

2010 SPPACE Questionnaire

ANN NEWMAN

Candidates for the North Carolina General Assembly State House of Representatives – District 103

1. **What are the top three issues facing your district and how would you address them?**

a). retaining small businesses – my late husband was a small business owner (and member of SPPACE), we had many lean years because there never seemed to be any breaks given to small business owners...so a tax break might help. b). job growth – retraining workers at our local community college in green technologies is a good place to start. c). transportation – with NC suffering a budget shortfall, it would be easy to ignore transportation needs, but we will surely pay the price in the future if we don't at least spend a minimum on transportation needs...continuing to partner with Raleigh to obtain federal funds will also help.

2. **In 2007, the North Carolina General Assembly authorized counties, subject to voter approval, the ability to impose an additional general fund revenue source (a .4% land transfer tax or a .25% sales tax). To date, the transfer tax has been defeated in every county where it has been considered. Would you support legislation to repeal the transfer tax option?**

Probably not, because I believe citizens should have the option to decide on which taxes should be levied in their own backyard.

3. **Would you support a local bill enabling Mecklenburg County to impose a real estate transfer tax or impact fee?**

The new tax or fee should only be allowed if the residents of Mecklenburg approve it; it should not be imposed unilaterally by the County Commission.

4. **Because North Carolina is facing an estimated \$3 billion shortfall, comprehensive tax reform for the state continues to be at the forefront of discussion in the General Assembly. The prevailing thought is to “broaden the base and lower the rate”. This means taxing items, services, transactions, etc. that are currently untaxed and either reducing the rate or eliminating altogether the taxes on items, services, transactions, etc. that are taxed at a high rate. Are you in agreement with this concept? Please explain your answer.**

North Carolina's tax code has not had a major update since the 1930's when our economy was mostly an agrarian one. As the state has changed to a more service based economy, I feel we need to review our current tax code and make it more equitable to all sectors. We should not favor one sector to the detriment of others.

- 5. There are over 20 different environmental agencies in the State of North Carolina that regulate water, air quality and land use. Would you support the consolidation of these departments? Please explain your answer.**

Yes, it would cut down on paper work, duplication of services and increase communication between agencies.

- 6. Do you support giving North Carolina's Counties the authority to hold a "Pennies for Progress" referendum similar to South Carolina's? (*South Carolina's program is a ¼ cent sales tax dedicated to a specific list of projects that sunset after a period of time or when the projects are completed.*) Please explain your answer.**

Yes, most people can "stomach" a new tax when they can see the direct benefits of it and can help decide the priorities of it IE: voting for a list of local projects. There are several examples in SC where the tax was discontinued early because the list of projects was completed early. This program allows local governments to decide what is important to them while continuing their partnerships with the state on larger projects.

- 7. Would you consider changing the current NCDOT funding formula to make it more equitable for the growing urban areas? If so, what would you propose?**

Yes, I would consider it...at this point I have no specific proposal. The Charlotte Observer article on the topic made a case 'for' but I would want to see an equal case 'against' before I would make a decision.

- 8. Would you support a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) tax as a means to pay for road construction and/or maintenance?**

This is one I know little about, but in doing some reading on the topic, some think it is 'the best thing since sliced bread' to pay for roads, while another called it a 'stupid idea'. So I would want some kind of an impact study done for Eastern Mecklenburg County /Mint Hill and Matthews. These are the areas I would represent in HR 103 and I would want to be sure that the VMT would not unfairly affect them.