



# 2020 CANDIDATE SURVEY

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CANDIDATE NAME: **ZACH BROOKS**

OFFICE SOUGHT: **SENATE 11**

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 will work to eliminate federal control of education within Idaho by refusing to take federal tax dollars. Idaho students are not the same as Kansas students or New York students. Common Core is an epic failure and should be placed in the landfill. I will also work to make sure that funds actually make it to the classroom, rather than getting lost in overhead and admin positions. Idaho should adopt ELA standards written by Sandry Stotsky and Math standards from James Milgram.

**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?**

A further examination of where the money is being spent is necessary. However, students know very well the cost they are signing up for when agreeing to pay the required tuition. A large part of the problem is that student loans are easily given and backed by federal taxpayers. There is little incentive for cost controls when your 'customer' is continually willing to buy what you are selling, regardless of price. I've attended a private university, public university, public 4 year college, and a community college in 3 different states with tuition costs ranging from \$60/credit to over \$700/credit. The quality of education received does not necessarily correlate with the price.

**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?**

First of all, spending needs to be reduced at all levels of government. You cannot

responsibly reduce taxes without reducing spending. I believe taxation should be useage or consumption based, rather than based on property ownership or being successful in business. Tax rates would be dependent upon the reduction in spending, but based on principle, I would raise the sales tax, lower the income tax and repeal urban renewal.

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

Within the current structure of taxes, yes. Staying true to my beliefs that taxes should be consumption based, I am okay with the grocery tax in principle. Until that system exists, I am in favor of eliminating the tax and would not support it coming back if we were to create a consumption based tax structure. The grocery tax is a slush fund that perpetuates increased spending in our current system.

**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?**

If elected, I will personally sponsor legislation to repeal urban renewal. Urban renewal is taxation without representation. Until UR is repealed, any new UR district should be required to be voted upon for approval by a 2/3rds majority of voters within the county and all URD boards should have to be elected.

**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?**

The State Healthcare Exchange should be disbanded and Medicaid Expansion should be repealed, especially before the Legislature requires counties to help pay for it, which would cause many rural counties to go broke. Regulations that drive up the costs of providing healthcare by doctors and paying for it through insurance need to be eliminated. Allowing for further competition in the insurance market would be a benefit, as well.

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

Yes. Repeal mandatory minimums. End civil asset forfeiture. Make sure Marsy's Law is not put on the ballot. Restoration of rights upon leaving jail. Stop supporting programs that incentivize counties and states to increase the incarceration rate thru farm labor and training that is only available to those that are incarcerated.

**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.

**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. Last I looked, we took in \$215 million in federal funds for education, \$100 million of which is from the USDA for school lunch programs. Are we incompetent to the point that we cannot feed our own children in a state with an Ag economy as diverse as ours is? I would support a reduction in the overall state budget enough to refuse those funds. Repealing Medicaid Expansion before it has the ability to bankrupt counties is another option. As a means of generating funds for the State to spend, rather than tax dollars, I support the increased utilization of multiple use lands by increasing the amount of timber that is harvested and the number of acres that are grazed.

**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?**

The answer to this is the same answer as given in questions 1 and 9...refuse federal funding for education. If you have to follow the federal mandates, regardless of the actual school you attend, such as a charter or even homeschool, then you really do not have a choice other than the broad form of how an education is delivered. Real choice exists where federal mandates do not. This allows parents and educators to teach whatever curriculum that they or their local school board has approved of.

**Q11. What is the proper role of state government?**

The proper role of state government is a system that acknowledges and protects our God given rights to life, liberty and personal property within a stable republican form of government. This type of system must be kept and maintained by the governed or the result will be chaos and oppression.