

Johnson County Public Policy Council
2018 Kansas State Representative Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Laura Smith-Everett

Phone: 913-717-8530

Political Affiliation: Democrat

Email: laura4kansas@gmail.com

District: 17

Campaign Website:

Address/City/State/Zip:

www.laurasmitheverett.com

PO Box

Campaign Video Link: N/A

Shawnee, KS 998

Occupation/Work History (last five years – 25 words or less):

I've been an educator for 15 years. I am currently an Instructional Coach where I work with teachers to improve their instruction.

If you are or have been affiliated with a chamber of commerce or other business organization please list which organization(s) and any leadership positions you have held:

N/A

Other recent political/community experience (25 words or less):

I've always been an active member of my community but since having a special needs child some of that time has not been available.

As a candidate, what are your top three policy issues? (10 words or less per issue)

Fund our schools and get out of litigation Expand Medicaid Look for creative incentives to support small businesses to grow and flourish in Kansas.

What are your views on state tax policy, being as specific as you can? (100 words or less)

We need a balanced tax system. One that includes a balanced three legged stool approach: income, sales and property taxes. The failed Brownback experiment created an over reliance on sales taxes and we need to readjust our tax system to ensure a sustainable future while not curtailing business growth.

With record low unemployment rates, what would you do to grow and develop the state's workforce? (75 words or less)

Promote innovation and entrepreneurs with grants and low-interest loans that can be used for small businesses that create Kansas jobs. Work on a statewide plan to identify areas that have the workers but not the work and vice versa. Put together task forces that can help different stake holders in these environments learn from one other.

What are your views on funding K-12 education? (75 words or less)

School funding has a direct connection with business. Fully funded, high quality schools attracts high quality businesses. Most importantly, we need to fully fund our schools to ensure we have a strong work force in the future and can get out of litigation to attract long term investments today.

What would your priorities be in any new statewide transportation plan? (50 words or less)

Ensuring a guaranteed funding source to see the plans through. Maintaining high quality roads that allow our good and services to move back and forth. Ensuring efficient travel from Western Kansas to Johnson County.

Do you support maintaining the current dedicated sales tax transfer to the State Highway Fund for the purpose of funding transportation infrastructure, or should transportation be subject to the appropriations process where legislators determine funding levels entirely? (50 words or less)

Yes, I support maintaining the current dedicated sales tax transfer to the State Highway Fund.

What types of economic development policies will you support to encourage job growth and business expansion in Kansas? (50 words or less)

Finding a way to provide affordable healthcare options for businesses would be a top priority. Jobs with health insurance attract quality workers. I also think when businesses can be freed of bureaucracy while ensuring the health and safety of their employees is also key.

What are your views on the state's role regarding immigration and do you support employment-based immigration reforms to assist with workforce shortages in specified industries? (50 words or less)

I really think this should be a federally handled issue, but believe that compassionate policies that help with workforce shortages are absolutely acceptable.

What are your views on the state's role with respect to access and affordability of public higher education? (50 words or less)

Higher-ed students in Kansas are bearing 70% of the cost of their education, compared to just 30% a decade ago. Saddling them with debt so they can't start their lives after school. Kansas's future depends on these students. Adequate funding for Universities and community colleges is critical to our future!

What are your views on healthcare policy and Medicaid expansion? (50 words or less)

I think healthcare costs are an unrecognized drag on our economy. Healthcare for all working Kansans would lift people from medical bankruptcy, provide them with early intervention and would save us a lot of money in the end. I am in full support of Medicaid expansion.

What role should state government have in determining workplace employment practices and benefits offered to employees? (50 words or less)

I think as long as it isn't burdensome it can play a critical role in maintaining the health and safety of Kansas workers. A state can also relieve some of the costs for business owners by providing state level options for business benefits.

What do you believe is the most pressing issue or challenge facing Kansas today and how would you address it? (50 words or less)

Wealth inequality. No Kansan should work full time and live in poverty. Supporting businesses that

take care of their employees and provide a living wage would be a step in the right direction. How about tax policies that reward companies for quality jobs and growth and development in Kansas?

What project have you been most proud to work on? (50 words or less)

I volunteered for two years for a group called The Multicultural Refugee Coalition. This group sought to provide refugees with the skills, training and connections to be self sufficient. I was proud to work as this group expanded to begin a sewing initiative than now sells to Ikea.

What do you believe most distinguishes you from your opponent(s) in this race? (75 words or less)

I have the life experience of being a mother, wife and an educator. I have first hand experience with child care costs, medical costs, public schools and the stresses a working family experiences. I will bring all of those experiences with me to Topeka, knowing that each vote has real consequences on the lives of my friends and neighbors.