

PDNC Lt Governor Candidates' Forum
PDNC Annual Meeting, December 8, 2007
Questionnaire and Responses from the Candidates

1. It has been pointed out that a family, whose breadwinner works for minimum wage, even with the recent minimum wage increase, is a family that is still living in poverty. Do you support the idea of legislating a Living Wage, which guarantees a worker will be paid enough to actually feed, cloth, and house their family? Why or why not?
2. Do you support the abolition of the Death Penalty in NC?
3. What is your position on the use of tax credits to attract corporations to NC? What are your ideas on how to attract economic development to counties that are being left out of the current development boom?
4. What is your position on the right of gays and lesbians to marry? To enter into civil unions? To adopt children?
5. Do you support the provision in the recently passed Renewable Energy bill, which forces utility customers to pay for new power plant construction before they are built - even if they are cancelled before they go online?
6. Do you support the expansion of the current Council of State Public Financing pilot program to all candidates for the Council of State? For all candidates running for the General Assembly? For candidates running for Governor?
7. North Carolina's recent history has been one of explosive growth, which is expected to continue into the foreseeable future. Infrastructure needs created by this rapid growth, by action of the NC General Assembly, may only be financed by county referendums on land transfer taxes, by increased property taxes, or by increased sales taxes. Impact taxes on developers and other real estate entities are expressly forbidden in all but a few counties. What position do you take on how to finance infrastructure needs created by new development? Do you see the need for additional financing options to be created by the NC General Assembly?
8. Do you support the idea of providing tax credits for energy efficient houses and buildings?
9. Lottery proceeds originally intended to increase education funding were immediately reallocated to replace, rather than increase, existing education funding. How do you propose to return the lottery to the original principles that sought to make it an "education lottery"?
10. Do you support changing the law that denies State and Local government employees the right to engage in collective bargaining?
11. Do you support an Independent Redistricting Commission that would draw NC's legislative districts on a non-partisan basis following the next census?
12. Do you support NC's current system of allocating Presidential electors on a winner-take-all basis? Is there another method of allocation that you prefer?
13. Is Health Care a right or a privilege? Should the Constitution of NC be amended to state such explicitly?
14. The issue of illegal immigration is getting a lot of attention in this election cycle, where undocumented immigrants are being blamed for everything from unemployment rates, to school overcrowding, to an increase in crime. Do you consider this blame for perceived problems to be legitimate? If elected, what legislation would you support to address these concerns while insuring the humane and responsible treatment of immigrants who are here, with or without documentation?
15. The Leandro decision has charged NC with failing to provide adequate resources to provide an equal education to all of NC's citizens. What would you do in order to bring NC into compliance with the Leandro decision?
16. Many returning Iraq War vets are already experiencing the same levels of homelessness and joblessness that plagued the returning Vietnam War vets. What do you propose that NC can do to assist those who served our nation, as they try to readjust to civilian life?

17. Do you support the NAACP's initiative to create an Environmental Job Corps for young people who did not graduate from high school, to re-engage them in public service? Do you have ideas on how to help foster such a "Green Jobs" corps?
18. What would you do to better equalize the funding and support for the five historically black public universities in North Carolina with that of the other public universities?
19. What would you do to address the history of state discrimination against people of color in hiring and contracting?
20. What do you see as the solution to the current crisis in affordable housing, as well as to the increased foreclosures due to the sub-prime crisis?

Responses from Dan Besse

(1) The "living wage" concept is a powerful tool and I support its use. Governmental bodies in particular (state, local, federal) should strive to live up to this standard with their permanent positions. During my period of service on its city council, the City of Winston-Salem has made strides in raising its lowest wages and is committed to the effort to provide all our employees with a living wage level.

I also supported the recent minimum wage increases at the state and federal level. It is important to monitor minimum wage levels on an ongoing basis and adjust them regularly. Ten-year gaps between adjustments to the minimum wage level are unacceptable.

The "living wage" and the "minimum wage" are related but distinct tools. A true living wage level must be calculated in recognition of variable costs of living from region to region, making it difficult to substitute entirely for statutorily established minimum wage levels. **The living wage concept should inform the establishment of enforceable minimum wage standards.**

(2) I am on public record in calling for a moratorium on executions in our state. We can no longer justify merely tweaking around the edges of the issue—for example, by debating execution of the mentally retarded, or reform of the procedures for execution. It is past time to address the fundamental questions about capital punishment, the ones which cause too many of our leaders to duck and cover: **risk of erroneous executions of the innocent, and racial bias in the application of the death penalty.** It is time for the legislature to put executions on hold while we carefully, systematically address those issues.

During that moratorium, we must examine and address those two key matters. The first is erroneous execution of the innocent. No matter what your position on capital punishment, we can all agree that execution of an innocent person is morally unacceptable. Unfortunately, both judges and juries make errors. If capital punishment is to continue to remain an option, then for its application we need a new set of evidentiary standards which would eliminate, for all practical purposes, the possibility of execution of an individual for a crime he or she did not commit. I can see ways to approach that goal, that I would commend for consideration by a study commission on the topic.

The second problem is racial bias in the application of capital punishment. This is a pervasive problem, and part of an issue which continues to undermine public confidence in the basic fairness of our justice system. A careful, thorough review of this element and how it could be addressed is needed. This issue is also tied up in questions surrounding the use of prosecutorial discretion in determining who to charge, with what offenses, as well as the threat of the death penalty as pressure in plea negotiations.

I would not put an artificial time deadline on the completion of these reviews. The legislature has the authority to enact a moratorium, and would inherently retain authority to determine when and if its questions were satisfied.

(3) The abuse of tax incentives for the recruitment or retention of industry has become a national scandal, which needs a national solution. I have consistently called for Congress to enact nationwide regulations on the use of these incentives and restrict their abuse.

Until this occurs, however, the state of North Carolina and its local governments have no effective alternative to considering the use of tax incentives, or face a major drain of jobs to states which will use them. We must, however, start making more consistent and smarter decisions about how incentives are used.

As a local elected official in a city which was particularly hard hit by loss of jobs from traditional manufacturing industries, I have been dealing with this issue in real-world situations for the past six years. Winston-Salem has successfully reversed its economic decline, and is well into the process of building a new economy based around high-tech opportunities, research, advanced manufacturing, and other areas. We have worked to use tax incentives carefully as part of that process.

My criteria for considering incentives as part of an economic development package have included these: Does the package produce a reliable net positive income flow to taxpayers? Does the targeted development fit with our economic

strategies? Are the incentives necessary to recruit the new or expanded development? Are they fair to existing employers and economic competitors in our area? Is the recruited opportunity acceptable on an environmental and employment-standards basis? If the answer to any of these questions has been "no", I have opposed the incentives package. I would take these same minimum standards to the state level as part of my evaluations there.

Attracting economic development to disadvantaged areas is a major challenge. **Having lived and served in both rural and urban regions of North Carolina, I understand that our strategies must be adapted to local conditions.** We must start with the different strengths of different regions, and build from there. For example, rural counties with strong agricultural histories are natural areas to direct the growth of clean biofuels development. These can include crops such as soybeans, sunflowers, and switchgrass for the production of biodiesel and ethanol. Small, decentralized manufacturing facilities are a natural part of this rural economic opportunity. Parts of our coast and mountains are natural areas for the development of wind power facilities as well. Of course, all of these and other economic development decisions must be made with human equity, resource conservation, and environmental justice considerations in mind.

As Winston-Salem's representative to the board of directors for the Piedmont Triad Partnership (PTP), I have had the opportunity to work with efforts that have led this year to PTP being named one of the **ten most effective regional economic development organizations in the nation** for the second year in a row. One of the leading current projects of PTP has been its successful bid for a **\$15 million workforce development grant** from the U.S. Dept. of Labor. We are using those funds to leverage major regional workforce development efforts, including cooperative training programs between employers and community colleges in multiple counties.

