

Name: *

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Tennessee legislative office sought: *

State Representative 17th District

Please include the legislative district with this submission.

Campaign Website:

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

I am a self-employed cabinet maker and carpenter. I have spent 35 years in the construction industry, occupying positions from labor to super to company owner. I graduated from Carson Newman College in 1975 with a BA degree in philosophy. I am a trustee at the First United Methodist Church, chairman of the Jefferson Co. Democratic Party, and an active volunteer with Cub Scouting. I have two teenage-age children.

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 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:

TN budget must balance. Revenue is obviously down so spending must go down.

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

- Yes
- No

Explain::

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::

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.:

[Empty text box for living wage support steps]

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:

[Empty text box for extending rights support steps]

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:

[Empty text box for grievance support ways]

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 do not have enough information on this subject to make a good judgement.
[Empty text box for graduation rates concerns]

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

[Empty text box for public higher education role]

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

[Empty text box for state's role in supporting education]

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?:

Standards should be set for a "quality education" by education professionals.

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:

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

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?:

If no, why not?:

CAPTCHA: no challenge enabled