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**Legislator Education Survey 2010**

**Response for:** 2010@kenclarkforaz.com

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**1 In an effort to balance our state budget, legislators have recently reduced Arizona’s K-12 and university/community school budgets by more than \$2 billion during the past two years. During this next session, legislators still need to address the structural budget deficit that remains. Which of the following best describes your approach to balancing the budget?**

Answer	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enact further cuts to K-12 and higher education funding as they make up a large share of the overall budget.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stabilize funding to education at existing levels until our economy recovers.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Find ways to recover the \$2.2 billion that was cut. Examine how state revenues are spent and whether the state collects enough revenue to meet its needs.

**Comment:** As the ranking minority member of the Ways and Means Committee, it became clear to me that our tax revenue model is designed to fail. Over the past 30 years we have moved further toward sales tax-only state funding. This leaves us vulnerable to economic downturn. If we revamp our state tax code such that our revenue streams are "shallow and broad", we will better weather economic downturn and will be more likely to fund education at reasonable levels.

**2 Do you support efforts to readdress Arizona’s tax structure to alleviate the reliance on fluctuating sales tax?**

Answer	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

**Comment:** Yes. Please see the answer, above. Further to that point, as an economic principle, I believe that we should save money during economic good times and use that money to either lower taxes or off-set lost revenue during the lean years. Thus far, our legislature has done just the opposite.

**3 Arizona’s current budget was devised using a series of cuts, borrowing, financial deferrals and the voter-approved temporary sales tax increase. Which of the following fiscal measures would you consider supporting this year? (Please check all that apply.)**

Answer	

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An effort to close existing tax loopholes
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Increase personal income tax
Enact a flat tax on corporate/individual income
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Increase property tax
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eliminate tax credits (please specify)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expand the sales tax to services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> End tax exempt status for mining, etc.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Simplify the state tax code
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate tax cuts
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensure corporate tax parity (large companies to pay same share as small businesses; tax exemption via out-of-state holding companies prohibited, etc.)
I think the only effective budget solution would be to introduce further tax cuts.
I think our current tax structure is adequate and we just need to wait until the economy rebounds.
Other

**Comment:** Arizona needs a whole-sale restructuring of its tax code based on the principle that revenue should come from a broad diversity of tax sources, that are "shallow yet broad." We give tax credits for services that should not be protected, such as manicures. Yet we over-tax manufacturing equipment. To the chagrin of some, I believe that every option should be on the table and we need the strength to make that happen.

**4 A number of national surveys rank Arizona among the last in K-12 per-pupil funding. Arizona invests \$61 less per student than it did more than 20 years ago, according to the American Legislative Exchange Council. What do you think of this level of investment?**

<b>Answer</b>
Arizona spends too much on K-12 education. We need to enact further cuts.
This is an adequate level of investment. I do not think we need to invest more in K-12 funding.
Although I do not think this funding is adequate, I do not think we can increase funding for K-12 education at this time.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> It is embarrassing to be among the last in the nation in K-12 education funding. As a legislator, I will work this fiscal year (2010-2011) to increase funding for K-12 public schools.

**Comment:** This information is particularly galling, when you consider that ALEC is a message machine for conservative legislators.

**5 Each year, more than \$60 million in Arizona taxpayer dollars are directed to School Tuition Organizations (STOs) for private school tuition through the tax credit program. What do you think about the current private school tax credit program? (Please check all that apply.)**

<b>Answer</b>
More tax dollars should be allocated to expand the private school tuition program.
The private school tuition program should be maintained as-is.

The amount of tax dollars allocated to the private school tuition tax credit program should be reduced.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The private school tax credit program should be repealed.
The 10% processing fee that STOs are allowed to keep from donations for expenses should be reduced to a lower percentage. (Processing fees in Florida are capped at 3%.)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> There should be income limits on the families who benefit from the private school tax credit program. The original intent of the program was to provide access to private schools for poor children.
I think any Arizona family should be able to take advantage of the tax-funded tuition benefits.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I don't believe we should be using tax dollars for private school tuition assistance.

