

Huerfano County Democratic Party Caucus Preference Poll

These questions were submitted by members of the Huerfano County Democratic Party. In preparation for our preference poll at caucus we think this may be the best way for our constituents to be familiar with how you view issues they care about. We are hoping that you can take time from your busy schedule to respond prior to our Feb monthly meeting on Feb 15. It is felt that this would help citizens to make educated choices at preference polling at caucus in preparation for county assembly. Following are the submitted questions.

Governor

Yes or No

1. *Do you support using taxpayer money for private schools?*

No.

2. *Do you support single payer health coverage?*

I support single payer health coverage at the federal level including Medicare for all. Because we can't wait on DC, I have a comprehensive health care platform that includes a public option. This plan will increase access to high-quality, affordable healthcare and lower costs, especially in rural Colorado. Read more on my plan [here](#).

3. *Do you support the concept of sanctuary cities?*

Local law enforcement should not be enforcing federal immigration. In order to keep Colorado communities safe, all people need to feel safe and able to report crimes like child abuse, drunk driving and domestic violence and must be able to visit police stations, courthouses, hospitals, and schools without the fear of them or their loved ones being turned over to ICE.

4. *Do you support deporting non criminal aliens?*

We need Washington to pass comprehensive immigration reform that keeps families together and creates paths to citizenship. No one is well-served by policies that tear families apart. People who have built their lives here in the United States and raised their children here should be allowed to stay.

5. *Have you accepted campaign contributions from sources such as Monsanto, oil companies or banks?*

No. In fact, I am not taking any donations from corporate PACS or corporate lobbyists. I've also agreed to a clean campaign pledge and called to limit campaign spending. An obscene amount of money gets spent on our elections these days, and I do not believe the Governor should accept contributions from the industries he/she will be responsible for regulating. We want to be a strong, united front going into the general election in November. I have asked all Democratic candidates to pledge to cap primary election spending at \$3 million -- plenty of funding to get our names on the ballot and effectively communicate with primary voters. Read more [here](#).

Essay Questions

1. *In this era of factional mistrust, politics of greed, lust for power, what allows you to maintain your integrity, truthfulness, humility and honesty?*

Growing up, I had a large family with three brothers and sisters who joined my family through the foster care program and a sister who joined my family through her church. My mother is a social worker and instilled in me a deep commitment to public service. My brothers and sisters didn't have the opportunities I'd been given and I saw what happens when kids don't get the opportunities they need to succeed. That motivated me to start my career working to increase funding for public schools — so that all kids can have better opportunities to succeed. I am motivated by a desire to ensure that all Coloradans have access to the same opportunities, regardless of where they live, how much their parent's make, or where their family comes from. I love this state and I am inspired by the generosity and kindness of the people who live here. I am grateful every day to have the opportunity to lead this state.

Taking the time to listen to and meet with Coloradans across the state is critical to maintaining integrity, humility and honesty as an elected official. One of the great blessings of running for and serving in elected office is that I have gotten to know Coloradans from all across this state. When I was State Treasurer, I toured Colorado and got to see firsthand the state of public schools. Many communities I visited didn't have the tax base to repair and replace their public schools; schools that had been built 50, 75 or 100 years prior. I took what I saw and heard and created the Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) program which has invested over \$1 billion dollars to repair and replace school buildings across the state, primarily in rural Colorado. As Governor, I will emphasize communication with all of Colorado's communities to ensure that we are serving the actual needs of people in this state.

Schools

2. What will you do about the public school teacher shortage in Colorado?

Public education is my top priority. My education platform is centered around supporting and compensating teachers as the professionals that they are to ensure that Colorado has a great teacher in every classroom. This is the best strategy to reach our goal of having every kid in Colorado, by the age of 19, ready for a career, higher education, or both. As Governor, I will take the following steps to invest in and develop the skills of Colorado's educators:

#1 - Pay teachers as the professionals they are.

