



CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

(PLEASE PRINT)

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Position Seeking __State Representative for Iowa HD 67__

Candidate signature: ____  _____ Date: __09/30/22_____

Please limit your response to 50 words per question

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

No

Explain:

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

Yes

Explain: **I ran a strategic consulting firm for a few years that focused on enterprise strategic planning using the Balanced Scorecard model.**

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

a. Address the labor market shortage

i. Improve education

ii. Improve quality of life

iii. Improve childcare and healthcare access/outcomes

All three priorities are centered around attracting workers and businesses to Iowa. Quality schools, quality of life, and access to affordable childcare and healthcare will attract working families to our state. The global economy is changing, more manufacturing will return to the U.S. Iowa needs to be competitive and this will not happen by accident.

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

Support

Explain: I support TIF's in Iowa because I trust Iowa's local governments to do right by their communities. There needs to be transparency and public input to ensure the TIF is clearly providing community benefits. I support scorecards / metrics to ensure the promised benefits are delivered and if not the TIF language allows for it to be dissolved.

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?

We need to think systemically and understand how government can play a key role in creating a state that is attractive to both working families as well as potential businesses. This means we must invest in our critical infrastructure, education, healthcare, childcare, and quality of life initiatives (think clean waters), affordable housing, if we want people to remain or relocate to Iowa. Iowa also has affordable housing and good communities, this is an opportunity for us to attract remote workers who want to raise their families in one of our great communities. I support Spanish being part of Iowa's K-12 curriculum as a bilingual workforce will have value in the future economy since many of the low-skilled work will likely be done by workers who speak Spanish and more commerce will shift to Central / South America as fragile supply chains, depopulation, and shipping costs make Asian manufacturing less attractive. Iowa's central location and access to water makes us attractive to businesses reshoring production, much of which will require high-skilled workers. What we don't have is the people—as noted earlier, high quality schools, affordable public universities, solid childcare and healthcare are key strategic objectives if we hope to attract, develop, and retain high skilled workers.

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?
As a college business professor of strategy the past 11 years, I am well aware of the need to develop talent. Having put myself through college while working 25-30 hours each week and 60-70 hrs during summer jobs, I am a believer in teenagers working and helping to pay for their own education should they decide to go to college or private high school in Iowa. I would like to see a teenage/young adult educational 401K program for Iowa's medium and small businesses where teens set aside money for college or to attend private high school, those funds are then matched by the business supported with tax credits from the government. This allows the teens to have some skin in the educational game, as importantly, it teaches teens how to work. We also must invest in our K-12 schools and reduce the cost of our in-state public schools—this requires funding. Working families want their children to have access to quality education and affordable colleges. I'd also like to see more digital badging or micro-credentialing provided by our state schools in partnership with businesses to support adult and continuing education. Finally, I support an educator's bill of rights—our schools will only be as good as the teachers we employ. Iowa's teachers need to be fairly compensated and more importantly respected. Too many people, including politicians, have too many opinions on how teachers should do their jobs. The bill of rights will establish expectations, processes and boundaries regarding schooling in Iowa. Bottom line: Iowa is competing for talent and right now we have little to differentiate us from other states.

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?

Iowa ranks 34th for childcare availability. We need to set the subsidy reimbursement rates in a more flexible fashion using a model that reflects the actual cost to providers. This should allow better wages that will be necessary to attract workers into childcare centers. A more cost-centric reimbursement, combined with grants for underserved populations and rural communities, and teenage educational savings, will go a long way in attracting more childcare workers, including teens. In terms of housing, we need to re-look at government regulations that might be driving up the costs of housing and see about temporary moratoriums where it makes sense to get us through this crisis. Government incentives, including subsidies and tax credits, as well as TIFs, are other tools to help communities increase housing supplies. As for transportation, a systems approach—coordinating state and local agencies to ensure a more connected regional transportation system is a must. When building affordable housing, consider locations that maximize transportation hubs. A systemic approach can also bridge to quality of life initiatives when considering housing and transportation. For example, create more city/county trails / bike paths to allow workers to bike to work during warmer months.

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?

