



WINONA AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 2022 CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

Legislature

Elise Diesslin - House of Representatives Seat 20B

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

Education, Healthcare, Farmers

2. Why are you running for office?

I am running for office because I care deeply about my district. I have been a life-long resident in this district and I believe our leadership has been inactive for far too long. I would be ready to get to work on day one. I want to fight for more funding for education, create more options in healthcare, and protect farmer's and their families.

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 would like to see the surplus redistributed back into education and healthcare. The pandemic has stretched these communities very thin. I would also like to see tax increases on the richest Minnesotans to keep it more evenly divided. The working class is getting smaller and smaller and it is getting harder every year to make ends meet. We need to alleviate pressures on our middle class.

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?

Yes. Combing bills gums up the works. There should also be limits on the amount of bills a legislator can write or submit. We have to stop playing politics with the things that really matter, which is people's livelihoods, healthcare, and education.

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?

Legislators are there to govern, and I think they should always be give the chance to do so.

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?**

I don't think vouchers are a good system. If we move to a voucher system, private schools should have to abide by the same rules public schools do. Public schools are much needed for those students who may not otherwise be able to afford an education. A big weakness throughout the pandemic was a lack of broadband internet services in greater Minnesota. The biggest thing I think the pandemic taught us was that parents noticed during the pandemic how much work we expect from our teachers.

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?**

I think we need to subsidize education a lot more than we do. The cost of a higher education is only rising and it is getting nearly impossible to be able to pay for one. Interest rates on student loans are preventing graduates from moving forward, and stagnating wages aren't helping either. As mentioned earlier, our middle class is shrinking because of consistent cuts, we need to course correct this.

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?**

Yes. I would like to see an option similar to a single-payer option. I have heard countless stories from small business owners or farm families where a spouse has had to seek employment elsewhere just to provide health insurance for the family.

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?**

Yes. Accidents and illnesses happen. It's exhausting not being able to take time off of work for such events. A healthy employee is a much better employee than one who is stressed from financial burdens or the stressors of balancing a job and an illness.

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

I'd like to see more funding towards our infrastructure. A tax on the top 1% of Minnesotans would

allow for more funding.

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

To be sustainable it could stay the same, but we must remain vigilant in our renewable energy resources.

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?

I would be in support of fully funding local law enforcement, but our district is different than one in the cities. Cutting funding in greater Minnesota doesn't make sense.

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