



## Campaign for Vermont Candidate Questionnaire 2018

These answers are presented in order of last name. No preference has been given to political affiliation. These are presented verbatim as they were submitted. All registered candidates for Governor and Lieutenant Governor were contacted multiple times and given the opportunity to participate in this survey. Those who chose not to submit responses -

- Cris Ericson, Candidate for Governor, Independent
  - Chuck Laramie, Candidate for Governor, Independent
  - Stephen Marx, Candidate for Governor, Earth Party
  - Murray Ngoima, Candidate for Lieutenant Governor, Liberty Union Party
  - Phil Scott, Candidate for Governor, Republican
  - Don Turner, Jr., Candidate for Lieutenant Governor, Republican
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### Trevor Barlow: Candidate for Governor, Independent

#### Topic 1 – Education

1. **Where do you stand on an adjustment to the student-teacher ratio that will bring Vermont per-pupil costs more in line with the national average?** I believe we should take a holistic approach that does not simply leverage per pupil costs as a measurement of our educational funding and quality. We need to review the whole process for administering and method for delivering education to find efficiencies and improve outcomes. We deliver great educational opportunities already but, based on my experience, we CAN deliver a great education for less money.
2. **What will you do to ensure Vermont public schools are preparing students for careers in a constantly changing world?** We need to continue to address skills-based learning and place more emphasis on the value of the trades. I am a proponent of combining the liberal and creative arts with skills and experiential learning programs to better prepare our students to take part in the dynamic workforce of today and tomorrow.
3. **What importance do you place on technical centers and apprenticeship programs as part of the public education system?** I place a VERY HIGH importance on skills based and experiential training. We need to create a better pipeline of qualified workers and entrepreneurs to fill the gaps of our retiring workforce. Good jobs and a healthy standard of living need not be limited to college graduates.
4. **Do you support Vermont's school choice system as it stands now? If not, what changes would you like to see?** Yes. However, I would like to see ACT 46 amended or repealed to allow for a return to more local or equal control over schools and their budgets. We can take a more collaborative approach to finding the right educational experience for each student, whether it be a specific school, learning track or program within a school. We should maximize our budgets for activities and programs that most directly impact student outcomes.

#### Topic 2 – Ethics

- 1) **Do you support expanding the ability of the Ethics Commission to investigate and enforce ethics violations in Vermont government, or do you feel their current role is sufficient?** I don't think an expansion is currently necessary unless there is an economic argument in the state's interest to do so.

- 2) **The Vermont Ethics Commission recently published their new ethics guidelines for public officials. Do you agree with those rules, and are they strong enough to do the job?** I do agree with the new rules and think they, along with other laws for general conduct and behavior as citizens are enough to hold our public officials to an acceptable standard.
- 3) **What will you do to continue to integrate ethics standards into the activities of Vermont public officials?**  
Response: Hold people accountable. We need to continue to remind public officials that we are public servants and our duty is to serve our citizens with the utmost integrity and treat all with dignity and respect.
- 4) **Do you support expanded disclosure requirements for officials with direct influence on policymaking?** No. I believe the ethics guidelines and reporting to the Ethics Commission should be enough to limit any conflicts of interest. If we hold each other to the highest of standards, the result will be a more ethical government.

