

SALINA LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

The Salina League of Women Voters gathers this information neither to endorse nor to reject the views of any candidate. We do not assume responsibility for the content of any candidates replies. This questionnaire has been reproduced as submitted to the Salina League of Women Voters by the candidates. Any continuation past the stated word limit has been deleted.

Kansas House of Representatives District 69

Candidate Name: Lori Blake

Address: 301 E Kansas, PO Box 67, Assaria KS 67416

Telephone Number: 785-227-0405

Email: loriblake4KS@gmail.com

Occupation: Business Manager/Treasurer Trinity United Methodist Church, Salina

Education: Bachelors in Communications with an emphasis in Business Bethany College, Dec. 1997

Please limit responses to the questions to 200 words per question.

1. What are the three most important issues facing Kansas and how would you prioritize them?

1. The largest issue is the lack of bipartisan problem solving. The two party system has polarized our government to be ineffective. My entire career has been in human services which has allowed me opportunities to collaborate with many people in Saline County and navigate systems to improve their lives. State government should be no different. When we view our differences as strengths, we can find solutions for all Kansans,

2. By meeting the legal obligation for Special Education funding, we increase general fund budgets locally. This investment into vulnerable students benefits not only their unique educational needs, but also allows districts resources to address low wages across the profession and greater flexibility with general fund dollars.

3. Increase access to medical and mental health services. Not only are there barriers for affordable options for health insurance, but equally challenging is finding care when we need it. From family

practice to specialty care, our citizens don't have access to doctors in a timely manner, Telehealth is improving acute diagnoses needs, but having enough providers outside of urban settings continues to be a problem. Offering economic incentives based on community need rather than simple economic growth should be prioritized.

2. What is your position on expanding Medicaid and why? Would you support putting Medicaid Expansion on the ballot?

Medicaid expansion in Kansas has been hindered by the lack of a fair and open debate, despite a hearing held earlier this year. Post-COVID, nearly 57,000 children lost access to health insurance between January and July 2024. Additionally, 150,000 working poor Kansans could benefit from federal tax dollars that have already been paid,

Currently, Medicaid eligibility in Kansas is severely limited. A family of four earning over \$11,856 per year is disqualified, and single individuals without a disability or pregnancy status are ineligible regardless of income. Expanding Medicaid would allow more Kansans to access better jobs, work more hours, and still maintain health coverage. This could reduce the overall burden on healthcare costs for everyone, as uninsured individuals increase rates for others. While passing a constitutional amendment for voter-initiated ballot measures is unlikely due to the political climate, the best way forward is to elect representatives who will advocate for the interests of the citizens

3. How can we be assured that if elected, you will work in the best interests of your constituents versus your personal interests?

Over three decades as a small business owner and administrator in public education, disability supports and child abuse prevention, I have learned families are the foundation for society. When they thrive, we all do. My leadership is steeped locally through community investment of time, talent and treasure. My career demonstrates an openness and willingness to listen and to collaborate to improve our community,

During this campaign, my love for meeting new people and discovering how we are connected has been elevated at voter's doors. I have made myself available in person, by phone and through varied platforms electronically. This will continue once I am

elected. I am not a politician. I want to be the representative of the 69th district to focus on common ground to grow the group mind to bloom solutions for the greater good.

4. What will you do about the Gun Violence crisis?

I will advocate for common sense laws to require education and accountability. If we require a license to drive a vehicle on public road. It's not unreasonable to verify gun owners are trained to take the responsibility for safe storage and use. When laws are enacted to require background checks and waiting periods, we must also fund the system and be willing to enforce the federal and state laws on the books. Owners selling their firearms need to understand their responsibility to ensure a safe buyer and that there are legal consequences to selling a weapon used in a violent crime, Developing extreme risk laws and waiting periods to identify and allow red-flag risks enacted with law enforcement could be one way to reduce the 318 suicides completed by using a firearm in 2023. According to Everytown.org, guns are tied for the 2nd-leading cause of death among children and teens in Kansas. In Kansas, an average of 50 children and teens die by guns every year, of which 48% of these deaths are suicides and 49% are homicides. In the US, 31% of all gun deaths among children and teens are suicides and 63% are homicides.

