

2010 SPPACE Questionnaire

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Candidates for the North Carolina General Assembly State House of Representatives – District 107

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

- **Employment.** Will be introducing an initiative targeted at promoting job development by small business. The measure will specifically target businesses with gross receipts of less than \$1,000,000 and offer various forms of tax relief in exchange for creating a new job and keeping that job filled for at least a year.
- **Education.** Specifically we need to adequately fund Central Piedmont because during recessions, our citizens seek to upgrade their skills so that they will be more competitive in the job market. This is especially true for skill sets that relate to “green jobs” and the energy sector. The University of North Carolina at Charlotte’s efforts in the energy field need the states continuing support in funding equipment and personnel to teach the next generation of engineers and scientists. At the **secondary level**, we need to continue to innovate in how we use technological devices, i.e. smart phones, book readers, laptops, etc.; game theory, to replace end of course testing with constant assessment models as well as changing how we use our physical facilities, i.e. year round schools
- **Transportation.** State roads in the metropolitan area are inadequate. As a member of Joint Transportation, I plan to continue to prod DOT to take a serious look such things double decking I-77; finance design build, to speed up construction; tolling parts 485, as a means of speeding up construction and changing the transportation allocation formula to award more money based on congestion.

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?

Yes

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

No

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.

Our current tax base is derived from our history as a manufacturing center. As manufacturing has left the state, this source of income has become more volatile. The current recession proves this point. It is necessary for us to change our tax structure in order to generate the revenue needed to support the services demanded by our citizens. I would suggest the following:

- Legalize electronic gaming and tax it. This is estimated to bring in around 500 million annually.
- Tax more services, while lowering the overall rate. To be equitable in this, we will need to take a serious look at taxing professional services, such as accounting and legal.

Before we can do anything, we will need to wait for the Bowers committee report, which is rumored to be considering recommending a VAT. If this recommendation moves forward, with a possible 3% state rebate the nature of the state level discussion will of necessity change.

- 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.**

It makes more sense for all environmental regulation to be in one department. The very nature of this regulation however, will still require “bureaus” that specialize. People who need services would at a minimum know where to start.

- 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 sunsets after a period of time or when the projects are completed.*) Please explain your answer.**

Counties now have the ability to increase local sales tax, which can be used for transportation projects. Mecklenburg has the highest overall sales tax rate in the state. If it goes much higher it will start to venture into disincentive territory.

- 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’d like to see 80% allocated based on traffic.

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

Not at this time. I think that it does deserve further study and in conjunction with other measures might be feasible in the future. It’s the type of idea that makes more sense on the other side of a recession.