

STANDING UP FOR KIDS

As advocates for kids, it's up to us to make sure voters and candidates are informed of the issues important to their well-being, and to make sure these are addressed after the elections are over.

One way to advocate for kids is to ask candidates their thoughts on issues that affect children.

Not sure what to ask? Pick from some of our provided questions. The goal is not to ask "yes or no" questions or questions that imply a "correct" answer; instead, let's prompt a thoughtful dialogue.

Children can't vote and don't write checks to campaigns. Yet our children will be the ones most impacted by the votes we make at the polls and by the decisions made by elected officials. You have the opportunity to be their voice.

DATES TO REMEMBER

General Election Date:

November 8, 2016

Early voting:

October 24-November 7, 2016

Early voting begins for the general election between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday-Friday, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday. Early voting ends at 5 p.m. on the Monday prior to the election.

EDUCATION

Pre-K: Our kids deserve a strong start, and kids who attend high quality pre-K get that start. They are ready for Kindergarten and what comes next. Arkansas's pre-K program has seen little funding increase in the past 10 years. *What are your thoughts on supporting quality pre-K for 3- and 4-year-olds in Arkansas?*

School discipline: Arkansas is above the national average in suspension rates of boys and girls of color. In Arkansas, 57.9 percent of black girls are suspended or expelled. The rate is 46.9 percent for black boys. *What do you think we should do to ensure discipline practices are fair to all?*

Strong public schools: There is a movement in place to shift public education tax dollars to private organizations. The movement relies on vouchers, tax credits, and takeovers to shift away from local control of our tax dollars. *What is your position on using public tax dollars to support private schools?*

AFTER-SCHOOL AND SUMMER PROGRAMS

Every dollar spent on prevention programs like quality after-school and summer programs saves taxpayers \$3. In 2011, an overwhelming majority of state legislators voted to provide grants for local after-school and summer programs, but the programs remain unfunded. *What is your position on providing after-school and summer programs?*

HEALTH

ARKids First: ARKids First has reduced the rate of uninsured kids to less than 5 percent. ARKids First helps kids stay healthy and have coverage that families can afford. *How will you protect health coverage for kids?*

Insure all children: Despite the progress we've made, many children in Arkansas still lack health coverage. Some are legally residing here, like Marshallese kids, but they cannot enroll in ARKids First. *What is your position on extending coverage to all children?*

Arkansas Works: Over 250,000 low-income adults in Arkansas, including parents and many who were previously uninsured, will continue to have affordable insurance because of expanded coverage. *What is your position on providing health insurance to adults?*

ARE YOU REGISTERED?

Find out at:

www.VoterView.Ar-Nova.org

You can also find out where to vote and which election districts you can cast votes in.

TAXES AND FAMILY ECONOMIC SECURITY

Tax change proposals: If there is a tax change proposal, lawmakers should have an idea of how much it will cost (or save) the wealthy and the middle-income earner, and also how it will impact low-income families. *How will this tax change impact all Arkansas families (high-, medium- and low-income)?*

If a lawmaker says we can reduce costs or pay for a program by "increasing efficiencies," make sure he or she shares what that entails. Are there specific programs that might face tighter budgets? *How will this tax change affect the amount of money allocated to other programs?*

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IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

College tuition equity: Undocumented Arkansas high school graduates must pay out-of-state tuition at state colleges and universities, even if they have work permits under the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy. Eighteen states, including neighboring Texas, allow similar graduates to pay in-state tuition. *How can Arkansas act to remain competitive with these states, which have higher percentages of residents with college degrees?*

CHILD WELFARE

Children in the foster care system: The number of Arkansas children entering our foster care system continues to increase, and is now at 4,900 children. The majority of these were cases of neglect by parents, which we know can be addressed through preventive services and programs. *What are your thoughts on the role that the state government can play in making sure that children are in safe and nurturing homes?*

Shortage of caseworkers: The average caseload per caseworker stood at 27 cases at the end of SFY 2015. This exceeds the national recommended standard of 15 cases per worker. *How do you plan to address the shortage of resources?*

RACIAL EQUITY

Inequality across the board: In Arkansas, 19 percent of white children live in poverty, while 39 percent of Hispanic children and nearly half of black children live in poverty. The median income for Arkansas families is about \$40,000, but less than \$28,000 for black Arkansans, slightly over \$31,000 for American Indian/Alaskan Native Arkansans, and about \$35,000 for Hispanic/Latino Arkansans. In health, the uninsured rate for Hispanic kids is twice the state average. In education, children of color have lower graduation rates, are suspended and expelled at higher rates, and are over represented in the juvenile justice system.

As Arkansas becomes more diverse, it is critical that all people have a fair shot at success. Public policy plays a vital role in strengthening families and expanding opportunities for all. *What ideas do you have to address racial inequity?*

JUVENILE JUSTICE

Community-based alternatives: More than 75 percent of Arkansas youth held in locked facilities are low or moderate risk. Community-based programs for these offenders cost less money, and are more effective at ensuring public safety. Further, locking kids up increases the chance that they will reoffend. *How do you propose the state address the need for community-based alternatives?*



2016 VOTER'S GUIDE

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT
THE ISSUES THAT MATTER

MAY 2016