**Comment:** I believe that the tuition tax credit system is a violation of the separation between church and state. While I know that this issue will soon see its day at the Supreme Court, I fear that my interpretation will not win the day. If this is upheld by the Supreme Court, I would seek to place an income limit on the use of STOs, for the reason described in your question.

**6 Do you believe reform is needed in our public education system? If so, which reforms do you support? (Please check all that apply.)**

Answer
No, reform is not needed.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes, reform is needed.
Yes, reform is needed but we need to establish adequate funding first.
I support the participation in a national standards program, i.e. NAEP.
I support increased charter school funding.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I support more teacher accountability.
I support the Common Core Standards created by the National Governors' Association and the state superintendents of education.
I support linking teacher pay to student test scores.
I support moving quickly to shut down failing schools.
I support creating more charter schools.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I support restructuring the "equalized funding" formula

**Comment:** While I would like to see more teacher pay, I would also like to see a stronger bonus system for student performance. I am not familiar enough with the Common Core Standards nor the NAEP models to comment.

**7 Some argue that we should move away from traditional public schools and transition to a system with more students attending state funded, privately-run charter schools and private schools with the aid of tax credits and/or vouchers. Do you support this plan?**

Answer
Yes
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Comment:** I believe that we will see a greater misuse of funds and less accountability, despite the claims of proponents of this model.

**8 This year, legislators referred to voters a ballot measure to repeal First Things First, an early childhood education program with a dedicated funding source approved by voters in 2006. What do you support?**

<b>Answer</b>
First Things First funding should be repealed.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> First Things First funding should be maintained in accordance with the original voter mandate.

**9 Arizona currently has some of the largest K-12 classroom sizes in the nation. Please check the statements you agree with below. (Please check all that apply.)**

<b>Answer</b>
Classroom size isn't a crucial factor for student success--many other factors are much more important and we should focus our priorities elsewhere.
I think it would be more efficient if we increased classroom size along with teacher pay. This would attract better teachers and decrease the cost of running the school.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I think classroom size is an important factor for student success, but I don't think we can currently afford to increase funding to pay for the additional teachers and/or school facilities.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Classroom size is one of the most important factors for student success--we should be working to reduce class size as one of our top priorities.
If parents believe that classroom size is important for their child, they should consider enrolling their children in a private school with a classroom enrollment cap.

**Comment:** I do believe that class size impacts student performance. While I believe that we do not have the political wherewithal to increase funding for education now, I would seek to reduce class size as soon as we do.

**10 Arizona has one of the highest high school drop-out rates in the country. In the last budget, all state aid for adult GED (General Education Diploma) funding was eliminated. Please check the statement you agree with below.**

<b>Answer</b>
GEDs should be funded by individuals.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The state should provide funding for GED programs.
I will work to restore funding for adult GED services.

**11 The Arizona Constitution has many sections impacting the state budget and education. If elected, which of the following articles do you most identify with? (Please check all that apply.)**

Answer	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The legislature shall provide by law for an annual tax sufficient, with other sources of revenue, to defray the necessary ordinary expenses of the state for each fiscal year. (Article IX, Section 3)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No tax shall be laid or appropriation of public money made in aid of any church, or private or sectarian school, or any public service corporation. (Article IX, Section 10)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The university and all other state educational institutions shall be open to students of both sexes, and the instruction shall be nearly as free as possible. (Article XI, Section 6: paragraph one)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The legislature shall make appropriations, to be met by taxation, as shall insure the proper maintenance of all state educational institutions & shall make such special appropriations as shall provide for their development & improvement. (Article XI, Sec10)

**Comment:** I could not help but check all of these, as they all pertain to fully funding our state budget, and, of course, maintaining the separation of church and state.

12 **If you have children, what type of school(s) did they/do they attend? (Please check all that apply.)**

Answer	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Traditional Public School
<input type="checkbox"/>	Charter School
<input type="checkbox"/>	Private School
<input type="checkbox"/>	Home School
<input type="checkbox"/>	University/Community College/Higher Education
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A I have no children.