

#49

COMPLETE

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Q1

Candidate Information

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Q2

Office you are seeking (e.g. House, Senate, Governor):

State Representative

Q3

Legislative District (e.g. Chittenden, Senate, Addison-1):

Chittenden 6-2

Q4

No

Incumbent (select one):

Q5

Yes

Would you be interested in visiting a school in your district and meeting with local educators?

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Q6

Agree

On resisting austerity, do you

Q7

Yes

Do you wish to sponsor legislation on resisting austerity?

Q8

Anything you want to add on resisting austerity?

I am encouraged to see Vermont-NEA's framing of the larger economic policies at play in our country as well as the undermining of the social contract built during the New Deal era (designed to predominately benefit white folks of course). I would add that my economic justice platform is designed to work on small acts of resistance to austerity measures by implementing tangible economic policy to benefit working people and larger acts to begin to deconstruct neoliberal influences in how the state approaches raising revenue and funding state services.

The small, immediate policy changes include: increase the minimum wage to a real, livable wage, expand and modernize workers' rights to allow all employees just cause protection, expand unemployment benefits to include self-employed and gig economy workers, and expand the legal definition of subjects of bargaining to expand labor unions' ability to positively impact the lives of their communities. The larger policy changes include resisting attempts to reduce the size of state services and budgets, especially during the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and instead, raise revenue in familiar and unfamiliar ways. It begins with raising taxes on the wealthiest Vermonters, using state reserves (rainy day funds) designed to help with unexpected and historical budget shortfalls such as this, and considering using debt financing options to allow the Vermont economy to slowly and safely recover. These approaches can be steps to help regular Vermonters get back on their feet faster as other revenue streams come back online such as property tax payments, sales and use taxes, and tourism dollars.

Long term, I would hope to use more progressive funding models for education (shifting to a income tax based system for the majority of revenue vs. a property-based one as recommended by Public Assets Institute) and generating starting budget discussions with what is needed instead of what can be cut and how can we reduce overall spending. Our budget and how we raise revenue is a direct statement of our values and priorities as a state.

Page 3

Q9

Agree

On institutional racism, do you

Q10

Anything you want to add on institutional racism?

To be clear, I agree with the statement that institutional racism must be actively dismantled within all elements of state and local government and within institutions.

One of my three platform priorities is to advance justice for marginalized people. I would add that institutional racism actively harms Black, Brown, Indigenous and other people of color. We must work to dismantle and change existing laws and institutions to be less racist and then do more. We must work to understand, name and redress the harm that racism within policies, laws and governmental systems have created for generations people of color. This is work which should be informed and led by the BIPOC community and completed (the labor) by white identified people who have and continue to benefit from racism. (White) people who benefit most from a system cannot adequately see the necessary ways to dismantle it and redress harm on their own.

Page 4

Q11 **Agree**

On community schools, do you

Q12 **Yes**

Do you wish to sponsor legislation establishing community schools?

Q13

Anything you want to add on community schools?

I believe community schools should be adaptable to a community's local needs and thus they will look different from school to school. Beyond services, community schools should also improve and embrace meaningful community engagement in the schools to improve schools responsiveness and accountability to their local community. This could include setting participatory practices in setting the school budget, critically reviewing curriculum to reflect the community and world with a commitment to anti-racism and justice, and becoming a community hub for community meetings, adult learning and workforce development needs.

Page 5

Q14 **Agree**

On universal school meals, do you

Q15 **Yes**

Do you wish to sponsor legislation on universal school meals?

Q16

Anything you want to add on universal school meals?

Universal food access for students is as simple as it gets with social justice policy making.

Page 6

Q17 **Agree**

On student and staff safety, do you

Q18 **Yes**

Do you wish to sponsor legislation on student and staff safety?

Q19

Anything you want to add on student and staff safety?

This is a critical area to name the impacts of racism on our communities (trauma) as well as the ways implicit bias impacts how adults define disruptive behavior and decide what an appropriate response should be. I would hope a trauma informed approach would include a commitment to unpacking bias and racism within student behavior and discipline matters.

Page 7

Q20

Agree

On para-educators, do you

Q21

Yes

Do you wish to sponsor legislation on para-educators?

