

#93

COMPLETE

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Q1

Candidate Information

Name	Ruth Hardy
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Q2

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

VT Senate

Q3

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

Addison District

Q4

Yes

Incumbent (select one):

Q5

Yes

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

Page 2

Q6

Agree

On resisting austerity, do you

Q7

Yes

Do you wish to sponsor legislation on resisting austerity?

Q8

Respondent skipped this question

Anything you want to add on resisting austerity?

Page 3

Q9

Agree

On institutional racism, do you

Q10

Anything you want to add on institutional racism?

As a school board member and a member of the Senate Education Committee, I have initiated and actively supported work aimed at creating anti-racism educational policies, curriculum, hiring practices, and student support systems. As a school board member in ACSD, I championed the creation of an Anti-Bias & Racism Taskforce that was made-up of a majority of BIPOC. As a senator, I was a co-sponsor of Act 1 which created the Ethnic Studies Working Group. Our schools and educators can be leaders in creating a more inclusive, anti-racist Vermont.

Page 4

Q11

Agree

On community schools, do you

Q12

Yes

Do you wish to sponsor legislation establishing community schools?

Q13

Respondent skipped this question

Anything you want to add on community schools?

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?

I have actively worked to expand access to school meals and local foods as school board member and senator. I believe we absolutely should have universal school meals, and we also need to ensure that the funding mechanism is sustainable for all schools to be able to afford to do so.

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?

I absolutely support more professional development for educators, and I know that students who experience ACEs can be particularly challenging to provide support and education. I also believe that we need to be cautious about how we frame "school safety" especially in light of national conversations about arming teachers and increasing a police presence in our schools, which I would absolutely oppose. So, yes to training and a thoughtful approach to meeting student needs that does not turn our schools into law enforcement institutions.

Page 7

Q20

Disagree

On para-educators, do you

Q21

No

Do you wish to sponsor legislation on para-educators?

Q22

Anything you want to add on para-educators?

This is a tough issue because I agree that students and teachers need support and assistance, and para-educators are often essential to this effort. However, in VT we can often rely too heavily on para-educators at the expense of providing the most appropriate and effective educator for our neediest students. The overuse of paras can also be expensive. So, I do believe that the state plays a role in setting standards for the delivery of educational services, particularly for high needs or special education students, and how the use of paras plays into this delivery.

Page 8

Q23

Disagree

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?

I have spent a significant portion of my career working on school finance issues and have considerable expertise in the area. While I agree that we need to ensure that Vermont's education finance system is as equitable as possible, moving funding solely to the income tax will not accomplish this. As we've seen during the COVID crisis, the income & sale taxes are not nearly as stable as the property tax, so this has created a crisis with our Ed Fund. In addition, because of the income sensitivity mechanism in our current formula, we already have considerable tax payer equity. I am more supportive of efforts to make the distribution of Ed Fund monies more equitable through efforts like those proposed in the weighting study.

Page 9

Q26

Don't Know

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?

I absolutely agree that we need to expand public funding for pre-K and that more schools should step up to provide this important educational opportunity. However, the issue is more complex than you lay out. While not necessarily a system I would design from scratch, our hybrid, public-private early childhood system in VT is necessary to meet the needs of all of the families and kids who need ECE slots. Private providers also generally provide full-year, full-time care, where schools do not. And, there services are generally high quality and standards-based. I know there is tension between school providers and private providers - I support both models, and believe we need to expand the knowledge, skills, and capacity of public programs, but at this educational level, it's unrealistic and detrimental to do so at the expense of private programs. We can find a collaborative solution to this problem.

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?

Yes, and realistically, we need the federal government as a partner and leader too. Our country needs to elect Democrats in 2020!

Page 11

Q32

Agree

On the right to strike, do you

Q33

Respondent skipped this question

Anything you want to add on the right to strike?

Page 12

Q34

Don't Know

On teachers rights and professional growth, do you

Q35

No

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'm not sure I fully understand this issue. Wouldn't this be a local contract, not a state-level, policy issue?

Page 13

Q37

Agree

On retirement security for teachers, do you

Q38

Anything you want to add on retirement security for teachers?

Yes, and it's going to be awhile before we have a budget surplus again...

Page 14

Q39

Don't Know

On good cause employment, do you

Q40

No

Do you wish to sponsor legislation on good cause employment?

Q41

Anything you want to add on good cause employment?

Colin & Jeff - is this about that obscure section of Title 16 we discussed in Committee? We were going to come back to that discussion at some point, I believe. I'm still open to that discussion.
