government. Corruption, administrative malpractice, incompetence and waste will flourish unless comprehensive transparency measures are adopted. We can start with the raft of reforms proposed by Kansas House Democrats in 2017-2018.

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

Running Disneyland.com was a lot of fun, but building up the digital operations of CBS Travel Editor Peter Greenberg has probably been the most rewarding project I have undertaken during my 2 decades in the workforce.

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

My opponent has never worked in the private sector while I have over 20 years of experience in the private sector working for companies large and small, in a variety of industries and in a variety of roles. This makes me well-placed to understand the needs of the business community.