

Arizona Republic Questionnaire

From the Desk of State Senator David Braswell

ISSUES

- 1. Has state government been spending too much money, the right amount, or not enough? Specifically, how would you change the state's approach to spending? I believe the state has been spending too much unaccounted for tax dollars. I would change the states approach to spending by requiring that it fund only services that are mandated by the Arizona constitution. We must legislate practical non-socialistic ways to provide basic services and meet the needs as required by the Arizona constitution. We must be willing to make the tough decisions to live within our budget without hindering job creation, business development and the quality of free and public education, charter education, private education, higher education and home school education. I would change the states approach to spending by rewarding state agencies and their employees whenever they found ways to save revenue regardless of their approved budget and, at the same time improving the quality of the services they provide to the public. There is enough current tax revenue to provide quality services for the agencies responsible for education, law enforcement and health care of the needy and elderly only. There is also enormous waste still occurring from the way state agencies spend revenue. We must look at every state position in every agency including K-12 and Higher Education and eliminate wasteful spending, institute accountability measures that reward quality services at a lower cost to the taxpayer. We MUST eliminate unfunded mandates and self serving agency revenue impact fees that break the spirit of businesses paying the fees and consumers that absorb the cost. It should not cost upwards of \$30,000.00 in impact fees just to get ready to build a house in some of our cities throughout Arizona. These cost end being rolled into the cost of the home and the mortgage.**

- 2. Name one state agency or program you believe gets too much money. Why? There are many agencies that are designed to spend money without regard for the quality of the service benefit they are charged to provide. I believe the Department of Economic Security has received too much state tax revenue to implement federally mandated programs. This department is no longer required by the Federal government to just provide basic needs to the needy. The programs they provide go beyond the scope of providing a basic temporary safety net for the needy for the sole purpose of helping them get back on their feet and become self sustaining without long term government assistance. Too many of these departments federally mandated programs are designed to motivate needy individuals to stay in poverty and continue receiving benefits. The federal government has placed too many regulations on the use of federal dollars by expanding this department's charter from that of providing basic needs, to providing un-needed social service "wants". The other agency that has been established to provide a misguided service is juvenile corrections. We have our priorities mixed up by providing state revenue in the amount of approximately 147,000.00 dollars per parole violator under the age of 18. This program should be restructured completely**

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with the sole purpose of punishment for crimes committed once a juvenile shows they are unwilling to cooperate.

3. Name one state agency or program you believe gets too little money. Why? There are two departments that I would list. The first is agencies that support economic development. These are state agencies that should be funded for the sole purpose of supporting the growth of existing business development and attracting new business development to our state willing to provide a living wage with benefits. The other program would be education. The people of the state have shown time and again their willingness to invest in education yet we refuse to increase funding opportunities that assure all students are provided the highest quality educational environment and a realistic path to attend college regardless of socio-economic status. That means all levels of status, not just the disadvantaged. The result has been to allow local school boards to rise additional unaccounted for funds through overrides that directly impact each business and property owner's primary property tax rate. This approach must be changed. Critics will say I support increasing dollars to Public Education. I support maintaining a high quality education system that gives choice for parents to choose where they send their children. One that holds every dollar to a level of accountability that increases student achievement and a system that prepares our children to master standards and benchmarks needed to compete in a global economy and provide for their families earning livable wage with benefits. Critics want to make education a partisan issue. Shame on them for using our children to politicize the needs of educating our children.
4. If you favor further state tax cuts, name one tax that should be cut and why? I want to see the corporate business property tax and business hidden tax fees cut or completely eliminated or cut drastically. It does not make sense to tax businesses willing to grow their infrastructure in Arizona with an approximately 22% tax on all business equipment purchases. The current business tax structure in Arizona is breaking the backs of our businesses small, medium and large. The result is a stagnated business climate postured to maintain the status quo in our state and grow the businesses infrastructure in other states willing to provide growth incentives and return on investment dollar.
5. If you oppose further tax cuts, name one strategy you would pursue to boost the state's economy. I have stated I propose a tax credit incentive program for businesses willing to invest in existing and new businesses that create jobs that pay livable wage with benefits. I propose a targeted tax reduction for businesses willing to meet the standard to qualify for the credit. I am proposing an across the board tax cut for all business in the form of a tax credit for any business willing to invest in infrastructure improvements for the purpose of growing their Arizona business and create jobs. For every qualified job created and maintained the state of Arizona should credit that company with a per job created tax credit.