Through promoting **regional cooperative efforts**, we can help rural counties to take advantage of facilities and joint training programs with universities and other urban county facilities nearby. We have done that in the Piedmont Triad; I will look forward to implementing this effective strategy statewide.

Another critical point to remember is that **disadvantaged communities are found within our cities and urban areas as well.** As a Winston-Salem leader, I have worked for the revitalization of our city center, the restoration of declining urban commercial areas, and the spread of economic opportunity and services (from small business to grocery stores) to our minority neighborhoods. **Equal opportunity and economic justice is a key first principle of ethical economic development.**

As a local elected official and regional leader, I also understand that regional transportation planning is critical to encouraging economic development opportunities without sacrificing our green land and quality of life. I will actively support the **regional public transit initiatives** underway now in the Charlotte region, the Research Triangle, and the Piedmont Triad, and I will work to encourage other regions to develop and tie into appropriate transportation initiatives of their own.

In general, I will come into the office of Lieutenant Governor prepared to use the opportunities that this position has through seats on the state Economic Development Board and the Rural Economic Development Center, to promote quality economic opportunity across our state.

(4) I support a **civil union/domestic partnership** approach. I will promote making partner and family benefits available to households with these unions/partnerships. Local governments and other employers should be encouraged to make these benefits available on a non-discriminatory basis. State government should also lead by example in this area. **I am proud to have proposed and successfully supported adoption by the City of Winston-Salem of our personnel policy which bars discrimination by the city on the basis of sexual orientation.**

As other starting points at the state level, I strongly support enacting protections against workplace discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, as well as **protections against the use of sexual orientation as a decision-making factor in adjudicating custody disputes or adoptions.**

(5) No! I worked in active opposition to this potential consumer catastrophe. The return of effectively unlimited "construction work in progress" (CWIP) financing places an **unfair burden on the backs of electric consumers—especially residential customers.** CWIP financing also distorts the incentives to electric utilities in favor of overprojection of demand growth, overconstruction of unnecessary coal and nuclear power plants, and the underutilization of energy efficiency and decentralized renewable energy resources. As the problems of the CWIP approach again become more clear to the public, I will work to once again tighten restrictions on this financing method.

As a consumer and conservation advocate, **I was directly involved in the 1982 adoption of the previous strong limits on CWIP financing, which saved North Carolina electric customers billions of dollars in avoided construction costs** over time. I was distressed at the backwards movement on this issue in 2007. Going forward, we must monitor abuses and advocate for the toughest possible review of CWIP requests, through the Utilities Commission process. Ultimately, I anticipate that a legislative fix may once again be necessary.

(6) Absolutely. This provides our best opportunity in the near term to **control the rising abuse of money in the campaign process.**

(7) Local governments, particularly those in rapidly growing areas, badly need **greater flexibility in their options for financing infrastructure development and other public services** to serve that growth. Modest increases in the land transfer tax, or carefully designed impact fees, can be appropriate tools for a local government to consider. I support making those tools available.

Political rhetoric to the contrary notwithstanding, it is important to remember that the real "home tax" is the general property tax. Blocking access by local governments in high-growth areas to alternative revenue options simply guarantees one of two undesirable results: Either the general property tax rate will skyrocket, or local infrastructure and services will break down from inability to pay for the costs associated with new growth.

As a local elected leader, I understand that the voting public must be treated as the fellow responsible adults they are. When new revenues are needed, local officials have to take the initiative in explaining the detailed needs, the alternatives for meeting them, and how the proposed new revenues will be used. **Voters are willing to pay for demonstrated needs. They are not willing to sign over blank checks.**

For example, in Winston-Salem, I have consistently opposed the creation of new flat fees for residential trash pickup or recycling. These are only regressive taxes in all but name, as they cost lower-income households a disproportionately higher share of their income. However, I supported an increase in the stormwater fee, tied to a new system of graduated fees according to residential lot size, and asking commercial and institutional land uses to pay more of their fair share of tax burden. I also supported the increase in overall stormwater fee revenue itself because it would be tied to specific, demonstrated needs in controlling runoff and dealing with flooding and other impacts.

I am the only Democratic candidate for Lieutenant Governor with the hands-on experience of dealing with the challenges of growth in our urban areas, including the challenge of how to pay for the costs associated with that growth.

(8) Yes. This will prove to be a key part of our **effective strategies for increasing energy efficiency in our state**. Increased energy efficiency, in turn, is a critical part of protecting our air quality and addressing our contribution to global warming. I have worked with these issues for decades as a consumer and environmental advocate. Most recently, as a **member of the North Carolina Climate Action Plan Advisory Group (CAPAG)**, I helped to shape a strong package of recommendations to the legislature for the control and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Those strategies include energy efficiency approaches such as tax credits for energy efficient houses and buildings.

(9) **I support efforts to direct the net revenues from the lottery into a special fund for education, to be used only for educational improvement opportunities that are not normally funded from the state general fund.** New efforts to offset the current inequities in educational opportunities between low- and high-wealth students and schools might be considered for part of this funding. So long as we have a state lottery, we should attempt to direct its revenues toward a net boost to the education programs to which they were promised.

Just as importantly, however, we should candidly acknowledge that the General Assembly determines from year to year how all revenues are to be allocated. **To achieve the desired result of net increased resources to education, we must elect leaders for whom education funding is a true priority.**

The lottery is not a panacea for our real education funding needs, and reliance on lotteries has serious public policy downsides.

I opposed adoption of a North Carolina lottery. Based on the clear experience of other states, I predicted the following:
--It would disproportionately drain funds from the poor, becoming in effect a regressive tax on the desperate and credulous.
--It would be a particularly inefficient way to raise public revenues, principally of benefit to the gambling industry. The lottery sends an excessive amount of its gross revenues to advertising and administration, with only a minority share toward net state income.

--It would be an unreliable source of revenue, as public interest and attention wane. The predictable results are disappointing "takes" for state programs and increased pressure to abandon advertising restrictions which were included as a part of the "compromise" adoption package. (I will oppose any efforts to loosen restrictions on lottery advertising.)
All of these predictions are holding true.

One of the most negative impacts from the lottery on state policy has been the (also predicted) public misimpression that lottery revenues will solve our education funding challenges. That foolish impression has to be torpedoed. **The sad truth is that we will only have the quality of education that we are willing to pay for through taxes.** I believe that we need elected statewide leaders who aren't afraid to admit that and still press for the funding our public schools must have to do their job.

(10) Yes. In order to reassure the public regarding this change, the legislation will need to simultaneously include protections against the disruption of essential public services.

While discussing labor issues, I will take the opportunity to briefly note some of my **experience in workplace and labor concerns**. While working as a legal aid attorney in eastern North Carolina, I assisted clients struggling with workplace conditions and fair wage issues in work environments such as poultry processing plants and crab houses. I organized and

directed the Northeast North Carolina Workplace Safety and Health Outreach Project (WorkSHOP), which trained workers and their attorneys in how to use OSHA processes to promote safer, healthier workplaces. After the tragic Hamlet fire exposed the gross inadequacy of basic safety inspections, I took time off from work to volunteer in the successful statewide campaign of Harry Payne for Labor Commissioner in 1992. This is an area of long and deep personal concern for me.

More recently, I have worked as a city leader to increase the salaries of our city employees, especially those making low wages, our firefighters, and our police officers. I have also fought to protect affordable health insurance benefits for our more than 2,000 employees.

