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State Senator District 7

Please include the legislative district with this submission.

Campaign Website:

<http://chucksgivingthecommunity.com> and <http://www.fac>

Please list and explain your current occupation, your background, and any other biographical information you would like to share:

Section One- Revenue/ Spending

The demand for public services, including higher education, is at an all-time high, yet funding for those services is the lowest it's

<https://ucw-cwa.org/node/4643/submission/443>

been in years, and cuts are looming. At the same time, major corporations doing business in Tennessee routinely use creative accounting practices to take their profits out of state to avoid paying taxes that fund our state services. Twenty-one states have enacted combined reporting to stop this drain on their state budgets and to level the field for locally owned small businesses.

Do you view Tennessee's budget crisis as one of revenue, spending, or both?: *

- Revenue
- Spending
- Both

Explain:

I say both because we are spending far more than the incoming revenue allows. We have the rainy day fund, but for some reason the Governor has not seen the rain, especially when it has come to education.

Do you see cutting public services to reduce expenses as a better solution than increasing revenue?: *

- Yes
- No

Explain::

While cutting public services would reduce expenses, we owe the electorate 100% service. We can continue to seek new business here and ensure that we give them plenty of reasons, within reason, to come here to Knoxville.

Will you support legislation to (check all that apply): *

- Enact combined reporting
- Close corporate tax loopholes
- Eliminate the sales tax exemption for cable television providers
- Eliminate the sales tax cap for single-item purchases

Other:

Section Two: Living Wage

Thousands of higher-education employees earn salaries that are at or below the poverty level. There are full-time employees, many with years of service, who qualify for public assistance.

Will you take steps to bring all state and higher education workers up to a living wage?: *

- Yes
- No

Explain::

With the fees that institutions of higher-education charge, there isn't any reason I feel that they shouldn't be able to pay fair wages to their employees.

Below are some concrete steps that could be taken by legislators to support a living wage. Please indicate your support:

- Sponsor, co-sponsor, or sign legislation enacting a living wage policy
- Speak to the media about the importance of a living wage
- Support equal-dollar raises rather than percentage raises in future university and college budgets

Please list and explain other steps you would take to support a living wage.:

While I would speak to the media, the college's and universities would just use their propaganda machines to countermind what is fact.

Section Three- Employee Support

Tennessee state civil service employees have a standard, defined, grievance procedure (http://tn.gov/dohr/employees/pdf/Employee_Handbook.pdf). Employees at the public colleges and universities do not have a consistent policy, much less standard procedures.

Which of the following measures would you support to extend rights to higher education employees?:

- Sponsor, co-sponsor, or sign legislation to extend civil service grievance protections to higher education staff (exempt and non-exempt)
- Sponsor, co-sponsor, or sign legislation that would allow a worker to bring a representative of his/her choice to disciplinary hearings

Please list and explain other steps you would take to support extending rights to higher education employees:

United Campus Workers works to defend the rights of individual workers who have grievances with the university. When going through university channels to effect change hasn't worked, we have turned to our allies in the Tennessee General Assembly to appeal to university officials to rectify injustices.

If asked to support an employee who has a legitimate grievance, will you:

- Join delegations to appeal to university administrators
- Make phone calls to university administrators
- Send letters to university administrators
- Speak to the media about the situation

Please list and explain other ways you would support an employee who has a legitimate grievance:

Section Four- Complete College Act

The Tennessee Legislature passed the "Complete College Tennessee Act," in an effort to increase the number of Tennesseans who hold post-secondary degrees. This act ties both the base funding formula and performance funding to retention and graduation rates. It acknowledges: "the demand for postsecondary is at an all-time high and public resources for the enterprise... are at an all-time low." It asserts that "[a]n operating assumption of the 2010-2015 planning cycle is that there will be few to no new state dollars with which to pursue quality enhancements," and further, that increases in degree productivity must be generated "with available resources... with no decrease in instructional quality." For further analysis of this act, read Dr. Tim Gaudin's critique at <https://ucw-cwa.org/critiquing-tennessees-race-top>.