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- 6. Did you support or oppose the May 18th sales-tax measure? I was appointed to the Senate the week after the legislature voted to refer the sales tax referendum to the voters. I was not there to vote yes or no for that matter. Had I have been in the Senate at that time, I would not have wanted to refer the issue to the ballot without first understanding the scope of the budget crisis that precipitated a request to increase taxes for additional revenue. Moreover, since the referendum went to the ballot the question for me became whether or not the taxpayers were willing to increase their investment in Arizona's education, law enforcement and health care system or continue cutting these agencies budget's to levels that would effectively shut them down. I would have rather had a referendum asking the voters if they approved raising earmarked revenue for the sole purpose of paying off the existing 4 billion dollar debt our state currently owes and never allowing us to go into debt again. I would then like to see legislation that caps and/or prevents state borrowing without voter approval and require us to zero base budget every state agency within our existing revenue collections. Until the tax system is overhauled we are going to continue to ride a tax revenue rollercoaster totally dependent on the health of our sales dependent economy. Change must occur and fast to right this ship and place it on a secure financial foundation. If elected I plan to lead the charge in this area.**
- 7. Is Arizona's budget too reliant on the sales tax? If so, what should be done to change the mix of revenues? If not, what should the state do to prevent cyclical drops in its revenue? Yes, Arizona is too reliant on sales tax as its main revenue stream. Revenue should be more dependent on business growth. When businesses are growing, more workers are able to contribute to moving the economic indicators in a positive direction. We need to build an economy that will add 1.5 million jobs in the next five years or 300,000 jobs per year. Job growth is the key to increased tax revenue. Property taxes should be capped and earmarked for basic needs as opposed to the socialistic wants for everyone. The primary property tax rate pie for the average property owner is reaching a 25% on the dollar level. This is simply not good for growth and must be restructured. We cannot tax ourselves to prosperity. The more dollars workers, businesses, and property owners are allowed to keep the more healthy the economy will be. The entire system is too complex and must be overhauled from top to bottom. Everyone should contribute fairly and consistently without overburdening any one sector of our socio economic status taxpayers.**
- 8. Are there any circumstances under which you would favor a tax increase to offset future state budget deficits? Budget deficits are defined in the eyes of the beholder. A budget is not in deficit if the agency reduces expense. For basic services mandated by the constitution, budgetary needs must be met at the expense of other services that are not providing basic needs and are not required by the Arizona Constitution. Simply put, we have not taken care of our fiscal house this past decade. I would favor paying off our debt and building a rainy day fund equal to 50% of the last five years revenue average. Once those two goals have been met, I would want a guarantee that we**

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budget future growth based on a averaging growth plan that does not exceed 5% of the last three to five years revenue and uses the interest from the rainy day fund to offset the cost associated with providing increased services in areas where the need for those services rises faster than the revenue required for providing the services.

9. Arizona's budget has a structural imbalance, meaning state spending obligations for the next several years outstrips the projected amount of tax collections. The state has already cut \$3 billion out of spending. What is the way forward to make the budget balance? The way forward is to stay within our revenue projections and only increase spending in areas that positively impact our ability to grow business and produce livable wage jobs, quality education, law enforcement, fire, and health care for the needy. We need a plan that addresses our short term structural imbalance, balancing that debt in a manner that does not stifle job growth. We need a long range plan that earmarks projected revenue for the sole purpose of providing quality of life services required by the Arizona Constitution. Additional requests for revenue must be vetted for their long term benefit and impact on job growth and economic development. Any increases must be funded with additional revenue sources approved by the voters.

