

## **Minnesota Senate District 59 DFL 2011 Senate Special Election Candidate Questionnaire**

The following is an informational Questionnaire for all candidates actively campaigning for the MN Senate District 59 DFL Special Primary Election to complete. Candidates have been asked to complete the Questionnaire and to submit their responses in electronic form to be posted online. The SD 59 DFL will post the full text (verbatim) of each Candidate Questionnaire online for public review prior to the November 30, 2011 Candidate Forum.

The SD 59 DFL is announcing the Questionnaire questions in advance of the Candidate Forum in order to give the public a sense of what questions candidates will already be addressing (prior to the Candidate Forum) to help attendees narrow the questions they may wish to ask at the Forum. Thank you for your cooperation in a full effort to educate, inform and empower Senate District 59 voters.

Please check the Senate District 59 DFL web site for these questions, the candidate's responses, Forum details and other important information at: <http://www.sd-59.org>  
Also, the Candidate Forum will be streamed live by The UpTake at: <http://www.theuptake.org> and available for online on-demand viewing in an additional effort to educate and inform the public.

### **Legislative Priorities**

1) Which three committee assignments would you request? Why would you request these three?

### **Taxes and Budget**

1) If you had revenues of \$100 (to symbolize the state's budget revenues) how would you allocate those revenues according to your priorities and your understanding of the budget and public priorities (so those priorities add up to \$100)?

2) What is your position on tax policy? What are the relationships between income tax, sales tax, property tax, user fees and other surcharges? If you had to raise revenues how would you do that?

### **Education**

1) What are your priorities for early education, special education, K-12 education and higher education? How would you fund them?

2) What are your views on investing in early childhood education? How would you pay for those? How would you prioritize this with other educational spending?

3) The costs of higher education continue to escalate while the resources available to most MN students and families decrease. How do you plan to address the rising cost of higher education with continuing decreases in financial resources especially in a very stressed economy?

### **Social Justice and Equity**

1) What is your position on the extension of basic family protections such as health insurance, pension benefits, sick and bereavement pay to unmarried partners and non-biological children of governmental/public employees as currently afforded married heterosexuals?

2) What is your position on the use of Photo ID as a requirement for voting? What changes (if any) would you propose to improve voter participation, and election fairness, efficiency and accuracy?

## **Health Care**

- 1) Given that many Minnesotans are without any health care coverage, are underinsured, cannot receive coverage for specific health conditions, or cannot access the proper medications, how would you increase the number of Minnesotans covered and the quality of their coverage? What else would you do to improve the current health insurance climate? How would you pay for that?
- 2) What would you do to improve the health and living conditions of the elderly, young children and others at risk? How would you pay for that?
- 3) What would you do to address the critical problem of access to health insurance for small and microbusinesses?

## **Economy/Jobs/Small Business**

- 1) What are the largest hurdles to the greater success of small and microbusiness? How would you lower those hurdles and minimize the barriers to their economic improvement?
- 2) In the context of *job creation*, where are nearly all U.S. jobs (since 2002) being created?
- 3) What is Minnesota's role in the global economy? What would you propose to support your position and serve the best interests of the Minnesota economy and Minnesotans?

## **Public Safety and Crime Prevention**

- 1) What is your position on the availability of guns and particularly handguns? What is your position on the use of background checks prior to the purchase of firearms? Do you support periodic checks of current license holders?
- 2) What specific legislation would you propose to reduce crime? What types of legislation would you propose to aid in the prevention of crime?
- 3) What is your position regarding Second Chance programs and opportunities for ex-offenders to reenter the community while balancing those initiatives with public safety and media influences?

## **Environmental Safety/Energy Policy**

- 1) How would you balance the interests of citizens and the environmental community with the interests of industry, finance and the business community?
- 2) What is your position on energy, the use of alternative and renewable energy sources, and Minnesota's role in this arena? What key resources does Minnesota have to make good progress?
- 3) What policies or programs would you support in the areas of state building code compliance with clean energy technology, improved energy efficiency and increased noise protection?

## **Transportation**

- 1) What are your Minnesota transportation priorities as they relate to business, freight, travelers, and public transit including commuters, seniors, people with disabilities, young people, and visitors?
- 2) What is your position on light rail transit? How would you play for light rail transit expansion if you feel it's needed?

## **Your Candidacy**

Explain why you are seeking the office of Minnesota State Senator. What will you bring to your constituents? What experiences, expertise and skill sets do you have that make you best suited to hold this position? What specific expertise will you bring to the State Senate that is unique or rare to the body?