We know that good teachers are the single most important factor in a student's academic success. Yet, in Colorado, we pay teachers at some of the lowest rates in the country. Mid-career Colorado teachers who head families of four or more qualify for seven public benefit programs, the highest number of any state. Colorado's teachers make 26% less than professionals with comparable levels of education. This is the second worst teacher pay penalty in the country.

The lack of investment in our teachers is compromising public education in Colorado. Every day we lose great teachers and lose the potential to give our kids the great education that we want for them. We need to pay teachers a competitive, professional salary that allows them to live in the communities where they teach. Higher pay will solve the teacher shortage, promote a larger supply of potential teachers, and increase the quality of teachers.

My goal as governor is to raise teacher pay in Colorado at least to the national average and close the teacher pay penalty, which is the difference between what a teacher earns and other professionals with the same education.

#2 - Expand the talent pipeline and develop a more diverse teaching workforce.

Colorado needs to expand its talent pipeline for great teachers and expand opportunities for people who want to pursue a career in teaching. Research shows significant benefits for students served by teachers who better represent the demographic makeup of their student populations. As governor, I will start a scholarship fund for teachers who commit to teach in hard-to-serve, hard to staff schools. I will expand teacher apprenticeship programs to support new teachers in their first years on the job. I will create more opportunities for concurrent enrollment so that high schoolers interested in a career in education can gain experience and credentials.

#3 - Empower teachers as leaders.

Teachers are leaders. We need to provide more opportunities for teachers to leverage their experience and expertise to improve their schools and better serve their students. As governor, I will expand the role that teachers play in evaluation systems and increase opportunities for teachers' professional advancement. We should allow opportunities for teachers to provide leadership in their schools and communities.

My platform will directly address the teacher shortage by supporting the teachers we already have, making the profession more attractive to new teachers, and incentivizing people to teach in rural classrooms. Read more on my plan [here](#).

Public education

3. What are their plans to adjust the negative factor (budget stabilization) to fund our schools according to Amendment 23?

As the author of Amendment 23 I applaud you including this question in your survey! I've spent my career working to secure more funding for public schools given TABOR, the strictest spending restriction in the country. I have taken on TABOR not once but twice at the statewide ballot. I was the author of Amendment 23 that protected funding for schools and I helped craft Referendum C. I also created the BEST program that has already replaced and rebuilt hundreds of aging schools in poor and rural communities in Colorado.

As Governor, I will lead a bipartisan coalition to permanently reform TABOR so that we can adequately fund public education in our state. It is unacceptable that Colorado has one of the strongest economies in the country but we fund our public schools at some of the lowest levels in the country.

Environment

4. What is your stance on fracking, drilling and other aspects of mineral extraction that have the potential for environmental degradation, especially our water sources?

Colorado must prioritize the health, safety and welfare of Coloradans and our natural environment. By working together, we can keep growing our economy and protecting all that is special about Colorado for future generations.

I believe that local governments should have the ability to regulate industry within their communities. That means increasing local control over oil and gas operations. The people of Colorado understand the importance of protecting our health and environment. After all, Colorado was the first state to adopt a renewable portfolio standard by popular vote. I know that by working together, local communities can prosper from a healthy economy and a safe environment.

The best way to protect the health and safety of every Coloradan and our environment is to put us on a path to a clean energy economy. To accelerate the transition to renewable energy, I will work to increase the Renewable Energy Standard and advocate for legislation to give all Colorado households and businesses the option to purchase energy or generate their own energy from 100% renewable energy sources. To meet these benchmarks the state must aggressively take advantage of the current federal tax incentives for the creation of renewable energy resources, and continue to retire coal plants while providing just transitions for impacted workers. We can do much more throughout the state to advance the development of renewable energy sources and I will lead this effort as Colorado's governor. In addition, I will implement a statewide climate plan that will ensure Colorado is on track to meet and exceed the emission reduction targets laid out in the Paris climate accord.

5. What will you do to protect our National Monuments and other designated spaces from mineral extraction and private ownership?

As Governor, I will fight any attempts to sell or privatize our public lands. I will lead a united opposition to the Trump administration's assault on our public lands and monuments. I have released a platform that pledges to conserve an additional 1,000,000 acres of land in Colorado by 2050, lead the coalition of conservation efforts amongst Western governors, and improve access to our public lands. Read more on my plan for open space and water [here](#).

