

2010 SPPACE Questionnaire

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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?**

Private Sector Jobs: Reduce taxes and simplify regulations to encourage business growth

Infrastructure: Allocate transportation money on population, congestion, and road condition. Currently rural eastern counties receive 10 times the money per capita than urban counties.

Public Safety: Increase DAs and courts to provide more and quicker trials. More prison space for repeat offenders.

- 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?**

I would co-sponsor it. Every family buying a home would pay this additional tax, not the seller, not the builder, not the bank. The family would pay part of the tax in cash at closing; the rest would be included in the mortgage and the family would pay the tax plus interest for the next 30 years.

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

No. In addition to the reasons listed in my answer to question2, the courts have ruled impact fees illegal in Union County and Cabarrus County.

- 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.**

No.

First, this is a sales tax on individual labor which is already subject to income tax. It would be added to things like haircuts, tax preparation, surveying, and the labor of the independent auto mechanic who changes your oil. Mostly middle class people would

pay these taxes, people who work as independent contractors and small business people. This isn't a sales tax, it is an income surtax on small business people.

Second, a "temporary" sales tax is now eight years old. I have serious doubts that this reform would be revenue neutral. I believe it would be used to increase the amount of sales taxes collected by the State.

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.

Is the problem that there are twenty different agencies, or are there too many different permitting processes? If one agency requires twenty different inspections and permits, that is not an improvement.

Different government agencies have conflicting regulations. Conflicts may be between State agencies, or between State and local agencies. There are situations where compliance with the regulations of one agency put a citizen in violation of the regulations of another agency. The answer to this conflict must be in Raleigh as the counties and cities are creatures of the state.

I would propose that agency and permitting reviews be consolidated to the maximum extent possible. For example, citizens would deal with one environmental permit, and would not be caught between multiple agencies. There would only one road permit required, and agencies could not wage turf battles at the expense of the public.

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 1/4 cent sales tax dedicated to a specific list of projects that sunsets after a period of time or when the projects are completed.*) Please explain your answer.

This is a great concept. My support for a specific bill to implement this would depend on the language of that bill. If the bill prohibits the reassignment of the money from projects in the referendum to other "similar" projects, and requires the tax to end at the completion of the projects, or at a date certain, I would support it.

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. Rural counties are receiving ten times the funding per capita of urban counties. Population, congestion, and condition of the roads must be the main decision factors.

I am particularly bothered by the games played with outer belt money. Significant amounts of money were diverted from I-485 in Charlotte to an outer belt for Fayetteville. The proposals to widen I-485 from two to three lanes in South Mecklenburg County over next two decades are woefully inadequate. The road is currently at capacity, and adding one lane each way in twenty years would only

preserve the current level of congestion. I-485 needs to be improved as an economic highway.

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

No.