



WINONA AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 2022 CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

Legislature

Steve Drazkowski - Senate District 20

1. Top priority: If elected, what is your top priority for the 2023 Legislature?

Rewrite Chapter 12 of Minnesota Statutes, to ensure that no future governor ever abuses the people of Minnesota like Governor Tim Walz did.

2. Why are you running for office?

Minnesotans' freedom is in danger. We need to stop the big government control of people. This means cutting taxes, reducing government spending, ending government fraud, and making crime illegal again. We must also restore the dignity of work by ending payments to able-bodied people who choose not to work.

3. Budget: The Legislature will be tasked with adopting a two-year budget in 2023 with a surplus. The surplus may grow, but that is uncertain. There has been discussion to use this surplus to increase budget, but is this sustainable? What will be your approach to balancing the budget in terms of reducing spending and/or raising taxes and fees? Be as specific as possible.

No, our budget trajectory is not sustainable. We are taxing and spending so much that we are many very productive people out of our state. We nearly lost a congressional district. Had it not been for very high levels of immigration into our state, we would have lost one. Exporting our wealth while importing poverty is not sustainable. We are headed for the cliff and we must turn this rig around!

4. Gridlock: What specific measures do you support to reduce the increasing partisanship of the lawmaking process and resulting gridlock? Do you support reforms that would prohibit consolidating multiple subjects into a single omnibus bill?

Absolutely. I am the leader of the caucus that led on this effort in the legislature the past two biennia. There is bipartisan support to bring reforms, and I will work toward this end again next session. We have a constitutional amendment draft that is still under development. Additionally, we need to hold our leadership accountable to changing the culture in the legislature so that we return to single subject legislating.

- 5. Mandates: During the COVID-19 crisis, the Governor initiated several mandates to address and attempt to mitigate the negative effects of the pandemic. Time will tell whether those mandates accomplished their goals. Nevertheless, the Governor, non-related to the pandemic, has bypassed the legislature and adopted the California Clean Car's act here in MN. What are your thoughts on these actions and how do they represent the voice of the people and businesses? What steps do you believe need to be taken to ensure that regulations of such magnitude are heard and decided by the legislature first?**

The governor and his agencies are actively engaged in pushing their radical leftist ideologies into policies utilizing the rulemaking process. We need to significantly reform the rulemaking process to limit the autonomy that the executive branch has in writing administrative rules that can carry the full force and effect of law. Because of past lazy legislatures that have granted way too much rulemaking authority to the executive branch, the legislative branch, as a result, has become weakened in the face of a then stronger executive branch.

- 6. Education, K-12: COVID-19 caused dramatic changes to the delivery of education. What weaknesses in the system were highlighted by distance learning? Did we identify any best practices that should be incorporated in the post-pandemic era? What are your thoughts on current PSEO funding, and should it be increased? Finally, there has been a recent push for "School Choice" and creating an ESA or school voucher program, what is your position on these policies?**

Tim Walz's commissioner of education was taking part in weekly meetings with Minnesota teachers union executives to determine that schools should be closed to kids that had no health-related reason to not be in school. They colluded to set policy. Education Minnesota and Governor Walz's administration. They didn't talk to parents and kids, or even ordinary teachers...it was a political decision made in full coordination with the teachers' union. After seeing the resulting 10% to 15% drop in proficiency scores in reading, math, and science in most school districts, we need an education system that focuses on the needs of the kids and families, rather than one that is susceptible to the political desires of adults. I have already written a Minnesota version of Arizona's education reform law, which has state education dollars follow the kids, creating a student-centered education system that fosters quality-enhancing competition and places parents rightfully back at the wheel again.

- 7. Education, higher ed: Businesses are now facing greater workforce shortages than before the pandemic. Lack of qualified workers is one of the largest burdens that we hear from business owners in our community. What steps do you believe need to be taken to assist our higher education system in producing a qualified workforce?**

First of all, we must stop paying people not to work, maximizing the reward and incentive to work. We need higher education to be much more responsive to the needs of students. Forcing them through a liberal arts education is not the way to go. While it may be the right thing for some, its not the same for all. We need to allow the expression of demand to build educational infrastructure for 2-year vocational-technical education, which can be achieved at the expense of irrelevant and non-performing 4-year college degree programs. Lastly, the expense of our higher education programs needs to be addressed, Top-heavy staffing configurations need to be flipped upside down.

- 8. Health care: Health care costs are continuing to rise, and affordable health care remains a concern to many Minnesotans. Do you support expansion of government-run health insurance plans? If so,**

what should that look like? If not, what options do you support to stabilize health insurance premiums?

No. Government has only increased the costs of health care and reduced its accessibility. We must adopt policies that move us back toward free market principles. Increase price transparency, make government health programs accountable for the money that they spend (reduce waste and fraud, develop systems to ensure that capitated payments actually have a real and qualified person receiving the service before the HMOs are paid), develop tax incentives for personal responsibility (i.e. health savings and medical savings accounts), and enable direct primary care to become recognized in our health care mix.

9. Workplace regulations: Mandated paid family and medical leave for all Minnesota employers was debated in 2020. It passed the House but failed in the Senate. Do you support such a mandate? Why or why not?

No. More socialism is not the answer. It rewards failure and punishes success.

10. Transportation: What is your preference for raising additional money for roads and bridges? Or is current funding sufficient?

We are on a better plane for our road projects than we were 4 or 5 years ago. We should scrap the grandiose failing proposals for expensive rail systems and turn those dollars into road and bridge money.

11. Energy: Should Minnesota increase its renewable energy mandates on utilities? Or are market forces sufficient to promote sustainability?

No way! These mandates have already increased our energy costs in exponential form! Governor Walz and his liberal ideologue colleagues are killing our economy with their out of touch ideas.

12. Police reform: Police reform has become center stage since George Floyd's death and prompted passage of legislation. Did the laws go far enough or too far? Today, many communities across the state have seen many public safety officers leave or retire early from their positions. These same communities are having difficulty re-filling these positions due to negative public perceptions and lack of funding. What steps do you believe need to be taken to ensure that our state and communities' law enforcement are adequately funded and supported so that our Minnesota communities remain safe and healthy?

The proposals passed into law were never necessary. The political response to politically-motivated outrage about police was not helpful and should largely be repealed. The police have too many mandates now. We need to fund the police properly (but not excessively) and stop the catch and release in our court systems. These actions will help restore the confidence from police officers that the public has confidence in them, and we will begin fix the Democrats' silly mess.

13. Other issues: Are there other issues you want to address?

Any and all of these approaches require that voters send adults into office, beginning with the governor's race.