

NCRSP's Seven Questions to Ask Any Candidate for The General Assembly

Virtually all candidates for public office will insist that they support retiree security and the public schools, but for too many of them, it's just lip service. The devil is in the details. We suggest that when you meet each candidate during the campaign or elsewhere—ask these questions. Do not settle for less than specific, satisfactory answers, and if you don't get them, consider the competing candidate. *[NOTE: This is an NCRSP discussion guide. NCAE conducts a candidate endorsement process, and the results of that activity will be available during the spring and summer of 2018.]*

- 1. Do you support restoring health insurance benefits for state employee retirees who will be hired on or after January 1, 2021?**

[The correct answer is "YES." This will require a repeal of legislation passed last year by the majority party in the General Assembly. They voted to take retiree health insurance coverage away from state employees who are hired on or after Jan. 1, 2021.]

- 2. Do you support sustaining North Carolina's current retirement system as a defined benefit plan?**

[The correct answer is "YES." Beware of any candidate who supports a change to a "defined contribution plan," to 401Ks or to "portable" self-funded plans.]

- 3. Do you support Cost Of Living Adjustments (COLAs) for retired teachers and state employees in your district (to help them keep up with increases in consumer prices)?**

[The correct answer is "YES." State retirees are losing earning power because COLAs aren't keeping pace with increases in consumer prices. Last year—after a great deal of struggle—we got a mere 1%!]

- 4. Do you support bringing North Carolina's teacher pay up to at least the national average?**

[The answer should be “YES.” North Carolina is the 9th largest state by population, but our teacher pay is 35th in the nation—that’s still \$9,000 behind the national average.]

5. Do you support bringing North Carolina’s per pupil spending up to the national average?

[In 2017 the national average per pupil expenditure was almost \$12,000, but North Carolina spends an average of only \$8,940 per student--that’s 43rd in the nation—source NEA.]

6. Will you support tax increases on corporations and high-income earners to get our state to the national averages mentioned above?

[The correct answer is “YES.” Our General Assembly cut the corporate tax rate from 6.9% in 2013 to 3% today, and majority party lawmakers want to cut it again to 2.5% in 2019. NC already has the lowest corporate tax rates of states that have one. Meanwhile, we are 43rd in per pupil spending. Our public schools lack books, adequate staff and must choose between smaller class sizes and things like art classes, music education and PE.]

7. Do you support transferring public school funds to create and support private voucher schools (also known as “school choice”)?

[The correct answer is “NO.” Private school voucher schemes lack full public accountability and these voucher schools have not proven to be more effective than public schools. Worst of all, voucher schools are draining millions of dollars from the public schools. Beware any candidate who calls for “school choice!”]