Huerfano County Democratic Party

**Vision statement**   Shared Value  Shared Responsibility  Shared benefits

**Our mission** as Huerfano County Democrats is for every citizen in Huerfano County to be   informed, engaged  and voting.

**Core values** Truth Inclusion Transparency Integrity

these questions were submitted by members of the Huerfano county Democratic Party.  In preparation for our preference poll at caucus we think this may be the best way for our constituents to be familiar with how you view issues they care about.  We are hoping that you can take time from your busy schedule to respond prior to our Feb monthly meeting on Feb 15.  It is felt that this would help citizens to make educated choices at preference polling at caucus in preparation for county assembly.  Following are the submitted questions.

**Governor**

**Yes or No**

1.     Do you support using taxpayer money for private schools?

No

2.     Do you support single payer health coverage?

It is clear that the state needs to take a greater role in helping us achieve universal access to care. I propose expanding a public option to individuals who cannot find affordable coverage on the exchange to reach this goal. Details of my plan can be found at: [www.mike4co.com/policies/health-safety/](http://www.mike4co.com/policies/health-safety/).

3.     Do you support the concept of sanctuary cities?

Yes, I support protections for minor crimes; however, I also support reporting to ICE for murder and major violent sex assaults.

4.     Do you support deporting non-criminal aliens?

No

5.     Have you accepted campaign contributions from sources such as Monsanto, oil companies or banks?

No

**Essay Questions**

1. In this era of factional mistrust, politics of greed, lust for power, what allows you to maintain your integrity, truthfulness, humility and honesty?

My path to the State Senate started as a teacher and then a principal. When I learned that many of my students would not be able to access higher education at an affordable rate because they were undocumented, I decided to run for the State Senate to change that. That reason – serving my constituents and those who often have the least power, has been the bedrock of my career as an elected official and a candidate for governor. Once I became a Senator, I immediately opened a community office in the Northeast Park Hill community of Denver – far from the Capitol – so I could be easily accessible to constituents and prioritize their needs. Indeed, my campaign headquarters is still in this same community office, and we still maintain an open door policy for anyone who comes to the office. This, more than anything else, keeps me grounded and ensures that every day as I drive to work I am reminded of who I am truly working for – my neighbors across the state.

**Schools**

2.               What will you do about the public school teacher shortage in Colorado?

Colorado is not immune to the nation-wide concern about teacher shortages. It is, however, uniquely positioned to respond to that challenge. I will be rolling out an education policy platform in the coming weeks that, among other things, addresses these shortages. In that platform, I’ll propose some of the following ideas:

- Increasing teacher pay, funded through reforming TABOR by “de-Brucing” the state.

- Increasing the broader benefits package for teachers including affordable housing options, perks from private business and the state government, and beneficial savings programs. Creative and collaborative efforts from the state government and its partners in community-based organizations and businesses can create additional, meaningful incentives and compensation for individuals considering joining the profession.

- Developing and funding innovative pathways for great teachers to stay in the classroom while taking on added leadership roles so they continue to advance their craft and their career without leaving the classroom.

3.               What are their plans to adjust the negative factor (budget stabilization) to fund our schools according to Amendment 23?

  What we have learned from Amendment 23 is that wishing and hoping, or even mandating, more school funding from existing resources does not work. The only ways to eliminate the negative factor involve expanding the funds available for our schools, and that takes political courage. I risked the political backlash to fight for Amendment 66 which would have put $1 billion into our schools, and, while voters ultimately rejected it, I would gladly do that again, or ask voters to change the TABOR formula, to ensure that our schools have adequate resources. Because even though asking for more money rather than promising to move money from one pile to another contains political risk, I believe Colorado’s kids are worth it.

**Environment**

4.               What is your stance on fracking, drilling and other aspects of mineral extraction that have the potential for environmental degradation, especially our water sources?

I oppose new drilling, coal mining, and oil and gas development on state public lands and would oppose the transfer of federal public lands to the state; Colorado does not have the infrastructure, capacity or resources to manage these lands.

As we’ve seen with tragedies like the Firestone explosion, with the population expansion as well as new technologies in oil and gas extraction, it’s more important than ever to consider the health and safety of Coloradans and the environment. I was the first candidate to support the Martinez Case, and I believe that the Colorado Oil and Gas Commission must stay focused on their top priority being public health and safety for Coloradans.

5.               What will you do to protect our National Monuments and other designated spaces from mineral extraction and private ownership?

As governor, I will fight any federal efforts to transfer protected federal lands to private hands, and work with our Congressional delegation to restrict mineral extraction in inappropriate settings

**Rural Development**

6.               What are your plans for much needed infrastructure funding?

We cannot meet the vast infrastructure needs without securing additional funding in the state budget. For that reason, I am committed to leading the fight to reform TABOR and bring us additional revenue that we can put towards the state’s most pressing needs including infrastructure. In addition to a focus on roads & bridge, we also need to bring high speed broadband to our rural areas. This will increase opportunity for businesses, health and mental health care, and education, and will connect our state in a way that has previously never been possible.

7.               What are your plans for stimulating jobs creation in rural Colorado?

As a state senator, I was the sponsor of the JumpStart Bill, which was designed to stimulate jobs in rural Colorado. By growing local businesses and attracting new ones, and partnering with local higher education institutions, we have already created over 200 jobs and six new businesses in Grand Junction – the pilot site for the program. Moving forward, I will support the growth of jumpstart, as well as expand other job-stimulating programs such as rural Enterprise Zones.

Additionally, on the very first day I launched my campaign, I announced my top campaign priority: the Colorado Promise. This plan will give access to up to years of free job training or higher education for *all Coloradans* in exchange for meaningful service to the state. In surveying the need across the state, I know that this will have a large impact on areas of rural Colorado where changes in industry will require new skills and new opportunities for workers to be able to stay in their communities and support their families.

8.               How do you intend to deal with the rising homeless problem?

As a state senator, I extended the low-income housing tax credit (HB16-1465) because I have seen firsthand the impact homeless and increased housing costs can have on communities, families and individuals. I am also in the process of rolling out a comprehensive policy plan to address affordable housing which I can share with this group upon release. Finally, we know that homelessness is often a confluence of many factors, including mental and behavioral health issues; my [health care plan](http://www.mikejohnstonforcolorado.com/issues/health-safety) has details of how we expand access to mental and behavioral health care so that we can address some of the underlying issues of homelessness.

9.               Do you have an economic development plan for supporting rural Colorado?

As a state senator, I was a key sponsor on the 2015 Jump Start legislation which has brought six companies and over 200 new jobs to Mesa County.  I also voted for the income tax deduction for leasing out agricultural assets (HB16-1194) and voted to expand access to broadband in rural areas (HB14-1328). As outlined above in question seven, I have released a full plan for how we will support all Coloradans across the state to get the skills and training they need to contribute to the economy and support their families.

The Huerfano County Democratic Party would greatly appreciate answers to these question

Please send answers to [huerfanodems100@gmail.com](mailto:huerfanodems100@gmail.com)

Thank you in advance

Dale Lyons  Huerfano county democratic party chair