(11) The PDNC's proposal for such an **independent redistricting commission** is a reasonable one which I could support.

(12) Ultimately, I would prefer **allocating electoral votes** on the basis of Congressional district vote, with two votes going to the overall winner of the state. We must be careful in the timing of implementing this change, so as to avoid contributing to a situation in which primarily the "blue" states adopt this reform, leaving the biggest "red" states to a winner-take-all format and institutionally disadvantaging Democratic candidates nationwide.

(13) **I support Rep. Verla Insko's bill to amend the state constitution to call for universal access to health care in North Carolina.**

It's a disgrace that over 1.4 million North Carolinians have no health insurance (including over a quarter-million children). It's a further hardship even to families with health insurance, that the cost of premiums and co-payments continues to rise precipitously. Since 2001, the cost to employers of providing insurance has gone up at four times the rate in the rise of family income. As a result, more employers are dropping coverage altogether, or at least cutting back on coverage and increasing premiums and co-payments. That harms our economy and risks jobs as well. We must overhaul this broken system of financing health care.

I will make access to health care one of my top priorities as Lieutenant Governor. I will use my positions as presiding officer of the State Senate, and as chair of the Health & Wellness Trust Fund Commission, as well as the general "bully pulpit" opportunities of a statewide independently elected executive official, to press for immediate expansion of access to affordable health care.

We can move immediately to broaden the number of citizens who are covered by expanding our children's health insurance program (allowing more families to buy into this system at affordable rates); implementing and expanding the high-risk insurance pool (for those whose pre-existing health conditions make purely private health insurance unaffordable); and amending state law to make it easier for small employers to band together in group health insurance plans. Put together, these efforts will also help to control the skyrocketing costs of health care and health insurance premiums for all North Carolinians. (That's because a major reason for rising health care costs is the high cost of caring for the uninsured through delayed, expensive care in hospital emergency rooms. Since the poor cannot afford to pay for this extremely expensive avenue of care, the unpaid costs are built into the rates charged to all those who have insurance and use the hospitals.) We must also rebuild the broken system for caring for the mentally ill, many of whom have been left without care as state hospitals and community care programs have been dismantled or woefully underfunded.

While we are taking these steps, I anticipate that a new Democratic president and Congress will be working through the process of implementing a nationwide system for providing universal access to affordable health care. However, if that effort does not appear well on the route to successful completion by the end of 2010, I will propose that North Carolina move forward on our own to establish on the state level a structure for universal access to affordable health care here. (There are strong reasons to prefer national-level action in this regard, but I am willing to give Washington only so much further room for action before pressing for comprehensive action at the state level.)

Finally, access to health must continue to include **choice and safe access to affordable reproductive health care.** I have extensive experience in working for this safe access, in part through work for Planned Parenthood. One of the strengths which I bring to public service, due to that experience, is the ability to explain to the public and other decision-makers the details of often confusing and controversial topics. For example, I can explain the difference between "emergency contraception" and medical abortion—and why it is important for victims of assault to have timely access to emergency contraception. I can also explain issues such as the difference between "abstinence-only" and "abstinence-based" sexuality and health education—and why it is important for students to have access to medically accurate, age-appropriate comprehensive health education. The ability to bring these facts and explanations to the table of policy discussion is a unique resource for the promotion of rational public policy-making in an area of intense debate.

(14) Nationally, our system for **immigration** and enforcement of immigration laws is in great need of an overhaul. The current system is not working well, with adverse consequences both economic and humanitarian. In part, the current problems result from a drastic decline in workplace enforcement of immigration laws during the early years of the Bush Administration. Predictably, as work-site inspections and prosecutions declined, the number of workplace violations soared. That is key to our current situation, because the great majority of immigrants who have come to or stayed in our country illegally are in effect economic refugees. They are here to find jobs that they could not find in their home nations. This basic

problem must be addressed at the national level through comprehensive immigration reform legislation. **That comprehensive legislation must include an earned path to citizenship opportunity for undocumented immigrants here now.** Regardless of the heated political rhetoric dominating public debate on the topic, **the only alternative to providing a path to earned citizenship is the unacceptable creation of a permanent criminal underclass of those branded as "illegal aliens".** Mass deportation of 12 to 14 (or more) million individuals is nothing but a dark fantasy of the radical right. It is not a realistic possibility. Both humanitarian and responsible business leaders understand this.

Most of the leaders of the political right must understand this reality as well. Regardless, they are cheerfully willing to use this issue to gain short-term political advantage by inflaming nativist bigotry, and driving political wedges between recent immigrants and native-born citizens, especially those who are themselves under economic stress.

While pressing for national comprehensive reform, I understand too the necessity to deal on a humane basis with the great numbers of undocumented immigrants in our state today. We must work to lower the heat level of political rhetoric on this topic and call our people to rational conversation. We must also remind the public that demagoguery on this topic produces not just results that are inhumane to the immigrants themselves. Driving people further underground also makes general criminal investigation and enforcement, immunizations and other public health measures, and strengthening of economic opportunity for all more difficult.

This will continue to be a challenging issue. Candidates who stand for realistic approaches and humanitarian treatment of immigrants may well lose some votes as a result, in the short run. It's still the morally imperative thing to do.

(15) I will make equity in educational opportunity another of my top priorities as Lieutenant Governor. There are several keys to the pursuit of equal opportunity to a high quality education for all our students:

- Providing adequate resources to low-wealth school systems. In the final analysis, this is dependent on the state legislature's willingness to approve adequate funding. I will push for adequate funding as presiding officer of the State Senate.
- Stopping the ongoing resegregation of many school systems by race and economic status. Schools with a disproportionate share of poor students almost invariably suffer greater problems in providing the best education to their students. The wisdom of *Brown v. Board of Education* is still true today: Separate is inherently unequal. Some school systems are doing a far better job of meeting this challenge than others. I will work as a member of the State Board of Education to promote the use of these more effective tools and strategies.
- We must move away from the current obsession with standardized test scores. That obsession is producing a generation of students who memorize for the tests, but are not inspired and whose long-term learning is weaker as a result. Inequities in starting points and resources in the testing and test-prep processes further exacerbate the gap between high- and low-wealth students' achievements.
- We must attract and retain the best teachers through improved compensation, and through providing teachers a greater opportunity to focus on teaching and mentoring their students—instead of excess paperwork, red tape, and test obsession.

(16) First, our social service agencies at the state and local level must make special efforts to **reach out to returning veterans** and ensure that they are connected with needed opportunities for counseling, job training and placement, and housing. These efforts should include mental health and substance abuse assistance, as needed.

Second, we must facilitate the development and implementation of programs to **address chronic homelessness** in general. As a Winston-Salem City Council Member, I have participated in the development of our local Ten-year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness in our community. The plan is based on a coordinated services approach to assisting the chronically homeless, known as the "housing first" approach. This approach emphasizes quickly placing homeless persons in permanent housing with long-term supportive services, instead of cycling them through an extended stay in shelter situations. At the state level, we can provide matching funding to leverage the development of systematic approaches like this in communities around our state.

(17) Yes. This "**green corps**" can be used to engage young people in the extensive and critical work of building a more **energy-efficient** economy. The program can partner with community colleges, non-profit community groups, and private businesses involved in weatherization and insulation, installation of thermal solar (hot water) systems and attached greenhouses for passive solar applications, and similar energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements. Many of these internships will have the potential to mature into permanent jobs and even entrepreneurial opportunities. I have personal experience in working with solar applications and know that this will be both practical and constructive.

This job program can work in cooperation with energy efficiency and renewable energy efforts which the electric utilities will be required to fund under Utilities Commission rules. Internships for Environmental Job Corps participants could be included as a requirement of eligibility for small enterprise loans to energy efficiency start-up firms.

