

2010 SPPACE Questionnaire

RUTH SAMUELSON

Candidates for the North Carolina General Assembly State House of Representatives – District 104

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

Jobs, jobs, and more jobs! In fact, jobs have always been the most important issue but we had them in abundance. The state needs to do its part by creating a certain and stable tax structure to fund a responsible and well prioritized budget, a regulatory environment that fosters and permits businesses to be nimble and creative in a global economy, infrastructure that provides a solid foundation for economic development (water/sewer, transportation, energy, cable, and cellular access), a 21st Century education system that rewards hard work and innovation while giving parents and educators more choices to meet their individual needs, and finally, a public safety system that is well staffed, well trained and well funded.

- 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.**

The current taxing structure in North Carolina is based on an economic structure that no longer exists. As a result, it produces very irregular revenue streams that encourage irresponsible spending when revenues are high and unpredictable or erratic “temporary” tax increases when revenues are low. One option has been to flatten the revenue curve by broadening the base and lowering the rate. While I do support the idea, I also recognize that it can create new “favored classes” of tax payers if done without careful deliberation

and broad participation by affected groups. It also must be revenue neutral or revenue reducing.

- 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, as much as possible within the various federal regulations. If we lose federal monies while still under their regulations, it will cost businesses more money as they would have to access the required inspectors and such through offices in Atlanta or DC.

- 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.**

I've been intrigued with the idea and have certainly heard a lot of folks discuss it. There are probably situations where I could support it, but the details would have to protect taxpayers in general, not overly burden certain businesses and have clear strategic goals with a termination date or completion goal.

- 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?**

I am not an expert on this issue. My sense has been that we need to redraw the districts so that there is less overlap between urban and rural areas with funding allocation that recognizes the number of users in each area. The formulas should also break out certain types of projects that have impact beyond the district in which it is located (ex. Yadkin River Bridge).

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

Not based on what I know so far though I have not researched it thoroughly.