



CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

(PLEASE PRINT)

Candidate Name: Jennifer J. Smith

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Position Seeking: Iowa House District 72

Candidate signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer J. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed over a light gray rectangular background.

Date: 26 September 2022

Please limit your response to 50 words per question

1. Do you have any previous legislative experience? If so, please explain.

Yes No

Explain:

2. Do you/have you ever owned a business? If yes, please explain.

Yes No

Explain:

3. If elected, what would be your top three legislative priorities & why?

Education – As an educator, I am quite concerned our youth are not getting the basic skills needed in order to be able to live successful and productive lives, especially in the global market. We need to get back to teaching the basic of mathematics, true history, reading, writing, and civics. We are spending too much time on social issues and social activism within the classroom.

Protecting Families – Parents are the ones who are responsible for raising their children, not the government or educational institutions. Parents need to be able to be informed concerning their children’s education and health related concerns.

Community Safety – We need to support our law enforcement and first responders. Laws need to be enforced. Picking and choosing which laws are enforced and which perpetrators will be punished based on some criterion outside of the crime itself is only putting residents and businesses at risk. An economy and society cannot function if there is not consistent enforcement of the laws.

4. What is your position on the use of Tax Increment Financing?

Support Oppose Other

Explain: If used carefully, they can be beneficial. However, they can be over-used and abused. It should not be the first option for development projects.

For the following questions, please keep your answers to 200 words or less.

5. Workforce is the number one issue facing the business community. Whether that's retaining current talent, attracting new talent to the area, or developing the pipeline businesses are struggling in Iowa. How do you plan to invest in talent attraction, development, and retention in your role if (re)elected?

Reducing taxes is one way to make sure individuals are attracted to Dubuque and Iowa. Allowing families to keep more of what they earn will increase the number of people who want to come to Iowa.

6. Higher education, whether a four-year degree, two year degree, or a certificate program can help professionals meet the needs of employers and attain higher wages. Developing talent and connecting that talent to local jobs is critical – but we must provide high quality educational opportunities for that pipeline to exist and grow. How will you support higher education, including the private colleges, in Dubuque County?

A lot of the issues that we currently have in the college system are at the federal level due to the government takeover of student loans. At a more local level, colleges need to focus on the skills desired by employers, and not concentrate on social issues. Curriculums are too focused on global issues rather than making sure students are receiving the skills required to be successful in the “real world”.

7. Transportation, Childcare, and Housing are significant barriers to employment. How in your role would you seek to address issues in access to childcare, attainable housing, and effective/efficient transportation?

I would encourage cooperation between businesses and public transportation to aid in transporting workers to their places of employment, especially for entry level jobs that are 2nd and 3rd shifts. It is difficult for an individual to take these jobs if public transportation is not running during these hours. A partnership would aid in reducing community costs, provide workers with transportation, and allow employers to increase the size of the worker pool. I also believe there could be some sort of child care incentives for these same shifts to be available at the place of business.

8. Air service is crucial to maintaining the Dubuque regions access to the global marketplace. Air service assists in attraction and retention of businesses and employees to our area. How do you see the State playing a role in restoring and protecting air service in Dubuque?

Air travel is critical to conducting business in today's economy. Increasing businesses in the Dubuque area will increase the demand for air service, which will attract airlines to the area. The State can help by making Iowa, and in particularly Eastern Iowa, to be more business friendly. A lot of the issues I see with attracting airlines is outside of the control of the State due to Federal guidelines and fuel costs. I also believe Dubuque could benefit by including routes that are direct to locations other than Chicago.

9. Tax increment financing is one of the most important, and valuable tools for local government to partner with private business to create economic growth and development. What is your philosophy on TIF and will you actively work to protect TIF in its current form?

If used carefully, they can be beneficial. However, they can be over-used and abused. It should not be the first option for development projects. I do not want to eliminate TIF as an option.

10. Incentives are a key piece of the puzzle when it comes to attracting new business investment into the state. What can we do to protect current incentives and is there anything you would like to change or see expanded beyond what currently exists?

Tax credits and incentives help bring in businesses, however it also gives reason to leave the community when the credit has expired. The incentive needs to be enough to entice the firm, yet not so large it results in the firm exiting the community after the expiration. IBM is an example. I feel a more consistent tax code would be of greater benefit to attract firms since they would be able to plan for long term investment in Iowa.

11. The state of Iowa recently passed changes to Iowa's tax law, lowering the individual and pass-through rate to 3.9% by 2026 and the corporate tax rate to 5.5% over an undefined period of time. What is your opinion of the tax reform package and will you fight to protect it?

I am fully in favor of the tax reform package and will do everything I can to protect it. Iowa's corporate tax rate has been among the highest in the nation, and has been a hinderance in the ability to attract new business. With the increase in working from home, now is the time to attract new workers and businesses to Iowa. Reducing tax rates will help in this goal.

12. What is your approach to regulation? The Chamber advocates for the government to approach business with a light-touch, focused on regulating bad actors while holding others harmless.

I believe businesses thrive when there is as little government intervention in business activities as possible. Businesses are in the position to understand what is needed most by their customers, workers, and suppliers, not the government. Regulations in general are a heavy handed way to reign in those who are not operating in a way someone who is uninvolved in the industry feel they should be operating.

13. What would you like to see the Chamber working on over the coming years?

The Chamber is an amazing organization and I support the activities and initiatives pursued.