

Kansas Senate/House of Representatives 2020

Response ID:122 Data

1. Candidate Information

1. Candidate Name

Ron Ryckman

2. Political Party Affiliation

Republican

3. District Number of Office Being Sought

78

4. Address

Street Address/Apt/Suite : 14234 W. 158th St.

City/State/Zip : Olathe, KS 66062

5. Phone Number

913-927-5333

6. Email Address

RonRyckman@gmail.com

7. Campaign Website

www.RonForKansas.com

2. Candidate Background

8. Occupation/Work History (last 5 years - 25 words or less)

I'm a small business owner. I have owned and operated a construction company in our community for over 20 years.

9. 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.

10. Other recent political/community experience? (25 words or less)

-Coach: children's football, basketball, baseball teams

-Olathe City Council (4 years)

-Kansas House (2012-present)

-House Budget Committee Chair (2 years)

-Speaker of the House (2016-present)

3. Issues and Policy

11. As a candidate, what are your top three policy issues? (30 words or less)

1. Economic recovery

2. Fair taxes for our families

3. Protecting funding for essential services, including mental health services, our schools, our nursing homes, infrastructure,

law enforcement, foster care reform

12. How would you propose to balance the state budget? What specific budget cuts would you support and what revenue enhancements would you consider, if any? (100 words or less)

A few years ago, we worked hard to get Kansas' finances in order. With the budget back on track, I've supported targeted funding in areas where there have been shortfalls, like mental health and infrastructure. I've opposed efforts to borrow from KPERS retirement funds, which only kicks the can down the road. My primary goal when it comes to the budget is to ensure we do not go backwards. We need to stay focused on funding the services our families expect, while making sure the state doesn't go back down a path of spending more than it brings in.

13. What are your views on state tax policy, being as specific as you can? (75 words or less)

We've made progress toward a fairer tax system over the past few years, but there's still work to be done. This year, I helped pass a property tax transparency plan that would give our local governments the flexibility they need and prevent property valuation increases from automatically triggering property tax hikes on our homes and businesses. The Governor vetoed that legislation, but we can't lose sight of the need to address property tax issues.

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

I come from a long line of teachers so funding our schools hits home for me. Issues on the horizon include sustainability and accountability. I expressed concern with last year's plan because even its supporters admitted the state wouldn't be able to fund it. I'd rather work toward a sustainable plan so our schools will have true stability. I also favor accountability so taxpayers know their investments are reaching the classroom and our teachers.

15. What are your priorities in the new statewide Eisenhower Legacy Transportation Program? (75 words or less)

Investing in infrastructure is one of the most effective economic investments we can make. Besides funding for our roads and bridges, I supported including grants for broadband expansion in the Eisenhower Plan. High-speed access is not only important to keeping Johnson County's economy ahead of the curve, it's also important to helping our rural communities grow their economic base. With a larger economic base, we can reduce the tax burden on all of us.

16. What types of economic development policies will you support to encourage job growth and business expansion in Kansas? (75 words or less)

Regenerating our economy in the wake of the COVID shutdown is one of the most pressing issues facing our state. I worked on a solution to make low-interest financing available to Kansas businesses that were unable to utilize the federal Paycheck Protection Program. Though that plan was ultimately vetoed by the Governor, we have to continue to find a long-term solution that will help our local businesses weather the impact of the pandemic.

17. What would you do to grow and develop the state's workforce? (75 words or less)

The Kansas Promise Act we introduced was a good first step. It addresses the cost of student debt and the shortage of in-demand skills in our workforce. Under the plan, businesses would help identify high-need sectors. Kansans who go into one of those sectors earn a scholarship for technical/community college, and have work requirements while in school. The goal is to stay on top of changing workforce demands so our businesses are positioned for growth.

18. What are your views on the state's role with respect to ensuring access and affordability of post-secondary education? (75 words or less)

Without a doubt, access to affordable education is critical to our economy. Cost-effective initiatives, like the Kansas Promise Act, and public-private partnerships are some of the ways we can ensure access. Other factors that need addressed are fairness in the state budget so dollars are not shifted from higher education and other priorities in order to fund ongoing litigation, and we need to look for ways to keep our graduates here in Kansas.

19. What are your views on healthcare policy and Medicaid expansion? (75 words or less)

Improving access to mental health has been a key focus, and I've voted to direct \$100 million more to community mental health. Suicide numbers continue to increase in Kansas. We must make sure resources are available for every family. When it

comes to Medicaid expansion, I've expressed concern over sustainability. There are systemic problems in the program that need fixed, and taxpayers should be informed how much expansion will cost them on an annual basis.

20. What role should state government have in determining workplace employment practices and benefits offered to employees? What workplace changes, if any, would you support? (75 words or less)

At the state and federal level, guardrails are in place to protect both workers and employers. I think business owners should retain the ability to make decisions on how they operate their own businesses as long as those decisions are not jeopardizing the safety of employees or the community. To the highest degree possible, government shouldn't put up unnecessary barriers or make it more difficult for our local businesses and entrepreneurs to succeed.

21. How control over decision-making is divided among the state legislature and local governments (including local school boards) on issues such as taxation, economic development, and education has been a matter of debate. What are your views on this issue? (75 words or less)

Generally, I believe that "the government closest to the people, serves the people best." There are overarching decisions that should be made at the state level to ensure uniformity and consistency across county lines for our businesses and our schools. But, as much as possible, local control should be honored because it allows communities to be more adaptable to the unique issues affecting their community rather than being made to take a one-size-fits-all approach.

22. What do you believe most distinguishes you from your opponent(s) in this race? (50 words or less)

My business experience is the biggest distinction at a time when our state's economic recovery is at the forefront. Our ability to regenerate the state's economic growth directly affects the state's ability to fund the priorities that matter to our families, including our schools, mental health and nursing homes.

4. Thank You!

Your response has been successfully submitted.

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