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**Legislator Education Survey 2010**

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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?**

<b>Answer</b>	
<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:** Quality public education, in my opinion, is the bedrock of our freedom and is why the founders of this nation insisted that every person have access to education. Education is a comprehensive system that must be fully funded from the beginning years of preschool to the higher education needs of our adults. As a state, we lose more opportunities and businesses when we prioritize tax cuts and individualism over the societal need for a quality education and access to opportunities for our children.

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

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

**Comment:** Arizona's tax code is one of the reasons the state's economic condition fell so drastically when the recession hit. It is also the reason it will take so much longer for Arizona to fully recover from the effects of the recession. I believe in a more sustainable approach to establishing revenue streams to support our state programs like education and public safety. There is a common sense approach to balancing the states budget this year and in the future that is more equitable and sustainable.

**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
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.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Tax structure that fits the use of the commons.

**Comment:** Everyone uses the social infrastructure that we, as a society, have built. I refer to this social infrastructure as "the commons" for short. Generally, larger corporations use more of the commons that individuals do. Yet, individuals (W-2 earners) are often taxed at higher rates than corporations. I would work to ensure that corporations that use more of our commons (the judicial system, educated workforce, roads and electric infrastructure) pay for their use and use the revenue for education.

**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.

**Comment:** The voters have proven time and again that they support education spending and will vote to increase it. It is a shame that our legislators cannot find the courage or the leadership among themselves to defend the public education system that many of them are products of. I will defend public education and ensure that any mandates or increases in accountability are matched with a funding stream to ensure schools have enough resources for our children, the future of Arizona.

**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.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I don't believe we should be using tax dollars for private school tuition assistance.

**Comment:** The founders of our country insisted on a free public education. Private schools that deny access to individual students are not, by their very definition, a public education. Furthermore, using public dollars to subsidize parochial or religious based education takes resources away from the system that we have all set up. Proponents of vouchers will argue that they are only taking their tax dollars, but I challenge proponents to attempt to do the same with public roads or public water.

**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.
Yes, reform is needed.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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.
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.
I support restructuring the "equalized funding" formula

**Comment:** Our local school districts must be left to govern their community schools. At the same time, as a state we must remember that local control must be met with accountability measures and tougher academic standards. We must fully fund education and then raise the bar of student achievement so that our children are prepared for success in the 21st century.

**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?**

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

**Comment:** Traditional public education has not failed us. In fact, it is our leaders who have failed public education. We must move on increasing our commitment to the future of Arizona, and focus on getting the state back on track.

**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.

**Comment:** Cutting programs like First Things First is evidence that the priorities of our leaders is not on education or ensuring a better future for the state of Arizona. It is revealing that when times get touch our leaders choose to take resources away from those most vulnerable, yet let large corporations off the hood for helping repair the state.

**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.
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:** As President of the Roosevelt School District, I have led the board in ensuring a lower class size than the surrounding districts and also many of the charter schools in our area. One way we did this was through creative funding of some of our behavioral and instructional coaches as well as some of our administrative staff. Roosevelt has risen to lead the state in closing the achievement gap, and it is clear that while other factors played a role, class size was the strongest determining factor.

**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 workforce is one of the factors businesses look at when thinking to relocate to Arizona. Why in the world are we even considering a cut to any adult of child education programs? Arizona must being to lead in terms of educational and economic opportunities for our residents.

**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)

**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.