Rural Development

6. What are your plans for much needed infrastructure funding?

Colorado has always been a forward-looking and innovative place. But deteriorating roads, inadequate transit systems, and lack of broadband hold our state back, costing us time and money, and leaving many of our communities behind. There are two Colorados: the metro front range and everywhere else. We can build a more equitable and prosperous Colorado by modernizing our infrastructure, particularly in rural

communities. Our growing population is creating an urgency to meet this challenge, but also an opportunity to think big. I am ready to act now to improve Colorado's infrastructure.

We need to invest in our transportation infrastructure but we need to ensure that the sources of revenue are sustainable, equitably distributed statewide, and don't unfairly burden low-income Coloradans. I have put out a comprehensive infrastructure plan that emphasizes choice, mobility, and sustainability. Read more on my plan [here](#).

7. What are your plans for stimulating jobs creation in rural Colorado?

As State Treasurer, I created the BEST program which is the largest rural infrastructure program in Colorado. I bring a long history of working in rural communities on access to healthcare, mental health services and transportation upgrades. Each community in Colorado faces unique challenges and unique opportunities for new economic development. On the eastern plains, improvements to water delivery and storage are critical to support agriculture. In mountain corridors, the outdoor recreation economy offers new opportunities for small business. And throughout the state investments in community, place-making and the arts are transforming small towns to tourist destinations.

We need to focus on supporting the businesses and entrepreneurs that are already there. They are the most important employers our communities have. That means connecting those coloradans to networks of peers, mentors, and sources of capital.

We also need to ensure that our community colleges in rural areas have sufficient state support. As Governor, I will help lead coalitions between community colleges, employers and unions to ensure that training programs are teaching the skills that people need to be able to get a quality job.

8. How do you intend to deal with the rising homeless problem?

Homelessness is a critical and growing problem in communities across our state. As CFO and Deputy Mayor of Denver, I created a first of its kind program that provided supportive housing and wraparound services for 200 homeless individuals with the money that the City otherwise would have been spending on locking these people up. So far, the program has seen great success with these formerly homeless Coloradans maintaining housing and achieving positive outcomes in terms of employment, etc.

One of the driving forces in the increasing number of homeless Coloradans is the lack of affordable housing. This problem is affecting communities across Colorado and solving this crisis is a key way that we can ensure that our state's progress reaches everyone. I have released a comprehensive plan for affordable housing that calls for the creation of the first ever state-level affordable housing investment fund in Colorado that will be used to increase the supply of housing. Read more on my plan [here](#).

9. Do you have an economic development plan for supporting rural Colorado?

I know that there are places in Colorado that are not yet benefiting from the economic growth Colorado is seeing. I will follow the lead of local communities as a partner to bring economic development to all parts of the state. Whether it's expanding access to broadband, supporting our outdoor recreation economy, investing in infrastructure, or connecting workers with ongoing education or re-training programs, the state needs to be a partner in ensuring all four corners of our state succeed for generations to come.

As State Treasurer I developed one of the largest rural infrastructure programs in the history of the state. The Building Excellent Schools Today program has invested over \$1 billion dollars to renovate aging schools primarily in Colorado's rural communities. I understand the challenges rural communities face in financing infrastructure and will work as governor to make needed investments in their communities. As Governor, I will continue to focus on the perspective of rural communities with every policy I implement.

As I travel throughout Colorado, there are two issues in particular that I hear about in regards to economic development: broadband and water. Too many rural communities still do not have broadband and lack reliable, high speed internet that is critical to starting, maintaining and growing businesses. That is why I have laid out a plan to solve the broadband problem that ensures the state will be a partner in efforts by communities to create their own broadband networks.

Water is also a top issue and is critical to the livelihood of ranchers and farmers. We can not keep drying up farmland to satisfy the growing demands of urban areas. My water plan puts conservation first and focuses on alternative methods to ensure that we support our agricultural lands.