



Legislator Education Survey 2010

Response for: gularforazhouse@cox.net

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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.

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: The state budget could be balanced in the short term with well placed co-pays to ACCCHS and refinancing of public debt. Long term we need to need to reduce the bureaucracy in education so we can be more effective with limited taxpayer resources.

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

Answer


Yes

No

Comment: We need to look at our tax structure as a whole. Taxes have to be somewhat tied to the economy or they don't get paid anyway. Property taxes are fixed, but when there's a housing crisis, receipts go down. Higher unemployment = less employment taxes, etc. Stabilizing tax revenue sounds nice, but is impossible. Put money away when times are good, so you have it when times are bad. Unfortunately, our former leadership spent it as fast as they could get it, which is why we are here today.

- 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
An effort to close existing tax loopholes
Increase personal income tax
Enact a flat tax on corporate/individual income
Increase property tax
Eliminate tax credits (please specify)
Expand the sales tax to services
End tax exempt status for mining, etc.
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.
 Other: Remove corporate commercial property tax.

Comment: Charging taxes on production (not profits) has done one thing, drove production companies out of the State. We can no longer survive on construction and tourism, only by producing and saving will we bring the State economy back.

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.
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: Arizona spends to poorly on K-12 education. While it is true that the classroom spending is around \$6k per student, total spending for 2009 was an astronomical \$9,700 according to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee. People like to throw around the \$6k number, but the reality is, we need to look at the \$100k per classroom or so per year that never hits the classroom. Find a way to move 1/2 of that into the classroom, and we will have plenty of funding.

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.
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.
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%.)
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: We need to look at what is both economical and, more importantly, what is best for the kids.

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.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I support moving quickly to shut down failing schools.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I support creating more charter schools.
I support restructuring the "equalized funding" formula

Comment: We need to set our education system up so children learn certain things. The government should not be mandating how to teach, rather, they should be requiring the skills that are necessary for our kids to be successful in order for a student to be promoted. History, Math, Civics. I find the fact that only 4% of high school kids in Arizona can pass a basic civics test to be frightening.

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

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.
First Things First funding should be maintained in accordance with the original voter mandate.

Comment: In this time of crisis we need to make choices. All mandated spending needs to be revisited.

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
<input type="checkbox"/> Classroom size isn't a crucial factor for student success--many other factors are much more important and we should focus our priorities elsewhere.
<input type="checkbox"/> 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 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 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.
<input type="checkbox"/> 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: We need to look at how the charter and private schools can run for 30% less with smaller class sizes and follow their lead.

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

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

Comment: The education is free, it is the choice of individuals whether or not to take advantage of it.

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)
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)
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: We need to look at the waste in the public school system where as much as 40% of the money does not reach the classroom.

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.