



WINONA AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 2022 CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

State Legislature

Steve Jacob - House of Representatives Seat 20B Candidate

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

Cutting Taxes.

2. Why are you running for office?

My mission for the last ten years as Winona County Commissioner has been to “stop the expansion of government”. I will carry the same agenda and mission forward to the state capitol once I am elected to the Mn House of Representatives.

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.

I view this as an over collection rather than a surplus. I will not vote to increase the budget. We need meaningful tax relief. I will start by working to eliminate the social security tax. Next, I will work to eliminate the Death tax or Estate tax.

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?

My experience of sitting in a minority of a 3 to 2 split County Board for the last eight years makes me well suited to understanding how to work together to get things accomplished. There are always opportunities to to put aside pieces where there are obvious roadblocks, and instead, work on the areas where common ground can be found. I agree that omnibus bills are problem and I do support reform to reduce or prohibit them.

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?

I am appalled by the governor's actions. He far overstepped his authority and he has given the citizens of Minnesota good reason to be concerned that they are living in more of a dictatorship than in a constitutional republic. New legislation will need to be introduced to ensure this can never happen again.

- 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?**

We have learned that masking our children, and keeping them home and out of school has hurt them and set them behind. Education makes up the largest share of the state's budget. If we are going to take that kind of money from the taxpayer we need to deliver a higher quality product. Competition fosters better services. The public school system has not had to compete for funding while other schools such as charter schools and home schooling are not receiving public funding. We need to look to states such as Arizona and Florida where funding follows the student. Giving a parent the power to decide if home schooling or a private Christian school is the best fit for their family will empower that parent while making public schools either deliver a better product or lose enrollment due to delivering an inferior product.

- 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?**

We need to let students know that there are options other than a 4 year college degree available to them and that it is okay for them to choose those other options. The military provides valuable services to our country and to our world while providing excellent career training. There are plenty of businesses that provide apprenticeships and will pay people to learn. Trade schools are another great option. Pressuring every high school student to obtain a 4 year college degree is unnecessary. Our education system almost seems to disparage students that don't choose a four year degree and the associated debt that goes with it.

- 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?**

Government is rarely a good solution. Each time we add more government to an equation it generally leads to less choices, less competition and more government funded salaries. We need to take the expensive insurance middle man out of the equation and give people the opportunity to use their health saving accounts coupled with high deductibles.

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

Government mandates are another expansion of government. My general philosophy is to keep the government out of our pockets and off our backs. I am not in support of this as a mandate. As for transportation, counties already have an option to add a half cent sales tax if they don't have adequate transportation funding. That authority has only been given to counties just a few years ago. I would give that more time before I would take more money from the taxpayer at the state level.

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

Current renewable energy policies are crippling both our economy and our nation. This is not the time to support additional renewable energy mandates. If a renewable energy platform can stand on its own without subsidies, then that is a good renewable energy source and it will be supported by the general public without the taxpayer needing to prop it up.

- 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 pendulum has swung too far on this issue and it is understandable why law enforcement feels undervalued, deserted and even abandoned. I will stand strong with law enforcement and work to restore their funding and their morale.

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

No other issues.