

Johnson County Public Policy Council
2018 Kansas State Representative Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Sean Tarwater

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Political Affiliation: Republican

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District: 27

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Campaign Video Link: N/A

16006 Meadow Lane
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Occupation/Work History (last five years – 25 words or less):

State Representative last session, Small business owner, HOA president 5 years, St. Michael the Archangel finance council chairman, Brian's Fund board member www.briansfund.org

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:

Association of Finance and Insurance Professionals, Automotive Service Association, National Auto Dealer's Association, Aircraft Owners and Pilot's Association, Kansas House Commerce Committee member, Governors Education Council

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

HOA President for 5 years. Neighborhood patrol member 6 years. Give two \$2,500 scholarships a year to 8th graders going to catholic high schools. www.briansfund.org

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

1) Decouple form federal tax (give middle class their deductions back) 2) Fiscal responsibility - Continue to pay down debts (KPERS/KDOT) 3) Mental health issues in schools/Safe and secure Schools

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

Because of changes at the federal level, most of the middle class lost the ability to itemize deductions on their state return. We need to allow everyone to deduct mortgage interest, property tax, medical expenses and other miscellaneous expenses. A fair tax plan should have a broad base and lower rates to be sustainable. We need to stay fiscally responsible and use surpluses to fully fund KPERS and KDOT debts. Once back on track, we need to fund a rainy-day fund, then all surpluses should be sent back to the taxpayer to spend themselves, rather than used to grow government.

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

I was recently appointed to the Governor's Education Council because of my work in Commerce and Education. We need to expand STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) programs to allow students to learn through hands-on experience. skilled labor and trades are in high demand. High schools need to allow students to explore opportunities in high-

paying skilled trade verticals like HVAC, welding, electrical, and plumbing. We should expand similar programs to help train our underemployed.

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

These past two years, I worked hard on the k-12 funding formula. I represented the schools to provide them with the tools they need to ensure that every child receives personalized student centered instruction to meet their individual needs. I will always represent the teachers, the parents and their children that attend our schools. Now that we are on track to "adequate", we need to focus on spending the funds where they are most needed.

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

Locally, we need to widen 69-highway. State-wide, we need to build a good business plan so when the Trump administration releases their infrastructure bill, we will be prepared to present. Most importantly, we must keep T-works funds in KDOT and we can use them to pull down matching Federal Dollars.

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)

I support funds going to, and staying in, the State Highway Fund. We will need these funds when the Trump administration launches its infrastructure bill. We must have a business plan to present and we must have funds to match federal dollars. States won't be allowed to bond the funds.

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

I believe the Commerce department needs to be unencumbered and have all the right tools to help Kansas become and stay the leader in a specific industry. The Legislature needs to have oversight to make sure the tools are being used properly and are efficient. We need more transparency here.

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 believe in a selective, legal immigration policy. Those that choose to come to America, and Kansas, should be self-sustaining and employable, without reliance upon the government. They must be willing to assimilate to our American values. I support employment based immigration, on temporary work visas, to address workforce issues.

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

I supported steps this year, partially restoring past cuts to the Board of Regents. I also supported programs that give a student credit hours for real-life experience, and increased access to credit hours in high school. To save on textbooks, we need to move toward Open Educational Resources (OER) <https://www.oercommons.org/>

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

I have seen first-hand the downside of expansion. As a business owner, it was nearly impossible to hire or promote anyone in expanded states. They would rather work less/earn less in order to receive free health insurance. Expansion has been a budget nightmare in every single state that has expanded.

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

As a business owner, I prefer less regulation, not more. Benefits, pay rate, and employment practices should be left up to the company and dictated by the free market. Currently, with so many employers looking for good people, we are seeing more job flexibility, better pay, and better 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)

Mental health concerns in our youth are alarming. Suicide prevention and safe-schools are a priority. I like the model that Blue valley and Children's Mercy are testing; placing social workers in schools to help with emotional and social support. I supported a similar measure in the school bill.

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

I am most proud of my work in Appropriations. I work hard to keep the state efficient. In the final hours of session, I was able to force the state to open the bidding process for Medicaid. My proviso already lowered the cost of the program and increased service levels.

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

My experience and pragmatic approach sets me apart from my opponents. I'm moderately conservative. Kansans don't need another ultraconservative to vote no on everything and stand in the way of progress. Kansans also don't need a liberal-minded republican who will overspend and grow government/taxes. I'm centered between these options and will work toward efficiency and progress. Sometimes you have to make uncomfortable votes because you know the options will only get worse if you don't.