Q22

Anything you want to add on para-educators?

As most folk reading this questionnaire may know, I worked for over a decade at Vermont-NEA organizing and supporting the workplace rights and cultivating respect for the work of all support staff in Vermont schools in various ways. I led many support staff contract campaigns, supported the ESP Award to recognize the excellence and leadership of ESPs within the state, and cultivated the leadership development of many ESP leaders within Vermont-NEA over the years. I continue to be dedicated to the support staff, including paraeducators, being fully compensated (livable wages, affordable health care, professional development resources) and recognized for their vital work in the schools. Moreover, adequate staffing levels of support staff, training and resourcing supports the health of the entire school system.

Page 8

Q23

Agree

On school finance, do you

Q24

Yes

Do you wish to sponsor legislation on school finance?

Q25

Anything you want to add on school finance?

This approach to school financing is exactly what I hope to sponsor and lead on if elected. We need a more progressive funding solution that asks Vermonters to pay their fair share (income based) based on what they can afford to support our school system and move away from the residential property tax system.

Page 9

Q26

Agree

On public funded and provided Pre-K, do you

Q27

Yes

Do you wish to sponsor legislation on public funded and provided Pre-K?

Q28

Anything you want to add on public funded and provided Pre-K?

Increased funding for pre-K should be held by the public school system to allow access for low-income and less advantaged households. I also continue to support creative thinking of ways to leverage Act 166 and other state dollars with private child care providers to be more accessible to less advantaged households and children with various needs. As a board member of a private child care program, I see many ways that a statewide system could better support identifying, training and support staff to recruit and enroll more economic diverse families and also be prepare to support the needs of more diverse students.

Page 10

Q29

Agree

On health reform, do you

Q30

Yes

Do you wish to sponsor legislation on health care reform?

Q31

Anything you want to add on health care reform?

I agree we need to continue to make incremental changes to curb the cost-shifting of health care costs from employers to employees and controlling the overall cost of insurance plans, but the system is broken.

Health care is a human right. Health insurance should not be tied to employment status or cause financial hardship or bankruptcy. Period. We need Medicare for All on a federal level. For now, yes, expanding programs like Dr. Dynasaur, continuing to fully fund Medicare and Medicaid, and making sure all regions of the state can access health care clinics are critical next steps. We must also leverage state regulatory measures to prevent insurance companies from increasing insurance premiums, prescription drug costs and keep healthcare providers accountable in how they spend healthcare dollars. These are all steps that should bring us to a universal, accessible program. Without building the political will and courage to create a true alternative and transition plan, I fear we will never get there.

Page 11

Q32

Agree

On the right to strike, do you

Q33

Anything you want to add on the right to strike?

Again, as a former statewide organizer at Vermont-NEA who organized, supported and led teacher and support staff strikes, you will never see me waiver on this issue. The right to strike remains one of the most critical tools available to organized workers to right an imbalance of power in their workplace, protect their rights and fight for the needs of their communities.

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Q34

Agree

On teachers rights and professional growth, do you

Q35

Yes

Do you wish to sponsor legislation on teachers right and professional growth?

Q36

Anything you want to add on teachers right and professional growth?

I completely agree with this position. I see this change in policy as part of a multi-mode approach to closing the gender wage gap. If a teacher, who are mostly female-identified, is restricted from making a career move through policies such as this, it can likely have a negative impact on their overall earning power over the life of their career.

Page 13

Q37

Agree

On retirement security for teachers, do you

Q38

Anything you want to add on retirement security for teachers?

Everyone should deserve to retire with economic dignity. As public employees, teachers deserve to be paid what has been promised as part of taking a public service job. This means maintaining a healthy retirement system that is fully funded and not building out funding shortfalls that would cause the system to be in crisis down the road.

Page 14

Q39

Agree

On good cause employment, do you

Q40

Yes

Do you wish to sponsor legislation on good cause employment?

Q41

Anything you want to add on good cause employment?

This is part of my platform. I call it "just cause" protection, but it is the same thing. I am glad to see Vermont-NEA is interested in advancing this right for unorganized workers.