### Topic 3 – Economy

1. **Taxpayers are on the hook for more than \$4 billion in unfunded liability for the pension and healthcare plans covering 32,000 Vermont teachers and state employees. The state has been making only the minimum payment to the pension plan fund and no payments to the healthcare fund. How will you lead Vermont taxpayers out of this unsustainable tax burden?** We need to increase revenues through investing in the expansion of new and existing businesses while lowering our liabilities through cost savings. The combination of greater revenues and lower costs will allow us to put a financially solvent plan in place that doesn't mortgage our and our children's future. We need to make Vermont more business friendly and competitive regionally, nationally and internationally.
2. **What will you do to support a workforce that meets the demands of today's employers?** We need to match our educational and professional skills development opportunities to be responsive to our employers' needs. This will help to make sure that we can offer improved career mobility for all Vermonters. We also need to encourage more skilled workers to move to Vermont to meet those demands. If people want to move to our state to be productive members of our workforce, we should more aggressively attract and support them.
3. **What does the State of Vermont need to do to draw new businesses to the state, encourage the development of existing business, and create employment opportunities to allow families to survive?** We need to boost our creative economy through Innovation Centers and an investment fund. I propose that we invest \$12 million each of the next 10 years into an Innovation fund that will be administered through public/private partnerships that are equally managed by our 12 Regional Development Centers. The goal will be to encourage local and national resources to invest in our local Vermont economies and to establish ourselves as a leader in in both rural and urban innovation. We have a long history of business and social entrepreneurship that we can tap into to drive the next generation of positive change in the Vermont economy. Historically, our best results have come from empowering our localities to find solutions to their local economic and social challenges and then collaborating and sharing those positive outcomes with the rest of the state. We need to create a virtuous cycle of prosperity for the whole state through this initiative and seek to diversify our economy and population to drive innovation.
4. **What is your proposal to support the financial requirements of cleaning up Lake Champlain and Vermont's waterways, a source of significant, statewide social and economic benefit?** We need to increase our revenues and funding to adequately address the needs of our most important natural resource, water. We can support local bonds and make investments to improve and modernize our water quality systems. We need to improve our source tracking and detection to more specifically identify the sources of problems and address them. I believe that the long term and unknown costs of our short-term inaction will far outweigh any proactive investments we make in water quality now. Where there is a will, we can find a way to finance the systems and solutions to our problems. As governor, I will.

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## Christine Hallquist: Candidate for Governor, Democrat

### Topic 1 – Education

- 1. Where do you stand on an adjustment to the student-teacher ratio that will bring Vermont per-pupil costs more in line with the national average?** We absolutely need to take steps to improve our education system and make sure we are spending efficiently. I don't believe the way to this is through arbitrary student-teacher ratios--we've seen the failure of this approach over the past two years. As governor I will work with school boards, educators and communities - those who know best how their schools can be improved - to find creative solutions to the problems facing our education system.
- 2. What will you do to ensure Vermont public schools are preparing students for careers in a constantly changing world?** First, I want to ensure the voices of educators are centered in this process. The people who work in our education system everyday know best how to improve. We also need to invest in higher education which is why I want to make degrees from Vermont state, community and technical schools tuition free for Vermont residents. Finally, we need to make sure our schools have the resources to prepare students for success by working collaboratively during the budgeting process, not dictating budgets from the top down.
- 3. What importance do you place on technical centers and apprenticeship programs as part of the public education system?** Technical centers and apprenticeship programs are a critical part of the public education system. My son Derek graduated from a technical program in Vermont-I have seen first hand the quality of the education they provide and the opportunities they set students up to pursue. The importance of these schools in preparing students for success can't be understated, another reason I want to enable Vermont residents to attain degrees from technical and vocational schools tuition free.
- 4. Do you support Vermont's school choice system as it stands now? If not, what changes would you like to see?** Vermont's school choice system plays an important role in our public education system and has been very valuable for small rural communities. However, relying on tuitioning students to independent schools instead of investing in public schools is a flawed approach for several reasons. Independent schools are not required or equipped to provide the same support to students with special needs as public schools. Public schools increasingly serve as the 'parent of last resort' for many students, providing essential social services that these students can't access elsewhere. Independent schools are unequipped to provide this support. Independent schools are able to suspend or expel students with much more impunity than public schools. Independent schools are inadequate for many students and we cannot rely on a system in which they are the only option for students.

### Topic 2 – Ethics

- 1. Do you support expanding the ability of the Ethics Commission to investigate and enforce ethics violations in Vermont government, or do you feel their current role is sufficient?** The Ethics Commission's investigative and enforcement powers must be expanded for the Commission to successfully serve its intended function. If we claim to take ethical violations seriously, the Ethics Commission must have teeth.
- 2. The Vermont Ethics Commission recently published their new ethics guidelines for public officials. Do you agree with those rules, and are they strong enough to do the job?** The guidelines themselves are robust and comprehensive but mean very little if the Ethics Commission cannot investigate and enforce them.
- 3. What will you do to continue to integrate ethics standards into the activities of Vermont public officials?** The first step, as mentioned above, is to ensure our Ethics Commission can actually do its job, not merely occupy a ceremonial position. I will also lead by example, fostering an environment of ethical behavior from the top down.

