

Election 2008 Answers from Those Seeking Office

For Kansas State Senator & Kansas State House of Representatives

- 1. What else should legislators do to improve economic development in the State of Kansas? (100 words)**
- 2. How should the state address the problem of the medically uninsured and under insured? (100 words)**
- 3. What ideas do you have regarding energy resources and how will these affect our air quality? Specifically address your position on wind farms for Kansas. (100 words)**

Answers

Senate, 17th District

Jim Barnett (R):

1. (Economic Development) Legislators should continue to support and provide funding for quality of life issues in our state that promote economic development. That support should include education from pre-Kindergarten through post-secondary education including Flint Hills Technical College and Emporia State University. Clean air and water are vital to our future. We should support work force development, training and re-training to sustain our work force. Our state should maintain affordable education for all citizens. Kansas must maintain competitive taxation levels. I support a 10% investment tax credit for all businesses. We must maintain affordable energy, while balancing environmental issues.
2. (Medical Insurance) Much has been done and much more must be done. We should continue to support safety-net clinics to provide care for the uninsured. That alone is not adequate. I support premium assistance in the private market to provide insurance for those who cannot currently afford healthcare coverage, especially targeting small businesses that struggle to maintain healthcare benefits. All Kansans should have access to affordable and quality healthcare. We should focus on prevention and wellness, realizing that long-term savings and better health for Kansans will be realized. Prevention of youth smoking and childhood obesity need greater attention.
3. (Air Quality and Energy) We need both short and long-term answers to energy resources, with attention to not only air quality but water quality and quantity. Our current base load of energy that is provided by gas, coal and nuclear should utilize the cleanest technology possible. Longer-term plans should include wind, solar, hydrogen, and other technologies that will undoubtedly be developed. Conservation is one of the most critical and missing elements of both state and federal energy policy. I support wind energy for Kansas. I would like to see our State further explore net metering and community wind

Kitty Frank (D):

1. (Economic Development) As your senator, I will fight to assure state economic development funds are directed toward projects that allow us to improve the quality of our lives over time. Our goal is to provide jobs that pay more than the living wage with companies that enact family friendly policies and use resources wisely. The health of our communities depends on small business growth and sustainability. I am excited about new strategies for growing our own entrepreneurs. There is no reason to feel we must sell ourselves short in order to beat out competition for jobs that do not meet our standards.
2. (Medical Insurance) I will immediately support the Premium Assistance Program. It was recommended by the Kansas Health Policy Authority in 2008 to provide health insurance to 24,000 needy Kansans over the next three years at very little cost. In the long run, we must disconnect health insurance from employment. Very small businesses, the same businesses that sustain and grow our Kansas communities, cannot offer health insurance in an efficient and competitive manner. This practice no longer meets the needs of a nimble and dynamic Kansas culture.
3. (Air Quality and Energy) I will provide leadership to end reliance on scarce traditional energy resources; the same resources that are the root cause of many of our environmental and health challenges. Conservation will be top priority. Kansas must invest in sustainable resource technologies, such as wind, while we have time to develop them through their trial and error phases. The bottom line is to be able to look our grandchildren in the eyes in twenty years and tell them we did everything we could to anticipate and ease their transition into the new energy economy.

House of Representatives

Don Hill (R) 60th District

1. (Economic Development) Our first priority in economic development is take steps to maintain and improve a well trained and productive workforce. This is best accomplished by investing in education and training at all levels and assuring value is being derived from the investment. The state should assist in further development in bio-technology, transportation, agriculture value added, and energy. Business climate has recently improved in Kansas and attention must be given to remaining competitive. We have the potential to attract more visitors to Kansas and investment in our hospitality industry should be encouraged. Finally, we need to leverage resources to improve housing availability.
2. (Medical Insurance) We need to continue to invest in our system of safety net clinics, which Flint Hills Community Health Center is an excellent example of. Both children and adults have significant needs as health insurance becomes less affordable and employers are discontinuing or limiting health benefits. I support expansion of SCHIP, a Federal/ State children's health initiative. I also support premium assistance, which the legislature has initially embraced, but last year delayed. I supported the Kansas Health Policy Authority's 2008 agenda and look forward to receiving the 2009 recommendations.

