



Legislator Education Survey 2010

Response for: cotera4az@gmail.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
Enact further cuts to K-12 and higher education funding as they make up a large share of the overall budget.
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: Recently released data from the U.S. Census Bureau showed Arizona as ranking 49th in per pupil K-12; but this is based on 2007-2008 data - before the cuts of the last two years. So, restoring the cuts only gets us back to 49th in the nation. We cannot stop there. We must have a realistic 10-year plan to restore Arizona to national parity in both funding and achievement.

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

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

Comment: We need to modernize the tax code and reduce spending by eliminating tax credits that do not increase the number of new jobs. By simultaneously broadening the revenue base while making the tax code more equitable for individuals and businesses alike, we can solve our short-term problems and still enable sustainable economic growth.

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
Increase personal income tax
Enact a flat tax on corporate/individual income
Increase property tax
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eliminate tax credits (please specify)
Expand the sales tax to services
End tax exempt status for mining, etc.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Simplify the state tax code
Corporate tax cuts
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.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Comprehensive reform

Comment: There is no single, simple, quick-fix to our budgetary crisis. We need to revise the code as a whole. There have been in-depth studies, such as the 2003-2004 Citizens Finance Review Commission (CFRC) report, which can provide a starting point for this very complex and difficult process. We must elect leaders who have the willingness and courage to bring all the stakeholders to a single table, and do the hard work necessary to achieve a consensus solution.

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?

Answer
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.

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.)

Answer
More tax dollars should be allocated to expand the private school tuition program.
The private school tuition program should be maintained as-is.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The amount of tax dollars allocated to the private school tuition tax credit program should be reduced.
The private school tax credit program should be repealed.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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.
I don't believe we should be using tax dollars for private school tuition assistance.

Comment: Since the government does not have oversight for private schools, and therefore is not able to provide the taxpayer with an accounting of their money, dollar-for-dollar tuition tax-credits for private schools are improper. However, given the crisis in our public schools today, parents need other options immediately. Existing tax-credits should remain available until we have restored our public schools, although perhaps not in a dollar-for-dollar formula.

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.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I support the participation in a national standards program, i.e. NAEP.
I support increased charter school funding.
I support more teacher accountability.
I support the Common Core Standards created by the National Governors' Association and the state superintendents of education.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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: Although we definitely need to increase school funding, there are reforms we can do in the interim. I support revising teacher performance formulas to include a component based on student academic progress; however this cannot be the only criterion as there are numerous factors that impact test scores. We need to balance state requirements and accountability with the local control needed for a school district to address the needs of their particular community.

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: We cannot create a two-tier system with children who have educated and engaged parents in one type of school (that presumably provides a better education), while all the other children are consigned to a lower quality type of school.

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?

Answer
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.

Comment: The Legislature should not be able to take funds from a voter approved program simply because they have mismanaged the general fund.

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.)

Answer
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.
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.

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.

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

Comment: An educated work force is the foundation for building a stronger and more stable economy for Arizona. This is a classic illustration of needing to elect Legislators who understand the difference between wasteful spending and wise investments.

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
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: The only oath any Legislator should make is to uphold the constitution of the great state of Arizona. First and foremost, Legislators should be accountable to the best interest of people of Arizona, not to an outside, highly partisan, political organization.

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

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