

#49

COMPLETE

Page 1: Welcome to the 2020 Legislative Candidate Survey

Q1

Name & District

Name	Lela Alston
Legislative District	24
Office Sought	State Senate

Page 2

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.**
-

Q4

Yes

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?

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.

,

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.

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)

There are several ways the state could help bridge the economic gap and make our state's economy more equitable and inclusive. One good step would be to support local minority-owned businesses. We could do this through grants and/or tax credits. This will help these business owners and invest in and strengthen these communities. We also need to close tax loopholes to bring more revenue to support small minority-owned businesses. Access also plays an important role. Members of the Black, Latinos, and American Indian communities do not receive the same resources and opportunities from birth. We need to give public schools more funding to improve the level of education students receive and offer better preparation for higher education or careers through CTEs. Reducing the cost of attending state universities would also be helpful as tuition is often prohibitive for many prospective students. The state should also strengthen anti-discrimination policies in the workplace, bring back and expand state job-training programs, and ban the box to make finding gainful employment easier. Investing directly into communities would also be helpful. Increased funding for schools, strengthening public assistance programs, incentivizing the use of clean, renewable energy, promoting sustainability across the state, and investing in infrastructure and greater transit options would all help bridge the gap. I will always be supportive of every single one of these measures and seek to implement them at the legislature.

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)

Public education has always been my top focus. Schools are the first and most important step for an individual's future success. Receiving a quality education that prepares them for success, whether it be at college or in a career, is paramount for their and our state's success. My priority is to increase public education funding to reduce classroom sizes, attract and retain the best teachers, and provide greater resources to students, like updated textbooks, technology, testing fee assistance, extracurricular cost assistance, and career and technical education programs. Investing in our students now is the best use of state revenues and necessary for strengthening our communities. Similarly, the state should also be expanding its job training programs for adults, not reducing them. Providing these programs offers adults an opportunity to receive state-sponsored training that will prepare them for good careers in several fields. Another priority of mine is helping make health insurance more affordable. Despite recent gains, the costs of healthcare coverage remains too high and the costs incurred from treatments can destroy someone's financial stability.
