

1. How has your background prepared you to serve in this role? My background provides me with a perspective that is unique in the Oklahoma State House. As a single income parent from a working class background, I understand the day to day struggles of working class Oklahomans because I live them too. I have first-hand experience with poverty, with struggling to pay bills, with fighting to make sure my children get the best possible education. I've been through our workers' compensation system and seen how it favors businesses over injured workers. I've gone years without health insurance because it was far too expensive to pay for and worried that one illness or accident could financially destroy my family. As an early childhood educator, I've seen what undervaluing and underfunding education does to both children and teachers. I know how to help craft solutions to these problems because I have lived, and continue to live, these problems every day. My experience doesn't come from sitting on boards or working with lobbyists, it comes from living, working, and struggling along with my friends and neighbors every single day.

2. Why do you feel you're most qualified to be the next State Representative from State House District 66? As noted above, my work and life experience have prepared me to serve. My perspective as a young, single income parent lets me see things differently than most State Legislators, allowing me to bring new solutions to old problems. I can, and will, work with any member who is serious about solving our problems, especially on education, as evidenced by the support and help I've gotten not only from my Democratic primary opponent Rusty Rowe, but one of my Republican opponents, Brian Jackson.

3. What is your stance on State Question 801, which would amend the State Constitution to expand the use of ad valorem taxes levied by school districts to allow use for operations? I am firmly against SQ 801. SQ 801 doesn't actually increase funding to schools in any way, it just shifts the burden from one source of funding to another.

There are three problems with that: first, it shifts the burden for funding schools

from the legislature to counties and school districts. The Legislature does not need another excuse to not do its job, but 801 will allow the Legislature to pass the buck by telling districts and counties that if they want more funding, they can raise local property taxes. Second, it will force districts and counties to make impossible choices between shifting property tax funds from other services to schools or raising property tax rates, which will disproportionately hurt working class residents. Third, it creates even more inequality between districts. Schools located in districts with already high property values will outpace districts in low value areas. Oklahoma's children should be able to get a great education regardless of what zip code they live in, and SQ 801 will make that more difficult, if not impossible.

4. Do you support the tax hike package passed last session to fund teacher pay raises? Why or why not? I do support the tax hike package passed last year, and would have voted for it had I been in the Legislature. However, I would have much rather supported a more robust package with a 7% GPT, a repeal of the capital gains tax deduction, restoration of the high income tax bracket, and increased classroom funding, not just teacher pay raises. We are not in a budget crisis with consistent revenue failure because working class people aren't paying enough. Ordinary Oklahomans should not be paying the same tax rate as CEOs and NBA superstars.

5. What are the most pressing issues facing the state in the next five years or so? How would you solve them? I think there are four pressing issues we must address in order to make Oklahoma the state it can and should be for all of us. First, obviously, is education. We need to restore classroom funding and respect the professionalism of our teachers by giving them the tools to do their jobs while paying them a competitive wage. Second, we must address the growing health care crisis in Oklahoma, especially in rural areas. By taking the Medicaid expansion and increasing revenue, we can stop rural hospitals from closing, make sure thousands more Oklahomans have health

insurance, and create more good paying jobs in health care. Third, we absolutely must reform our criminal justice system and reduce incarceration rates. We are number one in the world in incarceration and that is simply ridiculous, not to mention fiscally unsustainable. We have to offer real opportunities for rehabilitation, reform our cash bail system, and stop warehousing people in private prisons that have a financial incentive for incarceration. Finally, we must fix our broken workersâ€™ compensation system and protect the rights of workers.

Many people here in District 66 work hard, dangerous jobs and they should know that if they are injured, Oklahoma will take care of them first, not corporate profits.

6. What should be done to make the state budget solvent for the future and ensure critical functions of government receive adequate funding? First, while I am encouraged that we managed to bring the GPT back to 5%, it isnâ€™t enough. We should restore it to 7%. We should stop undervaluing our state and our resources to appeal to the wealthiest industry in human history. The oil and gas are here and they arenâ€™t going anywhere. Every time we give the oil and gas industry a discount, we undervalue our own resources and we are better than that. Second, we must repeal the capital gains tax exemption. It hasnâ€™t increased growth or investment in our state and instead gives massive benefits to a handful of wealthy families and corporate agriculture operations at great cost to the state budget. Third, we must restore the high income tax bracket. If we still need more revenue after those measures, only then should we look at taxes on gas or other forms of consumption that would disproportionately burden working class Oklahomans.

7. What should be done to reduce the stateâ€™s incarceration rate? First, many of those incarcerated in Oklahoma have not been convicted of a crime. They are in jail awaiting trial because they cannot afford bail. Because people who post bail are not eligible for a public defender, many are stuck in jail because they cannot afford to both post bail AND pay for an expensive private attorney. Ending cash bail for all but the

most serious of crimes or flight risks will immediately lower jail populations and reduce our incarceration rates. Second, our state's insistence on long jail sentences for relatively minor, non-violent drug crimes has not worked. Rates of drug use have not decreased, and our prison population has skyrocketed. State Questions 780 and 781 from 2016 were a good start, but must be fully funded and implemented. Third, we must create and fund rehabilitation, job training, and other quality of life programs that will help those currently incarcerated be productive citizens upon release. Finally, we must support District Attorneys who take smart approaches to prosecution and crime prevention rather than being "tough" just for the sake of being "tough".

8. Sandites want to see more economic development in their community. What's your take on incentives and what the best, most responsible ways to attract new business are? Certain targeted incentives may be useful in certain circumstances, but we must address other fundamental issues first. Businesses want to move to communities where their existing employees will be happy and where they can easily recruit new employees. That starts with core services like education and health care. The more attractive a place to live we make Sand Springs, the easier it is to convince businesses to move their operations and their employees here. Yes, in some cases, certain tax incentives can make the difference between equally attractive relocation choices, and I will support them where they make sense. But I am more focused on making Sand Springs a great place to live for our current residents and those who would consider moving here.

9. What should be done to make sure hospitals in the state are financially healthy and provide access to health care for Oklahomans? We must take the Medicaid expansion. That will not only cover thousands of Oklahomans with health insurance, but will help keep our rural hospitals open and operational. Further, better health care will mean more productive workers and new health care jobs for Oklahomans.

10. What is your stance on school vouchers? I am 100% against school vouchers. First and foremost, public money is for public schools, period. I'm perfectly fine with the

existence of private schools, and I have no problem with parents who make that choice for their children, but it should be their choice and their responsibility to pay for it. Vouchers pull money out of public schools where that money could be used to help many children. Furthermore, if we dump public money into private schools, then they should be forced to maintain the same standards as public schools, which defeats the point of them being private. Rachel Snyder 918-581-8315 rachel.snyder@sandspringsleader.com