10. Should Arizona take the lead in fighting global warming even if the federal government doesn't? If so, how? This question seems somewhat appropriate as the Gulf is being saturated with millions of gallons of oil due to corporate negligence. Arizona should protect its environment in common sense ways that does not over-regulate resulting in higher cost to businesses and consumers but protects its renewable resources through proper monitoring of business activity. It should not over regulate businesses in ways that grow state agency bureaucracies required to monitor compliance to the regulations just because they can raise fees and just because the federal government says we have to do it regardless. This approach has resulted in hidden taxes to fund the agencies charged to monitor compliance to the regulation. I would support a complete review of all existing state environmental regulations and weight each regulation against a rubric designed to evaluate its effectiveness in protecting the environment verses the cost to implement. Arizona should always take the lead in protecting its resources regardless of what the federal government does at the national level. This is a states rights issue for me.

11. What action does Arizona need to take next to deal with the problem of illegal immigration? Stay the course we have taken by passing SB 1070. Uphold the rule of law. Embrace immigrants that come to our state legally. I would like to see us require all K-12 students enrolling into our public and private schools to produce citizenship documentation. Not for the purpose of preventing the student from enrolling but for the purpose of requiring all undocumented students and their families to declare their status when they choose to participate in our free and public education system. I believe the taxpayers have a right to know exactly how many students attending our public and charter schools are undocumented. I would like to assign a dollar figure to

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and report that additional cost to the tax payers of Arizona to provide undocumented individuals a free and public education. I would like to charge the federal government for the cost to our AZ taxpayers to subsidize a free and public education for undocumented individuals that the federal government requires Arizona to subsidize at great expense. Finally, I would like to see legislation that expels any undocumented student attending an Arizona Public or Charter whenever they violate the schools Student Code of Conduct and Expected Behaviors in a manner that endangers the life of fellow students, staff, parents and community members.

12. Did I support SB1070-the state's new immigration law? What are its strengths and weaknesses? What changes, if any, would you make to the law? YES, its strengths are that it is forcing the federal government to address the current federal law requiring that all immigrants be prepared to produce proof of citizenship. The legislation enforces federal law. We in Arizona are law abiding citizens. Its weakness is that it does not go far enough in other areas where undocumented individuals are impacting our economic condition and the right of our citizens to feel secure. Other areas it should impact are: E.g. public and charter schools, hospital services, social services, loss of tax revenue to name a few. These areas should be included in the mandatory reporting to those in our state and country illegally.
13. If you could only introduce one bill in the coming legislative session, what would it be? If, as the questions asked, I can only introduce one bill in the coming legislature I would introduce a competitive economic development bill focused on livable wage job creation with benefits and supporting existing businesses and attracting new businesses willing to provide those types of jobs for all Arizonans.
14. Name one unsuccessful bill during the 2009 legislative session that you believe should have become law. I would have liked to see the "Jobs Bill" become law after having an opportunity to debate it in the House and Senate. I was disappointed to see that it was not allowed to be debated but rather presented as an all or nothing piece of legislation.
15. Should the Legislature act to reduce the influence of state and federal courts over state government? If so, how? Yes, our constitution requires that the court system be there to provide reasonable, fair and consistent interpretation of the law but it does not give them the right to interfere with our rights to govern on behalf of the peoples will. E.g. Education Funding Levels, immigration, social service benefits, mandatory health care, environmental, and water rights to name just a few areas of concern involving states rights.
16. What, if anything, should the legislature do to improve health care for its citizens? First, I would like to see us repeal the national health care legislation in Arizona and nationally mandating that all citizens have health care or be subjected to a fine. Second, I would like to see Arizona increase the eligibility requirements for state

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supported health care from its current 1.4 million levels downward to levels that only cover children and the truly needy and seniors. Third, I would like to see us focused on economic development that grows our economy by motivating current and new businesses to provide a living wage with health benefits that are purchased not only by the employer but the employee.

17. Did you favor the federal health-care reform law signed by President Obama this year? No I did not. If governments can mandate that all citizens purchase coverage under the threat of a fine, then Governments can mandate what level of coverage and who is eligible to receive coverage. This is not democratic and is nothing more than socialism.
18. Do you believe federal health-care reform will improve access to health care? Why or why not? No it will not improve access. One just has to look at the failures of nationalized health-care in Canada to see that it hinders timely access rather than improves. Indian health-care is another example of a failed government run health-care system. The government should not be involved in providing benefits in areas that are not required by the constitution either at the federal or the state level.
19. Do you believe federal health-care reform will place a burden on the state? Why or why not? Absolutely. The Federal Government is already mandating that states lower the qualifications for citizens to be placed on state health care systems. Arizona is a state of approximately 6 million people and currently qualifies 1.4 million to receive taxpayer support health care. This is simply bankrupting our state. Citizens need to be motivated to obtain employer provided health-care by getting a job that provides a livable wage and benefits. Only the truly needy should be provided a safety net temporarily. The state must provide incentives for existing and new business to create these types of job benefits.
20. Do you support using state funds for bioscience research? Yes, but not if the use of the funds infringes on the rights of the unborn.
21. Do you support the use of school vouchers? Yes, but only if they are constitutional, do not increase the reporting requirements for private institutions accepting a state supported voucher and, only if the voucher is for all students regardless of their socio-economic class financially. I do not support gimmick voucher bills that only provide limited dollars for disadvantaged students attending a failing public school and that allow the failing public school losing the student to a voucher by allowing them to retain some of the dollars otherwise provided through the state student funding formula for public and charter school students.
22. Should the Aims test continue to be required for graduation? Should it be toughened? Yes, but not as a single test beginning in the 10th grade year of high-school. The Standards and Benchmarks the state of Arizona have mandated that students should

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know and be able to do should be embedded in behavioral stated objected taught daily. The mastery of these AIMS standards should be monitored through the use of technology so each teacher, student and parent is able to see which of those standards have been mastered and which have not and need re-teaching. The current single test system only monitors student's failure of the standards after it is too late to re-teach. The system I propose monitors mastery in every class, in every grade level for every student in real time every day and provides the teacher and parent the needed feedback to re-teach when it is identified before failure occurs.

23. Would spending more money public schools increase the quality of education in Arizona? Why or why not? Relatively speaking under the current heavily mandated system NO it would not. Moreover, simply pouring more dollars into the current education accountability system will not guarantee anything. Consequently, I do not support simply increasing the amount of monies spent in the current accountability education system. I would support targeted areas of increases where the research is clear that it positively impacts student achievement as long as those dollars are held to a strict accountability measure and withdrawn immediately when they are not found to increase student achievement.
24. Is it prudent to bond to for school construction or would it be a better path to pay as you go for construction? Why do you feel that way? I believe it is not prudent to bond for school construction because it has such a negative impact on business budgets and property owners' primary property tax rates long term. We should pay as we go unless the voters approve a statewide funding source for all school construction throughout the state.
25. Do you support using state funds to keep the Arizona parks system open? If not, how would you propose to fund it? YES and NO. I support using state dollars to provide assistance to keep Park Systems open that are profitable and self sustaining without additional state funding. I do not support using state dollars to keep unprofitable parks open. If they are not profitable and of interest to enough citizens to maintain profitability they should not be funded. Those parks should either be closed or allow cities, counties or private groups to operate them profitably.
26. Do you support the passage of legislation that would require a presidential candidate to produce a birth certificate to be allowed on to the ballot? YES! As long as the legislation is not unconstitutional and does not prevent Arizonans' from voting in a presidential contest because of the legislation.
27. Do you support legislation that would:
- A. Prohibit or curtail abortion? YES
 - B. Legalize medical marijuana? NO

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28. C. Require presidential candidates to produce birth certificates to get on the Arizona ballot? YES! As long as the legislation is not unconstitutional and does not prevent Arizonans' from voting in a presidential contest because of the legislation.