Such efforts can dovetail with the implementation of tax credits for retrofitting homes and other buildings to be more energy-efficient.

(18) First, I will support advocacy for **better funding of our HBCUs** through the legislative budget process. In addition, I will work to emphasize **collaborative opportunities for participation by our historically black public universities in regional programs**. For example, in the Piedmont Triad region, Winston-Salem State University and North Carolina A&T University are working with other regional partners in the development of biomedical research and advanced manufacturing programs, respectively. They are collaborating with other partners such as the regional medical centers, Wake Forest University, UNC-Greensboro, and area community colleges in workforce development training programs. Funding grants made through the Piedmont Triad Partnership are helping to leverage funding from other sources, which is going into the WSSU and NC A&T student participation programs.

We should be able to generate similar cooperative regional efforts involving Elizabeth City State University in the northeast, UNC-Pembroke in the southeast, and N.C. Central University in the Research Triangle region.

(19) The initial step is to undertake a comprehensive study documenting our state government's actual **history of discrimination in hiring and contracting**. Prepared with that evidence, it should be possible to withstand the inevitable legal challenges to **affirmative action efforts**. Then, a program of goals for the state in providing women and minority-owned business contracting opportunities can be initiated.

As a member of the Winston-Salem City Council, I have regularly taken part in our city review process to set realistic goals and targets for women- and minority-owned business participation in all major city contracts, and voted to set these goals in contract bid requirements.

I am pleased that Winston-Salem has made a focused and successful effort to ensure diversity in city staff leadership. For example, our current outstanding chiefs of both our Fire and Police departments were hired because of their skills, experience, and qualifications—and both happen also to be African-Americans. I believe that our Police Chief was the first African-American woman hired by a large city in North Carolina for that post. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to work with such outstanding individuals.

(20) There is no single solution to our **affordable housing** needs, but instead a combination of approaches which can leverage increased resources to the development and retention of affordable housing. Approaches should include the following:

- Restoration/renovation of older housing stock, in combination with focused neighborhood revitalization efforts, especially in urban areas.
- Continued efforts to assist individual low-income homeowners, buyers, and renters obtain and retain good housing, through financial counseling, reduced rate housing loans, rental assistance programs, and public housing programs.
- An increase in annual appropriations to the N.C. Housing Trust Fund, to support statewide efforts in the development of affordable housing.
- Empowering efforts by local governments to encourage the development of affordable housing units by offering incentives for such within development rules and local zoning codes, including the conditioning of rezoning approvals on creation of a minimum percentage of affordable housing units.
- Loaning working capital to local housing authorities and CDCs (community development corporations) to acquire foreclosed units and return them quickly to the affordable housing market.
- Enforcing our new state predatory lending laws to stop the abuse of sub-prime lending practices.
- Assistance to low-income families facing foreclosure, through financial counseling programs, mortgage assistance programs when appropriate, and assistance in locating alternative housing when necessary.
- Center city revitalization programs, which include conversion of older commercial structures into new urban housing.

Responses from Hampton Dellinger

A substantial amount of information about my positions and track record on a range of issues is available at www.HD08.com. In addition, answers to specific PDNC questions are provided below.

1. **It has been pointed out that a family, whose breadwinner works for minimum wage—even with the recent minimum wage increase—is still living in poverty. Do you support the idea of legislating a “living wage,” which guarantees a worker will be paid enough to feed, cloth, and house their family? Why or why not?**

I support a living wage because I believe that all North Carolinians should be able to make a living from their life's work. We need to follow through legislatively by continuing with regularly scheduled increases in the state-required minimum wage. And state government should also lead the private sector by example, by paying all public employees a basic living wage. Government vendors and contractors should also be paying their employees a basic living wage.

As we progressives have learned over the past few years, there's simply no point in waiting for Washington to do what's right. This past year, North Carolina joined more than 20 other states in setting a minimum wage higher than the

federal baseline - \$6.15, compared to the federal minimum of \$5.85. I support the state-level minimum wage and also the regularly scheduled increases scheduled to occur over the next few years. We should continue to be a leader when it comes to providing workers with a reasonable minimum wage. But even after the minimum wage increase, a North Carolinian who works full-time for an entire year at the state's minimum wage will make only \$12,792. To put that in perspective, the federal poverty level for a family of two is \$13,690.

Clearly, the initial minimum wage increase should be only the first step towards our ultimate goal: a living wage for all North Carolinians in both the public and private sectors. I also support further expansion of the state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) so that more families can lift themselves out of poverty through work.

I applaud the efforts of local activists to bring cities and local governments in line with living wage requirements, and as Lieutenant Governor I'll work to make sure that the state lives up to its obligations as well.

2. Do you support the abolition of the death penalty in NC? Please elaborate.

I support a death penalty moratorium. My concerns go beyond the immediate issue of execution methods. For example, I am very concerned that there are effectively *two* death rows in North Carolina: One for people convicted of capital crimes after the statewide death penalty reforms in 2001, and another death row for those convicted before that date. As a result of the 2001, prosecutors now have discretion not to pursue the death penalty even when there are "aggravating factors" that previously mandated that a sentence of capital punishment be sought. And just as importantly, capital defense attorneys now have improved resources to defend their clients. (The 2001 reforms also included a ban on the execution of the mentally retarded, an issue I discuss at www.HD08.com).

These reforms have greatly improved our system of justice, but they also suggest the depth of the problems they were meant to address. The number of death sentences dropped dramatically after these reforms, from 25 in 1999 and 2000 to 11 in 2005 and 2006. We need to determine how to fairly assess whether those inmates sentenced prior to 2001 would likely not have received the death penalty had those reforms been in place, as well as deal with evidentiary issues, racial disparities, and other related matters.

3. What is your position on the use of tax credits to attract corporations to NC? What are your ideas on how to attract economic development to counties that are being left out of the current development boom?

Our use of tax credits has gone off track. I am also concerned that the availability of tax credits raises the possibility of a "play then pay" system that serves neither the interests of North Carolinians nor the economy as a whole.

Originally promoted as a way to attract new businesses to the state, tax credits are now being used to give large handouts to existing businesses. The first step for any investment - whether made by a business or by the state - should be to evaluate the potential benefits, whether they be financial or otherwise. Giving windfalls to businesses that don't need them simply doesn't help North Carolina's bottom line.

But the misuse of tax credits is symptomatic of a larger problem, which can only be fixed through true government reform. We need to end practices that create the perception that economic incentives packages can be bought, or that they are quid pro quos. Here is my plan: If the directors or officers of a company, or the company itself through a political action committee, has made any contribution of money or a pledge of a contribution of money, including any in-kind contributions, to either a statewide elected official or an elected official from the locality offering an economic incentives package in the two years prior to the commencement of negotiations for the economic incentives package, that company will be barred from receiving any economic incentives that in the aggregate are worth more than a certain amount, say \$50,000. And on the flip side, if a company receives economic incentives that in the aggregate are worth more than \$50,000, its directors, officers, and the company itself (through any political action committees) will be barred from contributing any money or pledging to contribute any money, including any in-kind contributions, for the duration of its receipt of the economic incentives and for the two years hence.

Above all, we need to get our focus back on the things that made North Carolina an attractive business climate in the first place: great schools, a clean environment, quality and affordable health care (including mental health and dental care) and engaged and sustainable communities.

To bring more and better economic development to counties currently left out of the economic boom we must remove the obstacles - including preferential handouts to well-connected businesses in urban areas - that make it hard for those counties to compete. Instead of giving bonuses to companies that don't need them, we should increase our investment in the things that *really* help businesses and communities grow including, as noted above, great schools, a clean environment, quality and affordable health care (including mental health and dental care) and engaged and sustainable communities.

