



For Arizona State Senate

Arizona Republic Candidate Questionnaire

What is the single biggest issue facing Arizona, and how would address it as a member of the Arizona Senate?

The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As of July 3, 2020, we do not yet know the revenue and expense impact of national, state, and local governments' regulations on public activities. Because of massive unemployment in Arizona and the shuttering of many businesses the state has been hit by four jolts to its balance sheet: drop in sales taxes collected, likely reduction in state income tax revenue, increased unemployment insurance costs and finally stresses to the state healthcare system and increased costs to fight the pandemic.

We have not seen revenue numbers up through the end of June for fiscal 2019-2020. When we see those numbers the legislature with the governor must make decisions on how to proceed with budgets for the 2020-2021 period. None of the options will be good and most will require that it will likely require some sort of "across-the-board" reductions in budgets throughout the state government.

This should be done with a consensus approach of both political parties in conjunction with the state administration.

What do you believe is the appropriate role of state government?

Unlike many in the Republican party, I believe that state government should have an expansive role in making sure that Arizona competes with other states by ensuring the best public school education system for ALL students in the state and investing in infrastructure in rural areas, We should no longer accept Arizona being near the bottom in many national state rankings.

The state government also has a moral responsibility to protect the health and rights of all its people. This requires elected officials to speak out forcefully and clearly on social justice issues including systemic racism, sentencing reform, LGBTQ rights, as well as women's health and choice decisions.

How would you seek to increase bipartisanship at the Legislature?

The single best way is to not have one-party control of all Governorship, and state legislature. That will force bipartisanship. Without that, if I was a member of the minority in the Senate, I would find issues of common purpose with members of the majority (such as increasing the gas tax or sentencing reform) and understand that I will not agree on many other issues, but should still work to create a working majority for issues I believe benefits all the people of the state.

Do Arizona's schools need more funding from the state government? If so, where should that money come from? If not, why not?



For Arizona State Senate

I want to first say when I speak about “schools” I am referring to public schools and the higher education system in Arizona. The state has consistently under invested in the public-school education system since at least 2009. The Republicans have refused to fund at the levels required by law. First, before anything else we need to fully fund at those levels.

I oppose using “budget tricks” to fund education. There are several possible avenues to be investigated to get additional funding.

- 1) Increase the highest state income tax bracket by 1% with the understanding that this tax will last until revenue, adjusted for inflation, meets 2008 levels plus 5% for three years.
- 2) Eliminate the corporate tax credit for private school STOs which drains the general fund of tax dollars.
- 3) Roll back targeted corporate tax breaks that only benefit specific industries.
- 4) Raise the corporate income tax rate by 1%.
- 5) Consider issuing state municipal bonds for funding of the Arizona Schools Facilities Board which distributes money for maintenance and new schools.

Do you support any new laws regarding the purchase or ownership of firearms?

This really should be done at the national level because it is so easy to move firearms across state lines. However, the state can do a few things that will help. Pass regulations on large-capacity magazines, demand that transactions at gun shows require registration, repeal limitations on municipalities gun buy-back programs. Increase background checks on people requesting concealed weapons permits, allow for a judicial “red flag” process for people with restraining orders, or known mental health issues.

What, if any, changes do you think are needed for Arizona’s election process?

I think Arizona is one of the “good guys” on this issue. We have the Permanent Early Voting List (PEVL). A big change would be to make the default option of any new or change registration to be automatically added to the PEVL. Voters could opt-out if they so desired.

I support the Arizona Secretary of State and the county election officers request for the 2020 general election to be allowed to send out vote-by-mail ballot requests to all registered voters not on the PEVL. We will still need to allow voting in person. Vote centers that can handle large number of voters in metro areas are essential to a smooth-running election. (This seemed to be a success in the recent Kentucky primary.)

I would like see more federal monies allocated to state election systems to ensure the security of the voting process with a consistent set of processes throughout the state and the same in-person voting machines with redundant technologies and counting methodologies.



For Arizona State Senate

What is the best way to improve Arizona's air quality and protect its water for future generations?

I must break this into two separate questions and answers. The air quality generally is pretty exceptional in the district I live in (that's why a lot of us live here.) Having grown up in the Los Angeles area of California I am aware of the challenges in large metro areas such as Phoenix. Don't fight increased fuel efficiency standards and emission standards for automobiles and more importantly commercial vehicles. Emissions tests need to remain mandatory in large metro areas. We also need to resist roll backs at the federal level of EPA requirements for both air and water. We were headed the right direction for both air and water prior to the Trump administration.

Water rights and groundwater depletion are a significant issue in southeast Arizona. The Willcox basin water table crisis has made national news, including the Arizona Republic, in the last two years. I support giving the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) more power to at least monitor non-residential wells throughout the state. We need to start the conversation by having the data to discuss the science of the crisis. I believe that legislation needs to be considered that:

Require large commercial wells throughout the state to have meters installed to monitor water use.

