



2016 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN BY 9/27/16

NAME: Dick Clark

Campaign Website: Clarkworksforyou.com

Legislative District: #27

Occupation: Attorney/Dick Clark Law

Please provide additional pertinent biographical information:

I am a small business owner, and I have worked in state government, think tanks, and higher education. I know that there is good evidence for which public policy ideas work and which ones don't. I believe we can put evidence into action and craft laws that serve us all better.

My recent work experience includes:

- *Policy advisor to Gov. Dave Heineman on economic and workforce development, technology, and government operations*
- *Research director at the Platte Institute for Economic Research in Omaha*
- *Research director at the Institute for Economic Inquiry at Creighton University*
- *Private-practice attorney serving small businesses, individuals, and nonprofit organizations across Nebraska*

Community involvement:

- *Temple Baptist Church*
- *Midwest Church Security Coalition*
- *Lincoln Independent Business Association*
- *Everett Community Nonprofit Organization (past board member)*
- *Nebraska Firearms Owners Association (past board member)*
- *Lincoln Izaak Walton League*
- *Citizens Connected, Lincoln*

My wife Justina and I live in Lincoln's South Bottoms neighborhood with our three children: Charlie (3), Eva (2), and David (1).

1. Please list the top 5 issues you believe the Legislature needs to address in 2017.

Top Five Issues (not necessarily in order of importance)

I) Long-term property tax and income tax relief

II) Corrections reform to address overcrowding/unsafe conditions

III) More rational, coherent approach to funding public schools

IV) Rolling back unfunded mandates by the state on local government

V) Expanded school choice for students and parents

2. Do you support protecting the Build Nebraska Act (enacted in 2011), which will direct a small portion of state sales tax revenues to road needs through July 1, 2033?

☒ **YES** ☐ **NO**

Additional Comments:

3. If elected, what is the #1 priority you would try to accomplish in 2017?

Tax-credit scholarship legislation to provide more educational options for students in need across Nebraska and to realize significant tax savings for businesses and families.

4. Several state senators have worked closely in a bi-partisan effort with Governor Ricketts to keep state spending in check and reduce taxes. Their efforts have strengthened our economy, improved our national tax rankings,

and set a more disciplined course for prioritized state spending. In the 2016 Session lawmakers focused efforts on property tax relief via shifting significant state revenues to the state's property tax relief fund that gets distributed back property owners residing inside and outside of the state. If elected, would state tax (income tax/and or sales tax) relief be a priority issue for you in 2017?

☒ YES ☐ NO

Additional Comments:

Tax relief is critical to the future growth of Nebraska's economy. Our high property and income taxes are driving away opportunities to build and grow more businesses and to create more high-paying jobs in Nebraska. We are losing too many young people and retirees to other states with more business-friendly tax climates. We have to accomplish real tax relief, not just shift the tax burden around. That means controlling state spending and rolling back unfunded state mandates that force local officials to tax and spend more, too.

- 5. Please check ONE characterization under each of the following categories of key issues that best represents your general view. We also encourage you to provide additional comments that clarify and define your views.**

5a. Taxes

☒ I believe our state and local tax burden is too high and I favor thoughtfully holding in check state and local government spending as the means of lowering the burden of taxes on our citizens.

☐ I believe our state tax burden may be slightly excessive but generally it is about where it should be in order to maintain needed and desired programs. I would be cautious about impacting government programs and agencies when dealing with tax cut proposals.

☐ I believe our tax burden is about what it should be in order to maintain the state and local government programs and services desired by citizens. Therefore, I do not consider broad tax relief a central theme of my campaign.

Additional Comments:

5b. State Spending

___ I don't believe we need to reduce the rate of growth of state spending. Program spending in areas such as state equalization aid to K-12 schools, funding for health and human services, and other government services need to be increased and our current projected trends are reasonable. It seems as though reduced state spending often just pushes the burden to local property taxes.

___ I believe we need moderate reductions in the growth of state spending. Program spending in all areas can be reduced and through such shared efforts we must continue to reduce our state tax burden. Concerns over property taxes primarily should be addressed by local elected officials and government officials who make the decisions on the levels of local property tax spending.

X I believe we need fairly significant reductions in the growth of state spending. Program spending in many areas can be reduced and we must make government programs more accountable for their spending. This will require tough decisions about the size and scope of state government, but I believe we must address these issues if we want significant tax relief.

Additional Comments:

I am all for new, innovative ideas about how to run government in ways that serve people better. We have to provide for critical public services like education, roads, and public safety. But every single public official must remember that it is entrepreneurs and workers that build prosperity, not government. There is no government program more important than a flourishing, competitive market that rewards hard work and allows parents to build a better future for their children. I trust families and businesses to invest their hard-earned resources more wisely than politicians and bureaucrats can.

5c. Government Mergers/Consolidation

___ I support our current state and local government structure as the proper balance of state and local authority. Our current structure reflects efficiently organized and modern state and local government.

☒ I believe our current state and local government structure is outdated and inefficient in many areas. I would support incentives for mergers and consolidations. Our current structure for delivering many of our government services at the state and local level too often reflects entrenched, inefficient, duplicative and ultimately unaccountable bureaucracies.

Additional Comments:

It is the constant task of public officials to look for ways to deliver public services more effectively and more efficiently. I am absolutely open to ideas for reforming public institutions in ways that accomplish these goals. Modern technology makes it more possible than ever before to provide responsive public services to citizens across the state of Nebraska.

5d. Build Nebraska Act - Road Funding

☒ I support the Build NE Act and would actively oppose efforts to repeal it.

☐ I do not support the Build NE Act and believe we can't afford to direct sales tax funds to provide additional road funding. I can't say that I would actively oppose efforts to repeal it.

Additional Comments:

6. What are your ideas for encouraging strong job and investment growth?

The best economic incentives package possible would combine uniform, low taxes with streamlined government regulations that make it easier and more profitable to do business here. I think that we can put out the welcome mat to potential investors by showing that we are serious about achieving long-term property tax relief and personal and corporate income tax relief, and by showing that public agencies in Nebraska operate to facilitate responsible business operations, not to slow them down.

7. If elected, do you have a preference as to which legislative committees you would want to serve on?

Because of my experience as an attorney, I believe I could be effective on the Judiciary Committee. I also believe that I could do a lot to make better policy in the Business & Labor Committee.

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