4. What is your position on the right of gays and lesbians to marry? To enter into civil unions? To adopt children?

As Lt. Governor, my focus will be on ending discrimination in state government employment, including discrimination based on sexual orientation. I support civil unions and partnership benefits.

I believe child adoptions should be governed by the “best interest of the child” standard and I oppose discrimination against parents based on sexual orientation.

5. Do you support the provision in the recently passed Renewable Energy bill, which forces utility customers to pay for new power plant construction before they are built—even if they are cancelled before they go online?

Although I am glad to see the state moving forward on renewable energy initiatives, I oppose allowing energy companies to put 100% of their construction investment risk onto customers. The Utilities Commission—in exercising its approval powers—must be especially rigorous in reviewing the construction and cost estimates for new power plants. The Commission must exercise extraordinary care and scrutiny when it comes to issuing or modifying power plant permits.

6. Do you support the expansion of the current Council of State Public Financing pilot program to all candidates for the Council of State? For all candidates running for the General Assembly? For candidates running for Governor?

I have long supported public financing of elections, and I continue to believe that it is a key part of electoral reform. We need to make sure that elections are in the hands of the right people: Voters. I support “Voter-Owned Elections” that allow candidates to qualify for public funding if they decline special interest funds, respect spending limits, don’t engage in untrue or personal attacks, and demonstrate their base of support by obtaining a large number of small contributions from voters. The Council of State Public Financing pilot program is encouraging. Based on the success of our judicial public financing program—which was the first of its kind in the nation when we introduced it in 2002—I am confident that the current pilot program will succeed, allowing North Carolina to continue in its role as a national leader on this issue. I applaud Chapel Hill for taking the initiative over the past few weeks, and I hope that other towns will take advantage of the recent legislative reforms allowing them to publicly finance elections in 2009 and 2011.

7. North Carolina’s recent history has included explosive growth, which is expected to continue into the foreseeable future. Infrastructure needs created by this rapid growth, by action of the NC General Assembly, may only be financed by county referendums on land transfer taxes, by increased property taxes, or by increased sales taxes. Impact taxes on developers and other real estate entities are expressly forbidden in all but a few counties. What position do you take on how to finance infrastructure needs created by new development? Do you see the need for additional financing options to be created by the NC General Assembly?

I believe that *all* counties should have the same broad array of financing options, including impact fees. Given the extraordinary range of demands they face, every local government needs equal access to every tool in the local public financing toolbox, so that they can come up with creative, equitable, and effective solutions. Charlotte’s recent mass transit tax referendum could be a good model for future transit and growth initiatives across the state. Subject to voter approval, counties should also be able to embrace progressive approach that asks those who are most fortunate to bear a larger share of the burden. We must give counties and voters a broad menu of financing options and make sure that new development is an additional benefit not an unfunded burden to communities.

8. Do you support the idea of providing tax credits for energy efficient houses and buildings?

I support tax credits for energy efficient houses and buildings. These credits save money in the long run by keeping our energy needs under control. Just as importantly, they help preserve and protect our natural heritage.

9. Lottery proceeds, originally intended to increase education funding, were immediately reallocated to replace, rather than increase, existing education funding. How do you propose to return the lottery to the original principles that sought to make it an “education lottery”?

North Carolina lawmakers promised that lottery proceeds would be used to supplement educational spending, not supplant it. This condition must be honored. Ensuring that lottery proceeds are used to increase education funding should be a top priority, and should be subject to strict oversight at all times.

But education funding is not the only “original principle” of the lottery that needs our attention and continuing support. We must also stand firm against privatization of the lottery and against any expansion of lottery advertising. State government shouldn’t outsource the lottery, nor manufacture demand for it.

And even at its best, the lottery is not a silver bullet solution for our educational funding needs. Recent studies show that even in states where lottery funds are pledged for education, they account for only 1% to 5% of educational spending.

10. Do you support changing the law that denies State and Local government employees the right to engage in collective bargaining?

North Carolina is one of just a handful of states that prohibit public employees from engaging in collective bargaining. I support changing the law that denies state government employees the right to engage in collective bargaining as proposed by SEANC.

11. Do you support an Independent Redistricting Commission that would draw NC's legislative districts on a non-partisan basis following the next census?

Redistricting should be about what's best for voters, not what's best for partisan politics. I support creative efforts to find a non-partisan solution to the need for redistricting, including the creation of a commission to come up with baseline neutral principles to guide the search for equitable and stable voting districts. In doing so, we have a moral and legal obligation to make sure that minority voting strength is not diluted. Forty North Carolina counties are still covered by the Voting Rights Act. Some Republicans have recently used redistricting as a political football, calling for the election of judges who will overturn new voting districts. We can do better than that, and we must.

12. Do you support NC's current system of allocating Presidential electors on a winner-take-all basis? Is there another method of allocation that you prefer?

I am concerned about the nation's system of allocating Presidential electors, since it makes it possible to elect a President who has not won the popular vote. At the same time, it is difficult to fix the system on a state-by-state basis. If North Carolina became the third state to abandon the winner-take-all method, a possible result may be *less* attention from presidential candidates and less influence over presidential elections. Since North Carolina is now recognized as a competitive state for the presidential election, we may do better to keep the power of our votes together. Although I am happy to consider these and other methods of allocating North Carolina's electoral votes, we must remember that state-by-state changes can have unintended consequences. When Democrats in North Carolina raised the prospect of changing North Carolina's system last summer, it gave political cover to Republicans in California seeking to do the same thing.

13. Is health care a right or a privilege? Should the Constitution of NC be amended to state such explicitly?

Basic health care is a right of all North Carolinians. Amending the constitution is a momentous proposition, one which we must never take lightly. But health care is among those few rights which are so fundamental to North Carolinians that it should be guaranteed in Article 1's 'Declaration of Rights,' which already guarantees other basic state-provided rights such as the right to a public education. But our most immediate concern should be with making affordable, high-quality health care a reality for every North Carolinian as soon as possible. I would make health care reform a top priority as lieutenant governor. I have already created a senior health plan that the Wilmington *Star-News* called "attractive," "sensible," and "admirably specific." I have also spoken out on the need to better manage the current transition of our mental health system, a process that has proven difficult—far too difficult—for many patients and their families. Senior health, mental health, children's health and (as I discuss in more detail below) veterans' health, are all massively important challenges demanding our immediate and sustained attention.

14. The issue of illegal immigration is getting a lot of attention in this election cycle, where undocumented immigrants are being blamed for everything from unemployment rates, to school overcrowding, to an increase in crime. Do you consider this blame for perceived problems to be legitimate? If elected, what legislation would you support to address these concerns while insuring the humane and responsible treatment of immigrants who are here, with or without documentation?

All too often, the shrillness of the immigration debate drowns out the important contributions that immigrants—including undocumented immigrants—have made to North Carolina and its economy. Anti-immigrant rhetoric and anti-immigrant policies are bad for the state and bad for all of North Carolina's workers. Especially disheartening is the unnecessary harm done to the children of undocumented immigrants, who themselves bear no responsibility for their parent's choices but who frequently become the target of anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies. Even holding aside immigrants' immeasurable social and cultural contributions, immigrants have done a lot to improve the state's bottom line economically. A recent study by North Carolina business professors found that the Hispanic population of North Carolina has had a total direct and indirect spending impact of \$9.2 billion. Our state's economy relies heavily on immigrant labor, without which our businesses would be less competitive and the prices of our consumer goods higher. The federal government's approach to immigration has been a comprehensive failure and I think the Congress and the President need to fashion a comprehensive solution.

