



2020 CANDIDATE SURVEY

CANDIDATE NAME: **ELI HODSON**

OFFICE SOUGHT: **HOUSE 21B**

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 advocate for bringing educational decisions back to the state and local level. Federal programs have repeatedly proven to be failures. It's time that Idahoans make the important decisions regarding their children's education again. More money being spent on education does not translate to higher quality education for our students. As Idahoans, we are innovators. There are many ways we can work together to promote a very high quality education in our state without spending more and more money doing so.

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?

Federal loan programs need serious review. Today across the country, there's too much incentive for universities to chase federal dollars via student loan funding. They then turn around and spend those monies in ways they believe will make their schools more "prestigious." In doing that, the universities drive up expenses on campus and therefore increase the cost of education for the student. Moving away from this current system will benefit students as tuition costs drop. Promoting lower cost vocational programs and non-traditional post-secondary education is something we also should do more of in Idaho. A typical bachelor's degree or above isn't necessarily the best pursuit for every student's long-term success.

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?

Any time we talk about taxation, we should first look at how existing revenues are being spent. Waste and unnecessary expenditures should always be the first things we target when having this discussion. I'm firmly against raising taxes. One of the major benefits to living in Idaho is the fact that we've kept government in check and we don't get carried away with wasteful, bloated government spending. I will continue to hold the state accountable and support conservative economic policies going forward.

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

I will only support repealing this tax with a corresponding cut to state expenditures. If we can find enough fat to cut from our state budget, then absolutely I will support eliminating this tax. I am a strong proponent of cutting and limiting taxes, but this must be done in a responsible way that permits the state to meet its constitutionally mandated obligations.

We have to keep in mind - eliminating this tax means it would no longer be collected from those passing through or visiting Idaho. And we can also utilize tax credits to help low-income Idahoans recuperate taxes paid."

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?

While I do support the creation of an environment conducive to business activity and renewed development, I do not support urban renewal districts because they create a situation in which unelected and unaccountable individuals control tax dollars. Idaho is an incredibly attractive state for business. Companies looking to move here will generally find natural incentives to do so that don't require hand-outs and taxpayer dollars enticing them to make these decisions. As a taxpayer, I will only support a system that's incredibly transparent and doesn't unfairly leverage tax dollars to pay costs companies should otherwise be taking care of themselves. Those companies will come to Idaho without being paid kickbacks to do so.

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?

I'm a fervent proponent of bringing transparency to healthcare in Idaho. The health care industry is a mess right now, not only in Idaho but across the country. Providers have no incentive to advertise pricing for their services, and they often lag for months on end just to provide the patient a final bill. This is completely unacceptable. The President has taken measures to end these outrageous practices and I fully support his

efforts. In the long-run, encouraging transparent pricing and allowing free-market forces to do their work in the health care industry will drive pricing down significantly while simultaneously increasing quality of care.

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

I'm a very strong supporter of our law enforcement and those who work so hard day in and day out to protect us and to ensure we live in the safest possible environment. That being said, insofar as injustices in our system can be shown to exist, I of course support mitigating those problems. Much of the talk surrounding this issue tends to rely on shaky evidence and questionable claims. Nevertheless, I support creating the most fair and accountable justice system possible, and I think in Idaho we've historically done a very good job on this issue.

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?

Occupational licensing is beneficial both to the public and to those required to achieve licensure. The public benefits by knowing that the professionals they deal with have achieved a standard of mastery in their work. The licensee benefits because they've gone through rigorous licensure programs and they stand among a select group who were willing to endure the requirements necessary to receive their license. I do not support limiting or reducing licensing requirements in this state. Would you hire a lawyer with no degree and who couldn't possibly get past the bar exam? Of course not. There's good reason to have licensing requirements in place.

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?

Absolutely yes, Idaho should work to reduce dependence on federal funding. The federal government has a tendency to use state funding as a way to continually increase their control over issues that need to be managed at the state and local level. Take education as an example. The No Child Left Behind Program and now Common Core have both been disastrous. Idahoans are bright, gifted people with a great deal of ingenuity. We can do much better resolving our own issues than the federal government could ever dream. It's time to find new approaches to our unique issues that don't come with federal encroachments on decisions we need to make here.

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'm a strong proponent of charter schools, private education and home schooling. Programs that promote these educational options should be robust in Idaho. Everything I can do as a legislator to create an environment where families can take more control of their educational decisions, I will do. It's imperative educational choices are made at the family level, and there's a great deal we can do to help families pursue alternatives to public education should they choose to do so. Those who prefer the public education system should likewise be free to utilize that system, and as a Representative I will work to ensure the education every child receives in Idaho is of the highest quality and promotes that child's brightest possible future.

Q11. What is the proper role of state government?

State government of course must fulfill the duties outlined in our state constitution. Outside of that, the state government should consistently encourage and promote decisions to be made at the local level. Idahoans are some of the most resilient, bright and innovative people across our country, and there's no problem we cannot solve when it's put in front of us. The state government should encourage and promote an environment conducive to self-determination and localized decision-making.