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COMPLETE

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Page 1: Welcome to the 2020 Legislative Candidate Survey

**Q1**

Name & District

Name	<b>JoAnna Mendoza</b>
Legislative District	<b>11</b>

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**Q3**

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?

**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.**

Other (please specify):

I fully support all of the strategies described above. Even prior to the pandemic, many working Arizonans struggled to make ends meet and put food on the table every month. The COVID-19 crisis has only made those disparities and inequalities more apparent. We need strategies that are focused on people, not the profits of large corporations or special interest groups. We need to do more to support working folks, both during the pandemic and as we work our way towards a recovery. It is imperative that we strengthen our social safety nets, including the expansion of unemployment insurance, paid medical and family leave, and improving access to SNAP benefits. Especially in rural areas in District 11, affordable housing options are extremely limited. Housing units in many communities are not up to code and lack livability standards. In some areas, the only option is buying a home, but this isn't something that everyone can afford. We need quality affordable housing to ensure that folks don't end up homeless because there are no other options. A statewide ban on evictions until our economy and society has stabilized and recovered from the pandemic is also necessary. In order to get our economy going again, we need to ensure that working parents can actually get back to work. To do that, they need childcare. Arizona has long neglected the childcare industry and rural areas suffer the most, with 48% of working parents living in a childcare desert. Other industries have received large bailouts to ensure they survive the pandemic, but childcare has yet to see the major investment needed to stabilize the industry during the crisis and in the reopening and recovery period to come.

**Q4**

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?

**Yes,**

Other (please specify):

Yes, I completely agree that we need to raise new revenue and avoid any cuts to public education, healthcare, and other essential services for our communities. Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, our state has failed to provide adequate funding for public education, healthcare, and other critical resources; these should be a priority for economic recovery. The effect of the pandemic on our economy can't be reversed overnight and tough decisions will need to be made as the extent of our revenue shortfalls become clear. But cutting funding to education, healthcare, and other essential programs is not the answer. Instead, we need to modernize our tax code and reverse special interest tax cuts to ensure that we have the funding needed to support our communities as we work to recover from the pandemic. Arizona's tax code is filled with loopholes and tax breaks for corporations and special interest groups. As individuals, we all pay our fair share in taxes every year, but over 70% of corporations in Arizona are able to reduce their income tax liability to \$50 or less every year. We lose tens of millions of dollars in revenue each year because of exemptions for special interests and corporations. By modernizing our tax code and eliminating those special interest tax cuts, we can invest that money into public education, infrastructure, and other programs that benefit ALL Arizonans. We need legislation that will put an oversight committee in place to identify tax exemptions that don't make sense and modernize our tax code. For too long we have focused on giving tax cuts to corporations under the guise of trickle down economics. But we know that system never really works. We need a system that uplifts everyone and in which everyone pays their fair share.

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**Q5**

Which of the following do you support to create a fairer tax code for all Arizonans?

**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.**

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**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.**

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**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).**

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**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).**

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**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.**

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**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.**

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**Other (please specify):**

Our tax code is in urgent need of reform in Arizona. I fully support all of these strategies for creating a fairer tax code in Arizona. It is beyond belief that each of us as individuals pay more in taxes every year than major corporations. We need a system that works for all of us, not just the select few. For decades, our tax code has been designed under the theory of trickle down economics - providing exemptions and tax breaks for corporations with the hope that it will eventually provide a return on investment and benefit the rest of us. But time and again, we have seen that that system never works. It only helps the rich get richer. We need a tax code that is fair and just and does not protect the profits of corporations over the well-being of the people. We need to repeal current

over the well being of the people. We need to repeal current special interest tax exemptions and create an oversight committee that will fairly evaluate tax credits. That will generate millions of new dollars in revenue that can be invested in public education, healthcare, and other services that benefit our society as a whole.

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## Q6

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)

The history of systemic racism in our country and in our institutions is responsible for rampant inequalities in both our economy and our society as a whole. Recent events have brought these problems to the attention of the general public and highlighted the injustices in our system. But for many of us, this is not a new problem being brought to light. This is an ever-present part of our daily lives. I grew up learning these lessons from my parents and my 4-year old son has already faced this in his young life. The list of young black men and women who have been killed simply for being black and being in the wrong place at the wrong time continues to grow, and often goes unchecked. The discrimination that I and other people of color experience each and every day, both in outright statements and more subtle microaggressions, creates a system of inequality that affects every aspect of our lives, including economic opportunities.

This is a systemic problem in our society. The racial wealth divide between households of color and white households continues to grow, with the median White worker making over 25% more and 35% more than the median Black and Latino worker, respectively. And this pay gap is even worse when you take gender into account. This problem is one with many causes and one that requires a holistic, systemic approach that includes not only economic strategies, but also a broader perspective on what we prioritize in the State Budget and legislation. First of all, education is key and can be the great equalizer. Every child should have the opportunity to gain a quality education - regardless of zip code or socioeconomic status or the color of their skin. From K-12 to community colleges, trade schools, and universities - we need to make education more attainable for everyone to ensure that future economic success is possible. In terms of specific economic strategies, we need to prioritize support for small business owners, particularly those who are women, immigrants, and/or people of color and face additional barriers. There are also larger problems that we need to address with how money is allocated in our State Budget. For instance, more money is allocated to Corrections than to public education. We have created a school to prison pipeline that disproportionately affects our communities of color. We have a vicious cycle in place where schools with students of color receive less funding and support, and in combination with other policies for policing and our criminal justice system, that results in an extremely disproportionate percent of our incarcerated population being men and women of color. I would also support legislation to combat police misconduct, with meaningful improvements to training and the creation of community review boards that would hold our correctional authorities accountable. Steps such as these would make a major difference in creating an economy and society that is more racially inclusive and equitable.

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**Q7**

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)

All Arizonans deserve to have the opportunity to succeed and lead a happy, prosperous life. To achieve this, we need a comprehensive, holistic approach that includes not only economic development strategies, but also considers funding for public education, workforce development, and other social programs that support our working families. First of all, every child should have the opportunity to gain a quality education and be set up for future success - regardless of zip code. Today, our public education system is massively underfunded and failing our future generations. We need to increase salaries for both teachers and support staff, and provide funding for capital improvements so that our students have a safe and healthy learning environment. Particularly in rural areas, there's a lack of certified teachers, special education teachers, and serious infrastructure issues, with buildings in disrepair and students travelling long distances to get to school on buses with no air conditioning or heat. We also need stronger workforce development programs, including trade schools, community colleges, and apprenticeships to ensure that Arizonans are trained and qualified to enter the workforce and obtain high-quality, good-paying jobs that allow them to support themselves and their families. Funding for social safety net programs is also essential to help give people a leg up when they need it and prevent anyone from falling into a vicious cycle of poverty from which they can't escape. Working parents need affordable, quality childcare options so that they can pursue successful careers and support their families. We also need affordable, accessible healthcare, with funding for KidsCare and AHCCCS. Healthcare is a human right and something that we all need in order to achieve our full potential. Economic development strategies should prioritize small businesses over corporations, particularly small business owners who are women, immigrants, and/or people of color who truly represent the diverse make-up of our state. They are the backbone of our economy and our success depends on their success. As a state lawmaker, these are the priorities that I would champion to help guarantee that all Arizonans have the opportunity and support they need to succeed and move up the economic ladder.

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