



2020 CANDIDATE SURVEY

CANDIDATE NAME: **CHRISTY ZITO**

OFFICE SOUGHT: **SENATE 23**

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?

For our students to receive a better education, the money must follow the children, no matter if they are homeschooled, charter schooled or public schooled. Much of our education budgets go to administration and meeting useless federal regulations. In states that have choice school programs, the top-performing schools have a waiting list. There is a demand for quality education, those that provide it will receive the money that goes with the child. More money does not make a better outcome. Choice makes a better outcome.

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?

It is time for universities to return to the business of educating job-ready graduates and leave the business of social engineering behind. These same universities are administratively top-heavy. This is money that is better served going to the classroom and providing the resources that will further hands-on education. Students leaving high school should be job ready so that they can work through higher education and pay as they go, rather than acquire expensive and burdensome student loans. When the government gets out of the business of funding higher education and the institutions have to create a system of accountability, being self-sustaining and focus on what is important and has real-world value the student will benefit, financially and educationally.

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?

Idaho cities and counties will have to reduce spending before there can be much tax relief. It is time for citizens to decide if they want to choose where their money will be spent, or allow bureaucrats on all levels to decide for them. Taxes are high because government entities on all levels spend too much money. We should do away with the sales tax on food. I believe that there should be no income tax and that our tax base would work best is a sales and use tax. The property tax system should be simplified, again cities and counties have to cut spending.

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

The grocery tax repeal should have happened 10 years ago.

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?

Idaho should simply end urban renewal.

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?

Medicaid is the worst thing that could have happened to the citizens of our state, and our country, it is a huge step toward socialism and the evils that follow that shift. It is time to return to a market-driven system for healthcare and insurance. Get the government completely out of our health care. Market competition will benefit the consumer. The spirit of competition drove innovation and customer service, and pricing that favored the patient for years, making the United States the global leader in the health care service.

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

Past time to do away with mandatory minimums and extended prison sentences for nonviolent crimes. We are simply feeding the industrial prison system, with the hard work of tax-paying Idaho citizens. To make matters even worse, we are simply not assisting those incarcerated with their re-entry to society. This is criminal. We can not justify setting those who make bad choices up for failure when they complete their punishment. When they have completed their time, there must be a vehicle for entering the workplace, and society in a way that they can hold their heads high with a feeling of accomplishment and not be degraded and looked down upon. There absolutely has to be job training and placement assistance.

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?

Licensing is begging permission from the state to be able to perform a job. In some cases licensing is nothing more than a vehicle to prevent entry into the market. I believe this is also a place where the market will drive excellence. If a craftsman, for example, provides excellent service, quality workmanship, and at an acceptable cost, their business will naturally grow. Word of mouth is the best referral. This same person to person referral is also the way that the consumer is protected from those who would provide poor quality. Anyone who is in a business that requires licensing will be the best, and safest if they know their job depends on it. Insurance companies and bonding agencies will not cover those who have claims against their work.

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?

The state of Idaho is constitutionally bound to operate on a balanced budget. It is dishonest to state that we do when much of our budget is federal money that is part of trillions of dollars of debt. Every bureaucratic agency in the state should be required to review their reason for existence and cut their budgets to fit the original intent. Those that receive federal money should be held to the standard of operating within the budget of the state. Be it state or federal money, it is the taxpayers money. Each agency has to be audited, and the federal funds done away with.

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?

Education money should follow the child. Those who home school should get a credit on their property tax. A market driven system where schools of all kinds have to raise the bar to have students attend their institutions will ensure the best education for our children. Federal funds with the strings attached, that create a system of federal compliance is not in the best interest of the child. Most primary schools are administratively top-heavy. It is more important to have the money in the classroom.

Q11. What is the proper role of state government?

State governments are to make sure the roads under their care are well maintained. It is the responsibility of the state to provide for the education of the children, in Idaho common education. It is the role of the state government to collect revenue to fund the operations of the state. A state judicial system is to be set up and operated. It is the responsibility of the state to assist in protection against loss of life, loss of property, and loss of liberty and to protect the right and control of private property.