In the meantime, I oppose the wholesale enforcement of federal immigration laws by state and local law enforcement officers. If local officials decide to determine the status of particular defendants arrested and indicted for violation of state laws, they should do so in a way that: (i) does not deter victims and witnesses from cooperating with law enforcement, (ii) does not separate parents and children unless the severity of the underlying state law violation demands it, (iii) does not lead to jail overcrowding so that those charged with serious violent crimes are turned loose.

15. The *Leandro* decision has charged NC with failing to provide adequate resources to provide an equal education to all of NC's citizens. What would you do in order to bring NC into compliance with the *Leandro* decision?

Providing a sound basic education for all children in North Carolina is a constitutional, governmental, and ethical duty. Meeting that duty requires better resources, and it also means thinking about how best to allocate them.

Ensuring adequate resources for teachers and students will help us meet our constitutional obligation and get out from under the *Leandro* court order, which is why it is imperative that we find better ways than the "education lottery" to meet our schools' funding needs. One way to do this is by allocating resources in a way to ensure that taxpayers are getting the return they deserve on their investment in North Carolina schools. For example, we can generate funds every year if full scholarships for athletes from out-of-state are required to be paid by athletic booster clubs or athletic departments at out-of-state tuition rates. I also support Governor Easley's push to make teacher salaries in North Carolina higher than the national average as part of his commitment to recruiting and retaining top educators.

Providing schools and teachers with adequate resources is only the first step in what must be a sustained effort to improve our entire system of education. We need resources, to be sure, but we must also be more creative in how we use them, to make sure that we are giving our children the education and skills they need to thrive throughout their lives. To do so, we must commit ourselves to the education of children from age 3-18, including expanding More at Four to include at-risk 3-year-old children and raising the compulsory school age to 18. And while they're in school, children need to receive a broader education in environmental and health literacy, which is why I propose, among other reforms, expanding Drivers' Ed into "Transit Ed," so that students learn both the rules of the road and options for public transportation and the benefits of walking and biking.

16. Many returning Iraq War vets are already experiencing the same levels of homelessness and joblessness that plagued the returning Vietnam War vets. What do you propose that NC can do to assist those who served our nation, as they try to readjust to civilian life?

More than 25% of this nation's homeless population are veterans. That is a shocking statistic. The first job of the Lieutenant Governor when it comes to veterans' health should be to hold the feds' feet to the fire, and to make sure that veterans get the health care they need and deserve. As Lieutenant Governor, I would advocate on behalf of individual veterans not receiving the care to which they are entitled, and I would also use the power and influence of the state to act on behalf of veterans as a group. If the federal government spends hundreds of billions of our tax dollars prosecuting a needless war in Iraq, it must take care of the men and women who have risked their lives in that war. Taking care of veterans' unique health needs—including not just combat injuries, but also mental health—should be a top priority for the nation and for the state. Experience has taught us that this is an issue that demands sustained attention. Many Vietnam veterans did not start to experience problems until 5 or 10 years down the road, by which point the support system they needed had diminished. Already, we are hearing reports that brain injury among Iraq veterans may be *five times higher* than the official military numbers reflect. Veterans affairs are primarily the responsibility of the federal government. But when the federal government comes up short, as it so often has, we as a state have to step up. One place to start would be ensuring that the state—rather than privatizing mental health care—meets its responsibility to serve the mental health needs of veterans and of all North Carolinians.

Taking care of veterans' health needs is a baseline requirement, but our commitment cannot stop there. Veterans often struggle to find civilian work, and we need to do more to make sure they have jobs where they can put their commitment, discipline, and skills to good use. I applaud the efforts of the state Employment Security Commission on this issue, including last month's Employ-A-Vet Week, and I hope we can find new and creative ways to further those efforts.

17. Do you support the NAACP's initiative to create an Environmental Job Corps for young people who did not graduate from high school, to re-engage them in public service? Do you have ideas on how to help foster such a "Green Jobs" corps?

I believe that "green collar" job programs are one of the most exciting and important initiatives out there, and I support them. Green collar jobs use one of our greatest potential resources -- our young people -- to protect another -- the environment. Successful programs can thus help us combat both poverty and environmental degradation. Communities around the country have been successfully experimenting with these programs for years now, and Congress has finally gotten on board, with the 2007 Green Jobs Act (H.R. 2847). My good friend and grad school classmate Van Jones has become a national leader in

expanding the “Green Job Corps” and in bringing about the country’s first “Green Enterprise Zone.” As Lieutenant Governor I’ll build on that experience and help forge the strong public-private partnerships necessary for a successful “Green Jobs” corps.

18. What would you do to better equalize the funding and support for the five historically black public universities in North Carolina with that of the other public universities?

Equalizing funding for our historically black public universities is not just a matter of practicality, it’s a matter of principle. North Carolina’s historically black universities have played a crucial role in expanding educational opportunities, and now is not the time for us to fall short in that crucial effort.

Although much of the 2000 statewide university funding increase was used to improve and increase their facilities at historically black universities, that increase only partially filled the dramatic historical gap in funding between historically black schools and others in the state system. Moreover, the needs of historically black schools have grown dramatically since 2000, as they attempt to serve a rapidly expanding student body. Since the 2000 funding increase, our state’s historically black colleges have seen their enrollment increase 50%. Substantially raising those students’ tuition cannot be the answer, as it would only deter students from low-income families from applying in the first place and conflict with the state constitutional requirement to keep college tuition as low as practicable.

As with our K-12 schools, we must also allocate our resources efficiently. One way to do so at the university level would be by ensuring that historically black universities have their share of specialized departments and centers which would help draw nationally prominent scholars within certain fields.

19. What would you do to address the history of state discrimination against people of color in hiring and contracting?

Because discrimination in North Carolina is a historical fact, a grim legacy, and a disturbing reality, I believe that targeted affirmative action continues to be a necessary part of ensuring fairness and diversity in hiring and public contracting. I also support vigorous enforcement of our existing anti-discrimination laws.

Affirmative action was never intended to be a complete solution, and it is most effective when paired with other efforts to overcome discrimination. For many minority-owned businesses, the most serious obstacles to participation in the market come well before the point of hiring. I believe the state can take more creative "affirmative action" earlier in the process, through outreach efforts, mentoring, and training for targeted businesses. Many of our communities have experimented with helping companies draft bids, giving broad notification, and helping minority-owned firms—which regularly pay higher interest rates than other firms—get access to the credit they need.

In order to get beyond race tomorrow, we must take it into account today. Given the history and persistence of racial injustice in North Carolina, color blindness too often becomes willful blindness. Rather than blinding ourselves to the persistence of discrimination, we must work actively and affirmatively to make ensure that our institutions—whether they be schools or workplaces—are as diverse and talented as the communities they represent and serve.

20. What do you see as the solution to the current crisis in affordable housing, as well as to the increased foreclosures due to the sub-prime crisis?

One thing that is certain about the affordable housing crisis is its size. Three-quarters of a million households cannot afford a safe, stable home in North Carolina. Thousands more lack heat and indoor plumbing. And according to data reported last month, foreclosures in North Carolina were up 62% in the third quarter of 2007.

Addressing this catastrophic trend will require efforts on many levels. I propose a multifaceted solution to this problem, one that builds on existing initiatives and expertise. In 1999, North Carolina became the first state in the country to enact a predatory mortgage lending law. I am proud of my work in the Attorney General’s office in support of this initiative. We need to remain a leader when it comes to fighting illegal predatory lending while preserving access to a subprime market, and rehabilitating existing buildings and housing stock. And as discussed above, moving towards a living wage will help more of North Carolina’s workers put a roof over their family’s heads.

