

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

Name: Jan Kessinger District: 2 Political Affiliation: R

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Campaign Website: www.Kessinger4Kansas.org

Campaign Video Link:

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

President Henderson Kessinger Consulting, Inc. - Sales & management consulting. Clients throughout North America & Central Europe; Fortune 100 to Mom & Pop companies.

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

Member Kansas Racing & Gaming Commission. No elected office.

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. Balanced revenue stream to state - sound fiscal policy
2. Protect and build infrastructure
3. Local control

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

While tax incentives for business can help keep and attract business, they must have performance requirements in order to meet qualifications. Kansas tax policy should be balanced among income taxes, property taxes and sales taxes.

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):

We are in a huge hole. First, stop digging. Restore taxes to the LLCs and eliminate the "march to zero" revenue triggers. Second, invest in assets rather than decimating them; quit cutting assets (KDOT, public education). This will take time to recover from the deep deficits brought by fiscal irresponsibility. But, we must be smart and invest in the future for growth. You cannot succeed with the march to zero.

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):

We must meet constitutional requirements. Johnson County subsidization of poorer school districts is needed to do this. We benefit as well-educated Kansans migrate to this area. Also, a well-educated workforce attracts new businesses to locate here. Great schools are a huge magnet for young families who add to the economy and want to work and live here. Schools are our best asset. Fund them properly and well...the payback is immediate.

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

Higher education has no value if it is free. However, when we price higher education out of the reach of most, we are not fulfilling our obligation to the people of Kansas. Kansas should fund higher education to the point where a student can work parttime during school and fulltime in the summer and afford to attend.

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

I am against vouchers. The role of government is to provide an adequate (if not superior) public education. If someone wishes to home-school or send a child to private school, that is a private decision and not one to be funded by the public.

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

We need to focus on our assets. Invest in education to attract employees with families and to develop an educated and skilled workforce. Accept federal Medicaid monies to provide care for the poor and sick as well as creating jobs in healthcare. Spend KDOT money where it is meant to be spent: on road repair and construction. That creates a cascade of jobs, home sales and retail activity. Then create new ideas for growth.

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):

Sales tax funds specific to KDOT were designed to maintain and construct roads. Not only is the appropriation of those funds for the general fund a misappropriation, it is poor fiscal management and is creating a huge expense to be shouldered by the next generation. It is wrong.

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):

America was built by immigrants who worked hard to build the economy and contribute to society. I would support immigration reforms designed to assist workforce shortages in targeted industries - as long as immigrants had no advantage over qualified American citizens. Immigration is primarily a federal function and while many current legislators wish they were Congressmen, my focus is on the state of Kansas

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

I am a supporter of local control and states rights. This would include state labor employment practices and governance.

What do you believe is the most pressing issue or challenge facing Kansas today and how would you address it? (75 words or fewer):

The most pressing issue is the challenge of overcoming the poor fiscal management of the past six years. We are in a hole that will take a while to climb out of. This must be gradual and fair (unlike the tax policies that put us into the hole). Accept federal matching funds for health care for the poor. Quit stealing from KDOT. Fund education. Reinstate the private business income tax. Gradually, we can then ease the tax increases thrust upon the state to compensate for the taxes lost via the LLC exemptions.

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

My heart for public service and passion for serving friends and community As a Congregational Care Minister at Church of the Resurrection, I know that open lines of communication is the key in learning how to help people. Our state rep is nearly invisible, not only in the district, but during important votes. In Topeka, people joke about his disappearing act during controversial debate. We deserve better representation. I have 41 years business experience with large and small companies. I hold an MBA and have good business sense.