3. (Air Quality and Energy) Clean air and economic development are both desirable to a great majority of Kansans. As we pursue both we must balance the two. The first priority should be encouraging energy conservation. Kansas should continue to invest in building transmission capacity, developing new nuclear capacity, cleaning up existing coal facilities and adopting standards for new facilities. Everything should be “on the table” in seeking clean, dependable, and cost effective energy. Aggressive renewable energy standards, prominently including wind farms, should be adopted. Kansas is one of a few states that have great potential from wind energy. The best opportunity for wind energy development is in western Kansas.

Peggy Mast (R) 76th District

1. (Economic Development) The people in the state of Kansas are innovative and resourceful. We need to do all that we can to help encourage and strengthen small business creation. We should cut as much red tape out of the picture as possible and work to promote our business economy. Small business should be treated with as much respect and promotion as big business. We need to protect our agriculture and business economy from frivolous lawsuits that drive up the cost of doing business and frighten people away from opening up for business. We also need to make sure that we are training the workforce necessary to help those businesses thrive.

2. (Medical Insurance) We have studied the uninsured and underinsured. We looked at other states, and learned a great deal. Kansas is faring better than most. We have more uncovered by auto insurance than by health insurance and auto insurance is mandated! Many uninsured are young people who don't consider health insurance a priority. For them, we should offer Health Savings Accounts and high deductible policies. Competition in the insurance market should be encouraged and smaller businesses allowed to access group coverage at reasonable rates. Emporia has a great facility that serves as a medical home for the underinsured or underinsured and should be supported wholeheartedly.

3. (Air Quality and Energy) Energy is at the forefront as our state and nation compete for growing demand. We must have a healthy mix. My first choice: an addition to Wolf Creek which supplies the cleanest, most efficient energy available. I have hopes for hydrogen in the future and a hydrogen cell with wind turbines would up efficiency and compensate for the inconsistency in wind. Solar energy will be great someday, but right now, too expensive. I am sensitive to the cost of “going green” with current economic uncertainty. We should be reasonable and responsible to every Kansas citizen. New clean coal plants can reduce energy costs to Kansans and boost our economy.

Carol Strickland (D) 76th District

1. (Economic Development) A more competitive and fair economy will benefit all Kansans. Legislators can show fiscal responsibility and still invest in Kansas again. Our state, long known for progress and resourcefulness, is struggling and needs economic growth. Legislators should:

- Provide a safety net for family farms

- Expand agricultural research and trade
- Support world-class public education and higher education
- Improve state infrastructure
- Institute a long-term transportation policy
- Enhance scientific research and green technology
- Reduce costs of doing business in Kansas
- Encourage new sources of revenue
- Abandon the politics of partisan division and work together

2. (Medical Insurance) Hopefully, the national initiative for universal health will become reality, and we will be able to provide coverage for the 300,000 Kansans who are uninsured and the additional thousands who are underinsured. Ensuring quality, affordable health care is essential to children's educations, workers' productivity, and businesses' competitiveness. Kansas should:

- Promote prevention and wellness
- Stop insurance discrimination
- Eliminate health care disparities
- Encourage medical research
- Provide affordable long-term care options
- Negotiate large group premiums for small businesses
- Fund community-based health centers
- Achieve savings through competition, choice, innovation, and higher quality care

3. (Air Quality and Energy) Kansas needs a new, bold sustainable energy policy that includes our natural resources and new, alternative energy sources. Because we cannot "drill our way to energy independence," legislators must work together to fast-track investment and incentives for a green energy sector, promoting wind farms, solar, natural gas, clean coal, biodiesel, and nuclear expansion. Research and development, conservation efforts, and clean air standards will be essential if Kansas is to meet the needs of our people now and in the future. We must be careful not to sacrifice the environment for "quick fixes" or the promise of new jobs.