Allow rural areas that counties declare as threatened to opt in to metering wells in groundwater basins.

Expand existing rules to require developers of subdivisions to certify an adequate 100-year water supply to cover all areas of the state.

Change rules for creating INA (irrigation non-expansion areas) to make it easier to limit well drilling.

Do you support legalizing marijuana for recreational use by adults?

Yes. I would prefer to do it through legislation rather than by initiative. My concern is licensing. It seems that the ballot proposition cements in control of licenses by large corporate interests rather than opening the industry to a wide variety of small businesses. Also, by doing it through legislation, it is easier to come back in future years to make changes based on implementation over time.

What state law would you most like to see repealed?

Proposition 108 passed in 1992 that set a two thirds majority for any tax increase. Yes, none of us like to pay taxes, and this is a way to make it almost impossible to raise taxes, instead creating dubious runarounds such as the increase in the vehicle registration fee. I am opposed to supermajority requirements when it comes to tax policy. This means one third of the electorate has more power than two thirds, for me, that is not representative democracy.



For Arizona State Senate

What do you believe should be Arizona’s policy for access to abortion?

Women should always have the right to make decisions about their own health. In conjunction with their physician, they should be able to have unfettered access to medical procedures, including abortion. State government should stay out of medical decision making for women in Arizona.

How do you grade the governor’s handling of the coronavirus pandemic?

As of July 3, 2020: C- barely passing. He started out above average with at least facing the problem with some clear guidelines and an executive order early on in March. But as time went on and pressure increased from President Trump and conservative voices in the state Republican Party, he began to cave resulting in the premature expiration of his “shelter-in-place” executive order and allowing businesses to open with only minimal requirements and did not allow local governments the ability to require masks.

As cases and hospitalizations spiked, he opted to pass responsibilities down to the counties and cities about requiring masks in public and then did about turn – closing only a very narrow group of business. For example, why gyms, but not tattoo parlors? These decisions must be clearly explained to the public with the science and reasoning behind them. The governor has failed to get a consensus on his actions. A statewide mandate for mask wearing is now needed.

What if any changes should Arizona make to its tax policies?

As explained above first get rid of proposition 108. Next sunset all tax breaks and tax credits. I would like to see the amount of each of the current tax breaks and credits published each year somewhere on the state’s websites. I have been trying to get those numbers for two years. While we can’t stop it, I would encourage everyone to think twice about doing tax policy through the initiative process. There are too many special interests being protected through the ballot box.

Is there anyone you won’t take a campaign contribution from this year?

At first reading, I thought this question was rather humorous. Candidates have a low bar for campaign contributions. Being a clean elections candidate, I have specific restrictions on how much and from whom I can get contributions. As a matter of principle, I would not accept a contribution from any lobbyist. So far it has not happened; if elected, the same principle holds true.

Should Arizona spend more money on safety net programs, including unemployment insurance?

The state really doesn’t “spend” money on unemployment insurance benefits. This money is payroll based and paid into the state and federal unemployment insurance funds by an employer tax per dollar of employee salary. Yes, it is possible that when there is deficit in the fund, as is likely right now, that the state must borrow from the federal government to keep the fund solvent. However, rates are almost always increased on employers to bring the fund back to its proper levels. I believe that there is a need for reform of our unemployment insurance



For Arizona State Senate

system starting with an increase in the maximum of \$240 per week which ranks 49 out of fifty states with only Mississippi paying less.

Yes, we should spend more on safety net programs, but do we have the money to do so? Right now, for the next few years we are facing tough choices that probably mean the best we can do is hold steady at current funding levels for some programs, and hope that if the worst happens only small reductions will be needed.

Arizona has one of the highest rates of incarnation in the United States. What if any policy changes would you support to reduce the prison population?

A priority is to get rid of for-profit prisons. That can be done as their contracts expire. We should never have a profit motive for incarcerating people. We need sentence reform, including giving time-off credits for nonviolent offenders who participate in diversion programs. We need alternatives to cash bail that allow community service in more cases. Drug courts for both adults and minors, seem to have gone out of fashion; I would like to revisit funding them in rural areas.

Do you think people of color in Arizona are treated the same as whites? If not, what, if any, actions would take to address this disparity?

Having been in property management until 2016 here in Arizona I can tell you that yes, people of color are treated differently – even when there are non-discrimination laws in effect. It is disturbing and infuriating at the same time. I cannot speak to the day-to-day discrimination that I know exists because it doesn't happen to me. So, what can I do about it? First, listen carefully to what is being said by minority communities. As an elected official make sure that I reach out to EVERYBODY in my district to get their viewpoints. I will support programs targeted to underserved communities of color, particularly in education, healthcare and economic justice. One of the greatest disparities between whites and Blacks is in family wealth, a 10 to 1 factor. We need to create programs that help build savings and home equity for communities of color. One way to do that is to support living wage legislation.