



2016 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire
PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN BY 9/27/16

NAME: Mike Hilgers
Campaign Website:
Legislative District: #21
Occupation: Small Business Owner

Please provide additional pertinent biographical information:

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) Economic growth and job creation

II) Tax relief

III) Strengthening education opportunities

IV) Maintaining quality infrastructure

V) Reducing regulation/reducing barriers to market entry for small business and Ag producers

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?

Using my experience as a small business owner to find efficiencies in state government to reduce spending, lower taxes, and grow our economy.

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?

X___ YES ___ NO

Additional Comments: I support efforts to reduce the tax burden on Nebraska families and entrepreneurs.

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

X 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: As a small business owner I have experienced first-hand how high tax rates create a barrier to growth and job creation.

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.

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 believe in reducing state spending growth while prioritizing core responsibilities of state government such as infrastructure development, education and public safety. I also think it is important for the state to help give local elected officials the tools they need to control local spending and keep property taxes low.

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:

My background is in challenging the status quo and finding ways to do things differently. If elected I will aggressively investigate what opportunities there are for eliminating bureaucracies and finding efficiencies for state services.

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?

Businesses form when barriers to entry are reduced/eliminated, where the community has strong fundamentals for growth (e.g., strong labor force, low energy costs, etc.), and where the returns on capital (either sweat or monetary equity) are high. In Nebraska, we need to work to reduce the burdens for starting a business, make sure our education system is strong and equips our students to perform 21st century jobs and tack advantage of the next generation

of opportunities, and reduce the costs of doing business through decreased taxes, low energy costs, and less red tape.

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

My preference is to focus on winning this race in November and serving the people of District 21.

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