

# 2020 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire

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LD 1

House of Representatives

**Q1** The COVID-19 pandemic has created an economic crisis with many Arizonans losing their jobs or dealing with a reduction in income. What strategies would you support to help Arizona workers and families recover from this economic crisis? (Answers in bold)

Increase Arizona's weekly unemployment benefit (which at \$240 is the second-lowest in the U.S.) to closer to the national average of \$490 per week.

Eliminate barriers to enrolling in and maintaining food support benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

**Replenish and create a designated funding source for the Housing Trust Fund to assist low-income residents and those at risk of eviction or experiencing homelessness.**

Increase state-funded childcare subsidies to enable more parents to return to the workforce.

None of the above

Other (please specify): **The economic threats to Arizonans continue to evolve as a result of the global pandemic from COVID-19. Difficult decisions will need to be made to keep the State budget balanced while promoting a robust economy. To help support Arizona workers and families to recover, we need to invest in our economy and society in general. The Paycheck Protection Act is a great example of the federal government stepping up to cover unemployment and/or underemployment support for employees until businesses can get back on their feet. The money coming from the CARES Act is a strategy that I support to invest in supporting Arizonans to recover from this economic crisis. Forward-looking, since I currently work full-time at a community college as a nursing professor, I also see the importance of education on raising our citizens out of poverty and promoting resiliency in times of economic crisis.**

**Q2** When the new legislature convenes in January, it is very likely lawmakers will be facing a significant revenue shortfall in order to maintain current ongoing funding of state government. If that is the case, would you support raising new revenue by raising taxes or reversing past tax cuts – like previous tax cuts for corporations or the wealthy – in order to avoid making budget cuts to things like public education, healthcare and other priorities? (Answers in bold)

Yes

No

Comment: **We don't need to raise taxes at this point as there are too many uncertainties, as well as an increase in the tax burden on those who are on a fixed income, low income, and/or no income would be a hardship. The uncertainties in the markets also make this an inopportune time to consider changes in taxes. Since COVID-19 hit Arizona, the State went from a \$1 billion excess to a \$1.1 billion deficit, thus demonstrating the wide variances in the market and timing. After the 2008 recession, we were able to come back and establish a fair-sized rainy**

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day fund. At this point, other forms of revenue generation need to be explored. Rather than cutting or increasing, let's consider incentivizing alternate revenue streams into the budget. Let's explore smart spending to support education and healthcare. One of my priorities is raising new revenue for education and healthcare. But just like I balance my own personal budget, I first need to know where the money is coming in and where the money is being spent. As a freshman legislator, I want to learn where the money is currently being allocated and the degree of transparency in the budget process that needs to be made. After figuring out where to reduce first that does the least harm to our economy, special considerations must be kept in mind for time-sensitive projects that smaller towns and municipalities depend on to keep their infrastructures running. Promises made need to be promises kept, such as the statewide teacher pay increases. Particular scrutiny needs to be made to where the most money is spent from our general fund, which is currently education and healthcare. The current threat to our budget from the unexpected global coronavirus pandemic demonstrates the importance of maintaining a robust Rainy Day Fund as we plan not only for the immediate future but for the future after this crisis is past.

**Q3** Which of the following do you support to create a fairer tax code for all Arizonans?  
(Answers in bold)

Repealing targeted, special interest sales tax exemptions for certain luxury items like country club memberships, fine art to out of state purchasers, and private jets.

**Enable legislators to evaluate whether tax credits are providing the desired return on investment by requiring corporations who claim tax credits to provide sufficient information on the jobs and economic benefits they are providing in exchange for the tax credit.**

Increase the minimum corporate tax that large corporations must pay no matter how many tax breaks they claim from \$50 to \$500 (73% of Arizona corporations currently pay \$50 or less in state income taxes).

Establish one formula for determining how multistate corporate income is taxed rather than allowing corporations to choose the formula which results in paying the least (Arizona is the only state in the country that allows this).

Repeal the special tax treatment individual taxpayers receive on long-term capital gains which an analysis shows that 83 percent of the benefits of this tax break went to the top 5 percent of wealthiest incomes in Arizona.

Requiring a sunset date for all new tax credits and sales tax exemptions to require the legislature to review each tax break every five years to evaluate whether Arizona is receiving the desired return-on-investment for the tax giveaway.

Other (please specify): **Arizona could do better by simplifying tax laws in the state. We have some of the most difficult income and sales tax laws in the country.**

**Q4** The effects of discrimination against Black, Latino and American Indians have lingered and manifested as racial inequalities in Arizona's economy today. What steps would you take as a state lawmaker to create a more racially equitable and inclusive economy? (500 words or less)

Answer: **Since I base my decisions on data, I am aware of socioeconomic determinants and their effects on communities. Racial identity has been linked to communities that lack healthcare and economic opportunity. As a nurse for the past 36 years, I am also aware of the inequities in healthcare and education for certain ethnic and racial groups. The first step in**

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creating a more racially equitable and inclusive economy is awareness of the issues and obstacles facing our citizens and then exploring the options that assist individuals to realize their full potential.

**Q5** Please share what your priorities will be as a state lawmaker to strengthen Arizona's workforce and economy so that all Arizonans have better opportunities to move up the economic ladder? (500 words or less)

**Answer:** I have priorities regarding public policy issues that aim to strengthen the workforce and economy. Healthcare, economic opportunity, and education are areas that I prioritize to help Arizonans have better opportunities to move up the economic ladder.

As a nurse, as well as a nursing educator, I have a deep understanding of healthcare policy and am prepared to narrow the gap between healthcare and healthcare policy. As I have been studying the work of the Legislature, I am ready to use my time and talents to serve on the Health and Human Services Committee. As the current President of my professional organization, I have been studying issues that challenge us in Arizona such as workforce supply and data, access to care, transparency in billing and services, and quality of care.

Since I currently work full-time at a community college, I see the importance of education in raising our citizens out of poverty. Higher education is tied to economic development, so it is essential to work as a legislator with higher education partners to advance support and funding for our colleges and universities as we enhance Arizona's competitiveness and prepare for the new economy. Partnerships need to be expanded and strengthened that expedite the pathways for learning from the high-schools to the community colleges, and then on to the universities. Funding for our public universities can be enhanced by partnerships from corporations that depend on graduates for their workforce. Legislators can help by promoting pathways that expedite student achievement into a competent workforce.

The teacher shortage in the K-12 system also needs to be addressed - Arizona has the third-highest ratio of students per teacher and is projected to have the most students per teacher by 2024. My parents were both educators, my father at the community college and my mother in the K-12 system. I have taught at our local community college for 25 years. A significant method to address the teacher shortage is to recruit, train, and retain educators. To recruit and train, people tend to stay where they are educated, so it is important to provide robust training programs at a reduced cost. Then to retain educators, it is essential to recognize their work financially and publicly. Recognizing good behavior motivates people to take pride in their work and do better for those they serve.

Thank you for this opportunity to consider these issues and for your interest in my campaign. These questions are great for every new candidate to consider as we look to how we can best advocate for the best interests of Arizona and help us to achieve our full potential. Thank you for this opportunity to consider these policies and priorities.