



2020 CANDIDATE SURVEY

CANDIDATE NAME: **MACHELE HAMILTON**

OFFICE SOUGHT: **HOUSE 12 B**

PARTY: **REPUBLICAN**

Q1. The K-12 Education budget is the state's largest by far, yet some people still believe that we are not spending enough. What would you do to help Idaho's K-12 students receive a stellar education?

I believe a major step would be allowing tax dollars to follow the child, leading to more educational choices. I do not believe it is the state's job to educate your child, it is your job as a parent. We need to return to accountability in the classroom, focus on the basics, and require that parents be parents. Our system has allowed it to be okay for parents to abdicate their number one responsibility - raising their children.

Q2. Graduation rates at Idaho's four-year universities are stagnant while tuition continues to increase (with the exception of the one-year tuition freeze). What would you do to bring down the cost of higher education and help students graduate with less debt?

Our public universities are so top heavy it is almost a joke. When you have 231 staff members at just BSU, ISU & UI, that are paid more than our Governor, you know you are top heavy. This includes 43 Dean's, 29 Vice Presidents, and any number of directors, professors, and executives. The student debt crisis is self perpetuating in that we offer more and more money, all while making more money necessary. There should be limitations on what loan money can be spent on, what majors are eligible, and graduation requirements. And we need to return to the idea that college is to learn, not to have an "experience".

Q3. Idaho has both an income tax and a sales tax, while five of our six neighbors have only one or the other. Idaho also has high property taxes. What changes do you suggest, if any, to Idaho's state tax structure?

The main concern for Idahoans today is property taxes. Skyrocketing home prices add to the pain of never ending levy increases. Schools and municipalities will never

feel they are funded adequately, enough will never be enough. On a statewide basis, a budget is set based on anticipated revenue. Cities and counties set their budgets, then decide the levy rate. Businesses are forced to work within the revenue they have collected, municipalities should be no different.

Q4. The grocery sales tax has long been debated in Idaho. Should Idaho repeal the tax on groceries? If yes, when?

Yes. I realize that Covid-19 has changed the landscape for many things, but charging tax on food does not seem appropriate at any time. It is something that still needs to be done.

Q5. Urban renewal districts receive all the increases in property tax revenue within their borders, which forces other property owners to fund increased service requirements. Should Idaho end urban renewal? If not, should state lawmakers change urban renewal law?

Urban renewal has been a valuable tool when used properly. However, it is often abused. Changing urban renewal laws from the ground up, giving the people affected by the district a voice, is the only way. Personally, I believe urban renewal has been misused, as so many government programs are. But I would never choose to tell a community they could not form their own district if it was their choice. But it should be the community's choice, not their government.

Q6. Healthcare is a significant expense in Idaho's state budget, rivaling education in total appropriations. How would you tackle ever-increasing state Medicaid costs? More broadly, what ideas do you propose to help make quality healthcare more affordable for all?

Medicare costs will continue to go up as long as health care in general increases. A focus on preventative care is important, and that is slowly becoming more accepted. I believe every medical clinic, doctor's office, or hospital should be required to post the cost of every basic procedure. This would allow people to compare costs. Also, I believe tort claims should be limited. This would curtail excessive testing and limit liability insurance.

Q7. Criminal justice reform has become a bipartisan issue in recent years. Should Idaho explore further reforms? If so, which reforms would you support?

With spending on corrections increasing over 200% in the last 20 years, we need to continue to explore justice reform. Focusing on recidivism only makes sense, and ensuring adequate tools and resources for those on parole would seem a good investment.

Q8. In 2020, Idaho saw some reduction in occupational licensing mandates. Should Idaho continue to identify and implement alternatives to licensure burdens? If yes, which licenses should be reviewed or repealed?

Yes, we should continue to work on deregulating the state, particularly when the licenses make no sense. (Like you need a license to do makeup, but you do not need a license to do tattoos.) Also, licenses that are nothing more than an income stream, meaning no accountability required, just pay the license fee, is just another tax.

Q9. Federal dollars always come with strings, yet a significant portion of Idaho's annual state budget is funded with federal money. Should Idaho work to reduce its dependence on federal funding? If yes, how?

Yes! Federal money is not free money! We need to stop accepting these bribes. A beginning would be to educate the average Idahoan on how much federal money we are already receiving, and what strings are attached to those dollars. I don't believe most people have any idea.

Q10. Education choice allows parents and students to choose the education that best suits their needs. What policies would you support to strengthen education choice in Idaho?

I did already touch on this, but I do believe in allowing the tax dollars to follow a child. Imagine how many more people could afford the school of their choice. I feel public education has lost it's way and it doesn't matter how many dollars we throw at it, it might be time for a complete overhaul of the system.

Q11. What is the proper role of state government?

Enforce our state constitution. State infrastructure, defense, maintain the judicial system and public lands, and educate our children.