In the last few days, the Department of the Treasury has announced that it is working with banks on a stopgap measure that would freeze "teaser" rates on adjustable-rate mortgages for certain high-risk borrowers for at least the next few years. Although this is only a first step, it is an encouraging one. I believe that state regulators can and should apply similar pressure to lenders in North Carolina. State officials also shouldn't hesitate to pressure Congress to either lead, follow, or get out of the way of North Carolina's nation-leading fight against sub-prime lending. I was happy to see the North Carolina Attorney General's letter to Congress this week, and as Lieutenant Governor I will keep up that fight.

Finally, we must always have a safety net in place to ensure that people caught in a tough spot do not end up homeless. The North Carolina Housing Trust Fund can be an essential part of that safety net, but it is currently woefully underfunded. As Lieutenant Governor, I would make the Housing Trust Fund a priority.

Responses from Pat Smathers

1. It has been pointed out that a family, whose breadwinner works for minimum wage—even with the recent minimum wage increase—is still living in poverty. Do you support the idea of legislating a “living wage,” which guarantees a worker will be paid enough to feed, cloth, and house their family? Why or why not?

It is unconscionable that North Carolinians who work a forty-hour work week, 52 weeks a year, cannot afford to properly care for their families. Even with the recent hike in the state mandated minimum wage, many North Carolinians who do the hard work of hauling trash in our hospitals; caring for the elderly in our nursing homes and keeping our tourism industry running make only \$12,792 a year. That means these workers are still falling beneath the Federal Poverty Level for a family of two.

I applaud the counties and cities that have demonstrated leadership in this arena by adopting living wage ordinances. I believe all entities, public and private, should strive to pay their employees a fair salary that reflects the current costs of food, housing, health care and child care.

I will continue to support local governments in their efforts to address the inadequacies of our wage system, and look forward to a day when all of North Carolina’s families – rather than a mere 55 percent -- can afford to budget for their basic needs. While I don’t believe the suggested statewide living wage standard of \$12.32 is immediately attainable in all of our communities, I am heartened by the successful grassroots initiative to raise North Carolina’s minimum wage. I hope some of the studies used by the movement’s proponents -- showing wage increases do not inhibit economic growth or small business productivity – will continue to be quoted in our ongoing fight for dignified, well-paying jobs across the state.

2. Do you support the abolition of the death penalty in NC? Please elaborate.

I support a moratorium on the death penalty. The statistics pertaining to executions in North Carolina are startling: Documented flaws in the justice system have saddled dozens of death row defendants with unqualified counsel and led to at least five innocent North Carolinians being sentenced to die. Until we can figure out how to administer this system fairly, and without the taint of racial bias, we should not proceed with any executions. The North Carolina Senate got it right in 2003 when it became the first legislative body to institute a moratorium.

Assuming the problems plaguing the death penalty can be resolved, the question of abolition should be put to a referendum. The people of North Carolina have the right to be heard on this important issue.

3. What is your position on the use of tax credits to attract corporations to NC? What are your ideas on how to attract economic development to counties that are being left out of the current development boom?

I believe we need to rethink our hastiness to give away tax incentives to big-name corporations that aren’t North Carolina-grown. Economic development is critical, but we shouldn’t pursue it at the expense of our communities. Rather than rely on attractive tax credit packages to lure high-tech industry here, we need to invest our money in programs that will improve the climate for all businesses, including those that have long contributed to our economy. I support programs to upgrade our state’s roads, railways, water and sewer systems. I support job-training programs that benefit our citizens in ways we won’t lose if a company picks up and moves away.

I believe it is the state’s responsibility to support those counties with more sluggish economies, both through funding and counsel. The state should collaborate with local government agencies to help them lay a path to economic growth while providing them with the needed autonomy to follow that path.

4. What is your position on the right of gays and lesbians to marry? To enter into civil unions? To adopt children?

One of the reasons I am proud to call myself a Democrat is that our party has always stood for justice and equality for all citizens. I believe all North Carolinians in committed relationships should be entitled to the same property rights and other legal benefits.

Legislatures and courts are still trying to figure out what exactly the concept of civil unions entails. Until we’ve carved out a definition for North Carolina, I will continue to use current legal tools to protect gays and lesbians from discrimination. As an attorney, I routinely work with gays and lesbians to ensure their rights through wills, deed conveyances and other contractual agreements.

Marriage is a religious issue, and I cannot advise churches on how to approach the institution. But I believe the state should not condone or abide discrimination that prevents its citizens from enjoying rich and fulfilling family lives. The question of adoption should pivot not on a couple’s sexual orientation, but on their ability to create a stable and acceptable home for the child. In all adoption cases, the welfare of the child is paramount.

5. Do you support the provision in the recently passed Renewable Energy bill, which forces utility customers to pay for new power plant construction before they are built—even if they are cancelled before they go online?

No. If a project is too big a risk for a power company, it's too big a risk for its customers. North Carolina's citizens should not be required to play the game of utility speculation.

6. Do you support the expansion of the current Council of State Public Financing pilot program to all candidates for the Council of State? For all candidates running for the General Assembly? For candidates running for Governor?

Yes, yes and yes. I believe the current system of electoral financing is horrible. The system is designed to force candidates to spend their time raising money, and it's working. But it's not working for the majority of North Carolinians. We need to re-open government to all of our citizens, not just those with deep pockets or lobbyist friends.

7. North Carolina's recent history has included explosive growth, which is expected to continue into the foreseeable future. Infrastructure needs created by this rapid growth, by action of the NC General Assembly, may only be financed by county referendums on land transfer taxes, by increased property taxes, or by increased sales taxes. Impact taxes on developers and other real estate entities are expressly forbidden in all but a few counties. What position do you take on how to finance infrastructure needs created by new development? Do you see the need for additional financing options to be created by the NC General Assembly?

I believe local governments should have a wide array of financing options available to them. The recent round of voting showed that transfer taxes aren't popular in many counties, but that's the way taxes should be addressed: By voters. Rather than issue broad dictates eliminating financing options, the General Assembly should create additional options for communities to consider.

Developers should not have to shoulder the total cost of growth, since we all benefit from an improved economy, but much of the financial responsibility belongs to them. As we face an ongoing drought throughout the state, we cannot ignore the price development exacts on our environment. In certain counties, assessing an infrastructure surcharge or impact tax may make sense: We must allow local entities to make those important decisions without unnecessary state interference.

8. Do you support the idea of providing tax credits for energy efficient houses and buildings?

Yes. Buildings gobble up our precious environmental resources, accounting for 70 percent of electricity consumption and 12 percent of water consumption nationwide. By constructing smarter, greener buildings, we can conserve our natural resources while bringing down the costs of doing business.

New York State has been a leader in stimulating its green economy, adopting a green building tax credit in 2000. Since its passage, more than \$700 million has been spent on green construction projects in New York City alone. In North Carolina, we can lead the Southeast by establishing incentives to encourage building green.

9. Lottery proceeds, originally intended to increase education funding, were immediately reallocated to replace, rather than increase, existing education funding. How do you propose to return the lottery to the original principles that sought to make it an "education lottery"?

I believe the lesson of the lottery is that we must be wary of silver bullet solutions that promise quick fixes to our state's problems. No matter how you split the lottery proceeds pie, there just aren't many slices to go around: The program generated just \$300 million in its first year, a figure that fell a full 25 percent below projections. Even more troubling are reports that most of the revenue is being used to sustain the lottery, with prizes and marketing claiming a huge share. Current plans to up the prize amounts threaten to further decrease the revenue percentage directed to education, while enticing more low-income North Carolinians to habitually buy tickets.

