



WHO'S FOR KIDS AND WHO'S JUST KIDDING?

How to make your vote count for Arizona's children.

This November, we will elect all 90 legislators, all 6 representatives in Congress, and a U.S. senator. These elections will profoundly affect the lives of Arizona's children. But kids can't vote. It is up to you to be their political voice. You can tell the politicians that kissing babies is not enough.

Arizona ranks a dismal 41st in the nation on key measures of child well-being. Despite our dramatic growth, more and more children in Arizona are growing up poor, and the average income of families with children is falling. To build a better quality of life, we need specific, realistic plans that will help parents give their children the health, education, safety and security they need to make tomorrow's Arizona second to none.

This election season, ask candidates tough questions and check their answers. Vote for candidates who put children at the top of their agenda. One of the most important responsibilities of our elected leaders is to provide opportunities for the next generation. These fact sheets can help you find out *Who's for Kids and Who's Just Kidding?*

Here you will find specific facts and questions you can use to find out the candidates' positions on issues affecting children. Use these questions at candidate forums or in letters and telephone calls to the candidates.

For more information about who's for kids and who's just kidding, check out *The Arizona Republic's* elections web site. All the candidates were asked the same questions about kids, and their responses are detailed in Part 5 of: www.arizonarepublic.com/opinions/elections/questions.

BE SURE TO VOTE ON NOVEMBER 7 TO MAKE YOUR VOICE COUNT FOR KIDS!

Child Abuse and Neglect

- During the month of March 2000, more than 3,000 children in foster care never saw their caseworker at all. Yet, state policy requires a personal visit at least once a month so that caseworkers can help move abused and neglected children into permanent homes.
- A child in foster care waits more than 2 years, on average, to be adopted. Many wait much longer.
- Fewer than 15% of the child abuse and neglect cases investigated by Child Protective Services ultimately result in services or follow-up for families.

Question: Do you support improving caseworker salaries and training and reducing caseloads so that CPS caseworkers can give children in foster care the attention they need? How would you connect more families with services?

Families and Taxes

- During the 1990s, Arizona led the nation in state tax cuts. But we also led the nation in the poverty rate among working families and in falling incomes for low- and middle-income families with children.
- In 1996, Arizona had the 8th highest sales tax burden in the nation. The vast majority of Arizona families pay more in sales taxes than in any other state or local tax.
- Arizona's income tax is one of the lowest in the nation. Personal and corporate income taxes make up almost half of all state revenue. The income tax is the only tax in Arizona that does not place a larger burden on poor families than rich families.

Question: Do you support cutting or eliminating Arizona's corporate and personal income taxes? If a ballot proposition passes to eliminate Arizona's income taxes, which programs would you cut or which taxes would you raise to balance the budget?

Children's Health

- Arizona has the second highest rate of uninsured children in the country and the vast majority have parents who work but aren't offered or can't afford family health coverage.
- Uninsured children don't get the health care they need when they need it. Compared to children with health insurance, they are less likely to see a doctor and dentist regularly, less likely to be immunized, and less likely to be in good health.
- Many working parents don't know their children may qualify for AHCCCS or KidsCare health coverage. Other parents need help to complete the enrollment forms and paperwork requirements.

Question: Should the state publicize AHCCCS and KidsCare health insurance programs and help parents to enroll their children? What else should the state do to provide health care options to families who can't get private coverage?

Child Care and Family Support

- Neuroscience research confirms that the quality of early care and education have a lifelong impact on children's brains and behavior.
- Quality child care depends on stable, well-trained caregivers who can create a safe and nurturing learning environment. But most children in Arizona don't have that kind of child care.
- Early childhood efforts in Arizona such as prenatal outreach, parenting education, family mentoring, and quality preschool have been proven to prevent child abuse; reduce juvenile crime, drug use, school dropout, and smoking; improve family income; and promote children's healthy development.

Question: Do you believe that the current requirements for teacher staffing ratios and health and safety regulations are sufficient to give children safe and nurturing child care? What plans do you have to help more children start school healthy and ready to learn?

Education

- Arizona has the second worst percent of teens who are high school dropouts in the nation.
- Arizona ranks 47th lowest in the nation on school operational spending per pupil.
- Arizona's school spending per pupil declined continuously for nearly a decade – 1989 to 1997. Spending per pupil in 1999 was 6.5% **below** spending in 1989.

Question: What steps should Arizona take to improve student outcomes? Is increased school funding for education needed to achieve these goals?

BE SURE TO VOTE ON NOVEMBER 7 TO MAKE YOUR VOICE COUNT FOR KIDS!

