



2020 CANDIDATE SURVEY

CANDIDATE NAME: **PRISCILLA GIDDINGS**

OFFICE SOUGHT: **HOUSE 7A**

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 would recommend several options:

1. Idaho has a great opportunity to remove the current Common Core Standards and replace them with specific Idaho Standards much like Florida did last year.
2. The time is ripe to modify the school funding formula so there is more equitable distribution between urban and rural school districts. This could also allow districts more flexibility to use state funding for buildings and maintenance.
3. State funding needs to focus more on K-12 and less on higher education. I don't think the constitutional requirement for education intended K-12 teacher salaries to be minuscule compared to professor's salaries.

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?

1. Rein in spending. A comprehensive analysis of each university's base budget could help identify any unnecessary spending.
2. Remove unnecessary programs. In recent years veterans programs have been cut while social justice programs have been expanded. The legislature has and can continue to hold each university accountable for mis-prioritized spending.
3. Focus more on trade schools and reward programs with high post graduation employment rates.

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 needs Grocery Tax repeal, property tax reform, and to expand our use of the state's natural resources to supplement reduced tax revenue, If needed.

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

Yes! I sponsored H360 that would have repealed the tax on groceries starting this year.

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?

Yes, Idaho should end the undue burden on property owners imposed by urban renewal districts.

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?

Healthcare needs to be forced to compete in a free market atmosphere to reduce price inflation and waste. Idaho can start by following President Trump's lead for healthcare price transparency and ensure that Idaho health care providers at all levels publically post costs for 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?

Idaho has one of the nation's highest incarceration rates, so it is imperative that bipartisan solutions be allowed to go through the legislative process. Several reforms were not allowed public hearings in Idaho's Senate even after passing the Idaho House. If reform legislation were allowed to proceed through the legislative process I would support:

1. Protections for employers who hire ex-offenders
2. Additional prison education and work programs
3. Standardized sentence time for nonviolent drug crimes
4. More support for local jurisdictions that can't meet imposed standards

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?

The 2018 Institute of Justice report found that Idaho is ranked 4th in the nation for the number of licensed workers at 23.6%. Nevada was the highest at 26.6% and Georgia was the lowest at 14.4% and our neighbor Utah was 16.3%; Idaho can do better. Licensing has trended away from the original intent of providing consumer safety and has instead become more about increasing revenues and limiting freedoms. I would like to see these changes in Idaho:

1. Streamline the disciplinary processes
2. Reduce the number of regulatory boards
3. Limit regulatory boards' investigative and disciplinary authorities
4. Provide more third-party disciplinary appeals processes
5. Reviewed and/or repeal components of licensing for Chiropractors, Contractors, Barbers & Cosmetologists, Marriage & Family therapists, Midwives, Speech, Hearing and Communication Services, and Shorthand reporters

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!

Every year Idaho's percentage of "needed" federal money increases. Idaho can try to reduce this dependence in three ways:

1. Stop taking "free money" that grows new government programs. (i.e. The \$25 million for the Health Data Exchange that will allow the Department of Health & Welfare to centralize access for all of Idahoans' medical records in 2020.)
2. Reduce state spending on unnecessary programs. (i.e. \$2.8 million for Home Visitation Programs. An Idaho health care company that manages benefits for Medicaid recipients provided \$8.8 million for an affordable housing project)
3. Allow Idaho's natural resources to be more efficiently utilized by reducing state regulations on natural resources that are more stringent than federal guidelines. (i.e. Mining, logging, and access to public land)

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 would like to see Idaho expand open enrollment to be more like Utah's model and allow students to attend any public school in the state that can accept new students. Eliminating boundaries can help foster competition and increase diversity.

Q11. What is the proper role of state government?

I believe the proper role of state government is to fulfill all 21 Articles of Idaho's Constitution. According to Article 1, Section 2, "Government is instituted for their equal protection and benefit, and they have the right to alter, reform or abolish the same whenever they may deem it necessary; and no special privileges or immunities shall ever be granted that may not be altered, revoked, or repealed by the legislature."

Government must ensure equal protection and benefit, not use taxpayer money to select winners and losers.

Additionally, the executive branch and all of its agencies should not be allowed to enforce regulations (that are treated like law) that have only been approved by one chamber of the legislature. The legislature must not abdicate its constitutional authority.