

PAGE 1: Five Brief Questions on Conditions for Kids

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**Q1: Address**

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**Q2: Arizona depends on elected leaders to make smart policy decisions that will create the conditions for individuals, families, and businesses to succeed. During the Great Recession Arizona suffered a high rate of people losing their homes, job losses around the state, and huge drops in state revenue. The major ongoing statewide policy directions have been shrinking state government, cutting spending in public K-12 and higher education, eliminating safety net strategies for struggling families, and phasing in additional permanent tax cuts. What direction do you support going forward to promote economic health for families and the state? (Check all that apply)**

Invest in roads, water supply, and other infrastructure.

Strive for Arizona to build a strong and educated workforce with revenue sources and investments in education and family support.

Comments

For too long, the legislature has failed to prioritize policies that will both strengthen our economy and promote economic health for families. We must responsibly restore funding to our public schools in order to develop our future workforce. We should prioritize infrastructure investment to create near-term job opportunities and lasting economic benefits. Effective preventive measures that support families and keep children safe are cost effective and beneficial. Instead of simply shrinking government and reducing revenue, we need to elect leaders who will develop a long-term vision for our state that includes world-class public schools, thoughtful infrastructure and a responsible social safety net.

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## 2016 Candidate Questionnaire

**Q3: Arizona stands out among the states in skyrocketing growth in the number of children living away from their families in temporary foster care due to abuse or neglect. The consequences include huge expense to taxpayers, an overwhelmed and unsustainable child protective services system, a shortage of foster families with children left sleeping in offices and living in shelters, and life-changing trauma for thousands of children. Do you support more focus on strategies like parent mentoring, child care assistance, family counseling and monitoring, and substance abuse treatment to prevent family crisis and help more children stay safely with their families?**

Yes,

Comment

A healthy, secure family is essential not only for a child to thrive, but also for communities to thrive. To combat the staggering increase in the number of children in foster care, we must implement a range of changes to the child protective services system. It is critical that we strengthen effective programs to prevent family crisis and keep children safe, including counseling services, child care assistance, and substance abuse treatment. The crisis at the Department of Child Safety is unacceptable and we must prioritize reforms that keep children safe and support vulnerable families.

**Q4: Business CEOs, parents, and teachers across the state are calling for increased investments in public education. The Arizona Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC) data show a 25% drop in total state funding for K-12 education per student – a drop of \$1,200 per student from 2008 to 2016. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), just over 1 in 3 eighth grade students in Arizona score proficient in math and fewer than 1 in 3 fourth grade students score proficient in reading. The new withdrawals from the State Land Trust approved by voters for ten years in Proposition 123 settle inflationary funding, but restore less than \$1 for every \$5 of what's been cut from the state budget for schools. Will you support increased investments in the state budget every year for: a) a workforce of qualified teachers with competitive compensation and quality professional development; b) classroom curriculum and supplies with updated textbooks and technology; and c) school building maintenance and repair to give students safe, clean, and functional places to learn.**

Yes,

Comments

Arizona's failure to invest in our workforce, through investment in education, has devastating long-term consequences. We must increase funding for teacher salaries, smaller class sizes, updated curricular materials and technology — all essential to creating a well-educated, competitive workforce that will attract high-quality jobs to our state. Now that Prop. 123 has passed, it is imperative that a long-term plan be developed to provide additional funding beyond the inflation settlement. We must commit to the restoration of the funds cut from K-12 education, early childhood education, and all-day kindergarten.

## 2016 Candidate Questionnaire

**Q5: Reading proficiency by third grade is the most important predictor of high school graduation and career success. In 2016, 6 in 10 Arizona third graders failed the AzMerit reading test. Reading success begins long before third grade. Many children start Kindergarten already behind their peers; poor children have heard 30 million fewer words in their young lives. The high cost of quality child care and preschool education put them out of reach for many hardworking parents (costs of up to \$8,000 per year or more). Often, the children who start out behind stay behind. Please indicate the strategies you would support to promote reading success:(Check all that apply)**

Educational programs to help parents read and sing with their young children and prepare them for kindergarten.

State funding to help working parents afford quality preschool and child care education.

Professional reading coaching for child care teachers and elementary school teachers.

An Early Literacy Grant Program for schools, child care, preschools and community programs to improve reading readiness.

Comments

The research is undeniable. We must invest in our young children through quality child care and early childhood education if we are to bridge the achievement gap. These are cost-effective programs that improve future academic success.

**Q6: Arizona has cut taxes every year (except one) for the past 26 years. Tax cuts passed just since 2009 will remove \$900 million from the state budget every year when they are phased in. Tax credits, like tax cuts, are permanent because they require a 2/3 vote of the legislature plus the signature of the governor to reverse or reduce. Tax credits have been growing far faster than state revenue, the state's economy, or state investments in public education without any evidence that they have created a single job. The amount taken out of state revenues for tax cuts and tax credits is not available to invest in public district and charter schools. What are your priorities for tax policy?(Check all that apply)**

Cap the growth in tax credits. ,

Take a time out from tax cuts to reinvest in public education.

Adopt tax policies that make the system more fair for low and middle income families.

Comments

We must carefully examine all tax cuts and tax credits to determine which are working to improve educational opportunities and incentivize job growth, and which are simply giveaways that deplete our available resources. Instead of additional tax cuts and credits, we must prioritize necessary investments in education and workforce development.