

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

Name: Dinah H. Sykes District: 21 Political Affiliation: R

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Campaign Website: <http://www.dinahsykes.com/>

Campaign Video Link: N/A

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

Stay at Home Mom
Personal Chef and Food Blogger, www.dinahs-dishes.com

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

PTA Treasurer and PTA President at Tomahawk Elementary, Sunday School Teacher, Co-Director Vacation Bible School 200+ kids at Central Church of the Nazarene, Trevecca Nazarene University Alumni Board Leadership Lenexa 2016

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:

Lenexa Chamber of Commerce; Legislative Affairs Committee (Lenexa); Leadership Lenexa 2016

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

1. Tax Policy - Restoring balance to Kansas' tax policy
2. Public Education - Adequately and Equitably funding schools at constitutional level
3. Representing the People - work in the light of day; listening to and respecting constituents

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

I would support restoring the pre-2012 tax framework (LLC, tax brackets, revenue trigger) where all Kansans are fairly supporting the quality of life amenities that make Kansas a great place to live. We must ensure our tax policy is not regressive and does not punish needy and middle class citizens while allowing other ways to avoid supporting the infrastructure and services they use in our state.

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):

Kansas must stabilize the revenue side of the state budget. Kansas cannot afford to continue to borrow from KDOT, delay payments to KPERS and make other irresponsible fiscal decisions. When cuts must be made to state budgets, those cuts must be done with great care rather than the legislature passing on their own responsibilities and abdicating their appropriations authority to the governor.

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):

The so called "block grant" must be replaced with a new formula. Any new formula must begin with the real costs for delivering a high quality education. Any new formula should be created with input from school boards, superintendents, teachers, parents and business leaders. A new formula must meet the dual needs of adequacy and equity while accounting for the changing nature of a 21st century education.

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

Affordability is a key component of providing access to all students. Further, personal debt from higher education must be a real concern both in terms of accessibility and a limiting factor to future economic growth. An affordable quality higher education system is key to helping Kansans escape poverty and matching workforce needs with skilled workers.

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

I oppose spending public tax dollars to provide vouchers, scholarships, or tax credits to non-public or home schools as such proposals will divert needed resources from public schools and lack oversight to how tax dollars are being spent.

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

I would work with area chambers and business leaders to understand the needs of employers and employees. I would support maintaining competitive state and local economic development tools that can attract or retain a variety of job creation and capital investment opportunities, including continuing to improve the effectiveness and financial return of state incentive programs.

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):

I support a sales tax promised to citizens to be spent on roads, to be spent on roads. The legislature is raiding these funds to pay for a failed tax experiment, resulting in many projects being canceled even while reports indicate serious issues with the state of our infrastructure. Safe roads are key to public safety and providing the infrastructure business needs to grow. Not to mention the thousands of jobs lost to the lack of road maintenance just in the last year.

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):

Immigration policy is largely a federal issue. I oppose state policies or restrictions that add costs or time-consuming mandates. If there are ways the state can add its voice to that of businesses to help provide the necessary workforce to grow our economy, I would work to find those ways.

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

Whenever possible, decisions are best left to employers and employees. Decisions about employment practices and benefits should not substantially disadvantage business by subjecting businesses or employees to regulations that create systematic disadvantages to specific locales.

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 current tax policy is broken and has brought our state to the brink of bankruptcy; we must change course in order to be fiscally responsible. I will take a balanced approach where everyone pays their share for the basic services Kansans use. The current tax plan punished hard-working Kansans, and rewarded a select few. It left the state insolvent resulting in Washington-style borrowing and deficit spending. I will work to restore fiscal responsibility and a balanced budget as a Kansas value.

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

My opponent has consistently supported Governor Brownback's failed tax policy that has increased our state's indebtedness and reduced the stability and predictability necessary for economic growth. My opponent has a fundamental disregard for constituents. I believe to best represent constituents you must interact and work collaboratively with constituents.