Do you support linking funding to graduation rates? What concerns do you have with the possible outcomes of this legislation?:

I would support it in some form, however, the concerns I have is that institutions will be penalized when students either drop out (of their own accord), fail or leave the state.

What do you see as the role of public higher education in the state of Tennessee?:

The role of public higher education in the state of Tennessee is to prepare our students for the future. Prepare our students to step out into the real world and work the newer technology, businesses. Also their role is to mold the future leaders, educators and professionals of this state.

What do you think should be the state's role in supporting affordable public higher education?:

The state should be able to ensure that the college's, universities, trade schools, etc. are not over pricing themselves to where it is not possible for ALL of those that are eligible to go to their schools are unable to. Regardless of what a school may say, they are still in the business to make money first and foremost. As a legislator we must ensure that they do not gouge.

Section Five- Doing More With Less

State funding levels for our schools continue to decrease year after year, while students and their parents are asked to pay more and more just to keep funding for education constant. By July 2011, it will have been four years since higher education employees have seen a salary increase. Additionally, we are seeing community colleges like Pellissippi State move away from students being taught by instructors to more web-based instruction in core courses such as Math and English. Maintaining quality education at our institutions of higher learning demands the funding to do the job right.

What specific steps will you take to ensure that quality education is maintained at our public universities and colleges?:

I do not feel that the sciences (Math, Science) should be taught as web-based classes. These classes are usually a little more involved and detailed for a student to try and learn it without a hands on instructor. I still feel that too much money is being given to the students, rather than the schools on all levels through the Hope Scholarship. I said it in the beginning and will say it again, as the money is increased towards the students from Hope Scholarships and any other grants, the colleges raise their tuitions. I want any money returned to Hope Scholarship because a student failed, moved out of state, etc. to be put into a fund for the schools on a need basis. I also want an explanation from the Lottery Director as to what happened to the jackpot money from the Lotto game when the game was switched to MegaMillion and what's going to happen to the leftover jackpot money from the Pick 5 that is now ending. Those monies can be used towards the schools.

We face job losses – potentially in the hundreds – when stimulus money runs out. As outlined above, quality higher education must be paid for with strong support of students, staff, and faculty at our colleges and universities. This state, its students, and its citizens simply cannot afford to have their future shortchanged.

Do you support saving these jobs?: *

Yes

No

Explain:

The above statement is true but it appears that the Board of Regents, the Board of Directors at the colleges and universities, ensure that they and the top staff of the colleges and universities maintain their way of life with lavish pay, benefits and perks. This must be stopped.

If yes, what steps would you take to save these jobs?:

We must direct more money from the lottery towards the schools to train, maintain and retain our staffs. I would also like to see an increase of .5% taken from the sales tax and put into the funds directed towards the schools but this for staffing personnel that do deserve pay raises and the security of better benefits for them and their families.

Section Six- Outsourcing of Jobs/ Privatization

Many colleges and universities across Tennessee have privatized areas of their physical plant to private contractors who often "rehire" the displaced workers at lower pay rates, without health insurance or other benefits, and scheduled for fewer hours. In many areas there has been a decrease in the quality of work done by these contractors, including instances of U.T. Physical Plant workers having to fix work just completed by such private contractors. Additionally, many of the basic services and functions of the university, including general-education instruction, are likewise shifting away from full-time tenure-track faculty to contingent employees ("adjuncts").

Will you oppose efforts for further privatization and outsourcing of university jobs?: *

Yes

No

If yes, how would you oppose efforts?:

I would oppose these efforts by seeking legislation that any jobs that are outsourced can only be done if the schools does not and has not had the proper staff on board to perform the work. In the case of jobs being privatized, workers already on staff must be retained at the same rate of pay or higher, with all benefits in place. Adjunct Professors, must be offered full tenure and become full Professor's upon completion of 5 years as an Adjunct. Also to ensure fairness, no Adjunct during or after year 3 of their employment can be dismissed without just cause. This is to prevent any school from firing or eliminating that Professor's job to keep making them full time Professors.

If no, why not?: