

2020 Election Questions – State Candidates

On behalf of the McLean County Chamber of Commerce Political Action Committee (PAC) thank you for your interest in elected leadership serving constituents in the communities of McLean County.

Please find our candidate survey attached to this email for the November 3, 2020 general election. Answers must be complete and submitted no later than Friday, July 10, 2020 by 4:00 PM to be eligible for candidate interviews slated for late July and early August. Responses from the survey and interview will be considered by the full PAC Board when endorsing candidates and/or providing a financial contribution.

We look forward to getting to know you as a candidate. If you have any questions about the PAC or our endorsement process for this general election, please call Charlie Moore at 309-829-6344.

Best regards,

Meghan O'Neal-Rogozinski
Chairman

Candidate Name

Karla Bailey-Smith

1. What are your top three advocacy/policy priorities for the State of Illinois as a whole?

Passing the Clean Energy Jobs Act, ensuring our rural residents and low income residents have access to affordable high speed internet, and criminal justice and prison reform, including ending cash bail.

2. What are your top three advocacy/policy issues specifically for your constituents in McLean County?

1. Rural broadband, 2. protecting union jobs and collective bargaining 3. looking at ways to protect our valuable farmlands from extreme weather, such as encouraging cover crops.

3. If elected, how would you work with other elected and community leaders throughout McLean County to enhance and ensure regional collaboration?

I enjoy collaboration, and I hope the other representatives will be willing and able to meet (perhaps virtually) to discuss initiatives that benefit all of our residents. I will be seeking advice from any organization that would be affected by pending legislation, or as bills are being written. For example, we need to look at failings of the DCFS, and I would speak to the people trying to do that work and ask what they need to do their jobs more effectively.

4. How can McLean County improve and/or stand out compared to the rest of the state regarding business growth, expansion, and attraction?

The Clean Energy Jobs Act could bring more solar and wind power to McLean County, and we could also be a leader in the implementation of cover crops, which will generate more income, reduce erosion, and contribute to healthier soil.

5. The State of Illinois is in financial despair. What do you propose should be done about it and how are you prepared to lead that charge?

I support the Fair Tax Amendment. We currently operate under a regressive tax. Many states have a progressive tax system, and their economy is healthier, and their residents pay a portion that is appropriate for their income. Current funding projections rely on the passing of the Fair Tax. The Rebuild Illinois plan is also a robust stimulus package, providing jobs and opportunities for businesses with equipment and raw materials to flourish.

6. COVID-19 brought on a limitless number of issues and challenges for business in 2020. What is your opinion on how the State initially managed the crisis? What would you do/have done differently?

The initial, harsh lockdown measures saved lives. We did not know exactly how the virus spread at that time. If the science had shown the lower risk to outdoor activities, I would have encouraged earlier availability of non contact sports and recreation, and curbside service of all types of businesses, including bars. I would also have allowed earlier outdoor, spaced appropriately seating at restaurants and bars.

7. Moving forward, how should the state manage the Restore Illinois phasing plan and overall economic recovery?

Economic recovery will not take place if we have a surge in covid cases due to too much indoor, direct exposure without face coverings. Science shows that viral spread is through aerosols from the mouth and nose. The key to economic recovery is to move forward with appropriate caution, so that we do not have to go BACK to Phase 3, or even Phase 2. We need to secure Federal funds to help our small, independent businesses with their recovery, and to assist rental property owners to pay their mortgages. If we start evicting people who can't pay their rent, we will have a bigger homeless crisis, and increased public services to those people on the street will be yet another drain on our economy.

8. Policy issues with the State have continued to be the same over the last decade with very little movement. How do you propose to address issues regarding workers compensation, pension liabilities or property tax rates?

We need to meet our pension obligations, and we have to continue to work together to do so. A Fair Tax, or progressive tax, would help fund schools and take the burden off of property taxes. Workplaces should be supported with safety training and information to reduce the need for worker's compensation.

9. How do you feel about a graduated/progressive income tax and its affect on Illinois to be competitive for entrepreneurship, business attraction and employee/citizen retention?

I support the Fair Tax amendment. I believe it is beneficial to entrepreneurship, because people like me (a small business owner) struggle to make a profit, and would not be affected by higher taxes. Taxes would only increase for people making over \$250,000 as a single filer. Employers and residents who fall into this higher income category should be willing to contribute to a healthy economy. People on the other end of the income scale spend a higher proportion of their earnings on consumable items that fuel the economy, such as gas and food, and they should have a lower tax burden.

The McLean County Chamber of Commerce works with the Political Action Committee to help its membership understand who you are as a candidate and what your policies will be if elected. We achieve this by sharing your responses with the membership to help increase the turnout of educated voters. I agree that the McLean County Chamber of Commerce may share and publish my responses as submitted and as presented, on the McLean County Chamber of Commerce website www.mcleancochamber.org.

Yes

No

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