The state can bring the tools of government to bear on this issue—so tax incentives, infrastructure investments, etc. The state also plays a role in creating demand for air service—namely by attracting more businesses as well as tourists to the greater Dubuque area. The Field of Dreams project is huge for Dubuque County—we’ve built it, they are coming, we have a lot to offer with the River Museum, Grand Harbor, etc. but even more needs to be done to make the area a true tourist destination. Knowing many little leaguers will be coming to the FOD, I support the idea of an Eastern Iowa children’s museum with a baseball theme similar to the St Louis Children’s museum—a huge indoor playground made with recycled goods. State grants to support more tourist-centric businesses are also appropriate. The state has invested quite a bit in the FOD, so it makes sense to continue investing in the surrounding area to attract tourists to eastern Iowa.

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?

As noted above, I support TIF's as long as there is oversight, public input, and local governments have an ability to dissolve a TIF if the business is not meeting its promises. I trust local governments to right by their communities.

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?

Consider what is happening in the global business world today: 350,000 jobs reshored to the U.S. last year, tight labor markets as a result of depopulation in every developed country, fragile/costly trans-oceanic supply chains pushing firms to shorter, more regional supply chains. Massive changes are coming to the U.S. business community and Iowa needs to get ahead of this. The best thing we can do to attract businesses to our state is to have a well-educated, high-skilled, and I believe bi-lingual (Spanish), workforce. This means we need to attract workers to our state—which means we need excellent schools, affordable in-state colleges, affordable and accessible housing, quality healthcare, affordable and accessible childcare, and quality of life (clean water, great parks, cultural activities, etc.) that attracts workers to our state. Requiring K-12 Spanish also provides an ESL infrastructure to support Iowa attracting more low-skilled labor, much of which will be speaking Spanish. All this means we need people and businesses paying taxes and we need a state government that is willing to invest its tax revenues back into the state. Thinking systemically, we also need to respect women's reproductive rights as states with restrictive abortion bans will have a lower participation in the workforce by women. Likewise, how many female professionals will want to relocate to a state that disregards their bodily autonomy?

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 do not support the flat tax, I will not fight to protect it because it does greater harm to our business community in the long run. The progressive tax has served the U.S. well for over 150 years and the corporate tax cuts as well as the flat tax were nothing more than political ploys. I've never heard a wealthy person in Iowa or a company in Iowa complain about our state taxes. Government works—it's not always pretty, but I have a high opinion of Iowans and I know many people who work in state government--good people doing good work to make our state the best it can be. Iowa is in a fight for talent and it will take investment, meaning tax revenues, by the government to give us competitive advantage that attracts workers and businesses to our state. Government also plays a key role in encouraging entrepreneurship, retaining talent, and helping existing businesses thrive. Iowa has many strengths that we need to leverage against current and future opportunities noted in my previous responses.

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 support common sense regulation; this includes reviewing standing regulations to see if they still make sense. I also support equity in regulations, meaning that some regulations for larger companies may not make sense or too expensive for smaller companies. Government should act to encourage business development but this is not without limits. We see today that too many industries are over-consolidated where just a few companies own more than 80% of a market and this brings harm to the consumers. So there is a line that government must walk between free markets flourishing and free markets being taken advantage of. My approach to regulation also depends on the issue. For example, I would like to see greater regulation regarding land ownership and land use in Iowa. I am not a fan of foreign countries or outside investors buying up all the farmland, driving up land costs, making it too expensive for the next generation of independent farmers to get started. I'm also not a fan of large factory farms that use millions of gallons of water from our aquifers but do not spend in the local economy for veterinary services, implement purchases, or feed mill services. So I see regulations as having the potential to burden as well as to help protect our local business.

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

I'd like to see the Chamber taking a more active role in promoting Iowa's critical infrastructure—education, healthcare, housing, childcare, quality of life—as essential pieces to making our state competitive to attract workers and businesses. Likewise, having the chamber hosting more public forums regarding ways to improve Iowa as a worker destination would be useful. Perhaps chamber resolutions supporting quality-of-life initiatives such as clean water, well maintained parks, etc. Could also help raise awareness of the important role government, at all levels, plays towards improving the business opportunities in Iowa. Finally, I think the chamber can also play a key role in supporting our teachers who have come under attack by extremists accusing indoctrination and calling for book bans on books that have been widely used for decades, with no evidence to support the accusations. Many local business already do a lot for our schools and teachers, but a chamber endorsement and support for our teachers carries weight. Too many colleges are avoiding education as a major and the disrespect shown to our teachers is a key reason why this is happening. Quality education and educators are very much in the interest of the Dubuque Chamber.