As the *New York Times* reported this year, voters across the country wrongly believe the lottery fully funds public education. Perhaps that's why there hasn't been a louder outcry over lottery monies in North Carolina supplanting, rather than enhancing, education funding. We can begin to address this situation by reinstating the exact language used in the first lottery bill Gov. Easley signed: "Net revenues generated by the lottery shall not supplant revenues already expended or expected to be expended for those public purposes, and lottery net revenues shall supplement rather than be used as substitute funds."

10. Do you support changing the law that denies State and Local government employees the right to engage in collective bargaining?

I believe this issue deserves careful study. As a lifetime resident of a mill town, I understand the importance of protecting workers' rights and support efforts to organize blue- and white-collar workplaces. I believe an engaged and energized union base is key to reducing poverty and developing the economy in North Carolina. But unions should not be in a position to set the tax rate, and we must consider the rights of taxpayers and workers as we revisit this important issue.

11. Do you support an Independent Redistricting Commission that would draw NC's legislative districts on a non-partisan basis following the next census?

Yes. The way our counties are chopped up is not resulting in good, representative government for all North Carolinians. Democracy is rooted not in protectionist partisan politics, but in the free exchange of ideas in a competitive ideological marketplace. We must redraw our legislative districts to eliminate all single-party bias.

12. Do you support NC's current system of allocating Presidential electors on a winner-take-all basis? Is there another method of allocation that you prefer?

The federal electoral system is ripe for reform, but I believe it must be addressed on a national scale. I'm open to new ideas about how we collect and count votes in presidential races, but I don't think we as a state can depart from the nationally accepted model without jeopardizing our franchise in federal elections.

13. Is health care a right or a privilege? Should the Constitution of NC be amended to state such explicitly?

Health care is neither a right nor a privilege: It's a necessity, like food or shelter. The government should not freely distribute it, but instead ensure citizens' access to it. Like food or shelter, health care will continue to be provided by privately held industries, but that should not preclude its availability to all North Carolinians. We must strive, through public-private partnerships, to create a health care system that is affordable, accessible and easy to understand.

14. The issue of illegal immigration is getting a lot of attention in this election cycle, where undocumented immigrants are being blamed for everything from unemployment rates, to school overcrowding, to an increase in crime. Do you consider this blame for perceived problems to be legitimate? If elected, what legislation would you support to address these concerns while insuring the humane and responsible treatment of immigrants who are here, with or without documentation?

Immigration is not the source of all problems facing our state, but we must recognize its effects on our hometowns. As mayor, I have watched our community grow and change with the influx of workers from across Central America, a perspective that has shaped my five-prong plan for addressing immigration. First, I believe the United States must secure its borders. An unmanned fence is not a sufficient solution: For the sake of our domestic security, we must actively guard the many entryways to our country. Second, we need to develop a guest worker program that meets the needs of our economy while protecting the American worker's interests. And third, we should work to build a program that allows undocumented migrants who are longtime residents of their communities to gain citizenship.

These initiatives can only occur at the federal level. But local leaders' involvement is critical to the final two steps of my plan: We must enforce laws against employers who take advantage of the current situation, and we need to immediately deport illegal immigrants who are involved in criminal activity. These seemingly simple measures will improve the quality of life for all North Carolinians, including our most recent arrivals.

15. The Leandro decision has charged NC with failing to provide adequate resources to provide an equal education to all of NC's citizens. What would you do in order to bring NC into compliance with the Leandro decision?

State government's single most important responsibility is the education of its citizens. As Leandro rightly states, this responsibility may not be ceded to local municipalities, many of which lack the resources to provide their residents with sound basic educations. The state must continually examine and evaluate its schools, and develop funded solutions based on those assessments.

Leandro recognizes that school districts, like students, face various obstacles on their paths to success. Rather than embrace a "one-size-fits-all" answer, Leandro instead instructs the state to collaborate with counties to find the best ways to serve children of all ages, economic backgrounds and abilities. The state must fight underfunded federal mandates and pay for necessary measures, including additional materials and supplies, capital improvements and more teachers to reduce class size. But this dynamic partnership between state and local governments requires more from North Carolina than money: The state should provide the visionary leadership, logistical support and ongoing monitoring needed to keep a good teacher in every classroom and a good principal in every school.

16. Many returning Iraq War vets are already experiencing the same levels of homelessness and joblessness that plagued the returning Vietnam War vets. What do you propose that NC can do to assist those who served our nation, as they try to readjust to civilian life?

The veteran population in North Carolina is approaching one million. Every one of those brave men and women who honorably served their country deserves to be thanked not just with words and memorial monuments, but with meaningful legislation that protects and provides for them.

I served in the National Guard for 28 years, and am proud of my military experience. As a veteran, I know that we need someone in government who will consistently and forcefully speak on behalf of our interests. If I am elected lieutenant governor, I will always emphasize issues pertaining to veterans.

Many of those issues need to be addressed immediately by the General Assembly. We must enact legislation to ensure veterans' employment and housing rights. We need to make legal representation for veterans available and affordable, so veterans who have not received their benefits can seek compensation. And we should raise the state's Department of Veterans' Affairs to a cabinet-level department.

The best way to approach the very real problems veterans face when they return from Iraq is to remember veterans' interests are everybody's interests. Programs that create affordable housing and improve mental health care in North Carolina will make this a better state for all citizens, veterans and non-veterans alike.

17. Do you support the NAACP's initiative to create an Environmental Job Corps for young people who did not graduate from high school, to re-engage them in public service? Do you have ideas on how to help foster such a "Green Jobs" corps?

Yes. But to make this program work, we will need funding and support from local, state and federal government. This tripartite backing is the best way to ensure "Green Jobs" success.

18. What would you do to better equalize the funding and support for the five historically black public universities in North Carolina with that of the other public universities?

A lieutenant governor's greatest asset is his soapbox: As lieutenant governor, I would be an enthusiastic spokesman for the state's five historically black public universities, which together award more than half of the college degrees earned by African Americans statewide.

Still, many of these schools are at a critical juncture. According to a recent report in *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, the graduation rate at Shaw University, a private HBCU in Raleigh, fell off ten points in ten years, bringing the current rate to a dismal 28 percent. Even the best performing public schools, such as North Carolina A&T State University, don't outpace Shaw by much, with 52 percent of students dropping out.

We must continue to stress education at every level. By building a culture of education in North Carolina, we can improve graduation rates and build support for these important institutions.

19. What would you do to address the history of state discrimination against people of color in hiring and contracting?

Unfortunately, there are many shameful incidents in North Carolina's past. We cannot ever fully atone for all of the civil rights violations that stain our history. The most meaningful way we can address the state's history of racially-based discrimination in hiring and contracting is to embrace our current commitment to fair and unbiased hiring practices. If we continue to enforce the law at all levels of government, we can ensure our future is brighter than our past.

20. What do you see as the solution to the current crisis in affordable housing, as well as to the increased foreclosures due to the sub-prime crisis?

I believe affordable housing is a local government issue. It is the state's job to work with and support municipalities in finding community-appropriate ways to develop affordable housing and foster well-paying jobs. While it's impossible to solve the sub-prime mortgage problem at the state level, North Carolina can take action to prevent future crises. Many of the low-income citizens who are continuing to be victimized by sub-prime loans are renters whose landlords are losing their properties: These North Carolinians need an advocate who can help them find affordable, stable homes. Additionally, we need to continue to stress basic financial education in our high schools, so young adults aren't tempted by the raft of credit card offers which can devastate their credit scores, leaving them vulnerable to sub-prime loans and other costly, questionable deals. Finally, North Carolina should expedite its plans to join a national mortgage brokers' registry so fraudulent lenders and loan officers who prey on borrowers in other states won't be able to do the same thing here.