4. **Do you support expanded disclosure requirements for officials with direct influence on policymaking?** Yes - it's critical that those with influence on the policymaking process don't have undisclosed conflicts of interest.

### Topic 3 – Economy

1. **Taxpayers are on the hook for more than \$4 billion in unfunded liability for the pension and healthcare plans covering 32,000 Vermont teachers and state employees. The state has been making only the minimum payment to the pension plan fund and no payments to the healthcare fund. How will you lead Vermont taxpayers out of this unsustainable tax burden?**
2. **What will you do to support a workforce that meets the demands of today's employers?** In order to make sure our workforce meets the demands of today's employers we need to invest in education, both K-8 and higher education. A robust public education system is the only way to ensure our workforce is prepared for the 21st century economy. We also need to pass policies that make work worth it - things like a higher minimum wage, paid medical and family leave and expanded childcare. These policies will prevent qualified individuals from being pushed out of the workforce.
3. **What does the State of Vermont need to do to draw new businesses to the state, encourage the development of existing business, and create employment opportunities to allow families to survive?** Our first priority has to be universal high speed internet access. The lack of this capability has held back economic development in Vermont for too long. Universal broadband will attract new business, give existing businesses access to previously inaccessible markets and allow Vermonters to work remotely.
4. **What is your proposal to support the financial requirements of cleaning up Lake Champlain and Vermont's waterways, a source of significant, statewide social and economic benefit?** I'm committed to protecting Vermont's waterways and recognize their economic importance. State Treasurer Beth Pearce has estimated that this will cost \$25 million on an annual basis. To meet this funding requirement, I will work with the legislature to determine sustainable funding sources to ensure that we can continue to meet this requirement.

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## Emily Peyton: Candidate for Governor, Liberty Union Party

### Topic 1 – Education

1. **Where do you stand on an adjustment to the student-teacher ratio that will bring Vermont per-pupil costs more in line with the national average?**
2. **What will you do to ensure Vermont public schools are preparing students for careers in a constantly changing world?**
3. **What importance do you place on technical centers and apprenticeship programs as part of the public education system?**
4. **Do you support Vermont's school choice system as it stands now? If not, what changes would you like to see?**

I am greatly concerned and unhappy with the quality of public education in Vermont, there is a particular emphasis on compliance, by both the students and teachers. I believe we could use some freedom there, and allow teachers to teach according to their strength and passion, and create a stronger environment for love of learning, creativity and independent thinking. Our efforts of compliance to the common core are misplaced, and instead our concern should be support of the joyous and natural desire of every child to expand their knowledge of the world around them. The seated and passive nature of our schooling is creating a division between those who are "good" students and those who are 'in need of' drugging simply to force them to sit down and comply. It saddens me that the quality of teachers could possibly have eroded to the point that this is an accepted norm. It also saddens me that the society seems to want children to be obedient more than they want them to be brilliant and unique. It also saddens me to see children sequestered rigidly according to age groups, it is well

documented and known that children in the act of teaching one another, learn better and as well impart principles better and faster, so allowing for a restoration of a one room school room mind set, and opening up to the children's need for much greater exploration and activity is truly crucial to the future generations' ability to meet the crises of our day. We do not want to create good little robots, nor do we want to create a situation where half the students are subjected to emotionally abusive situations because their restlessness and boredom with the compliance based learning is condemned.

Apprentice programs, mentorships, real life experiences, trips and tapping local wisdom are hugely important. The teachers must not be afraid for themselves, they must not worry about their income, or being judged by a test standard. WE should not worry about "keeping up" We should instead focus on the joyous experience of learning.

Indeed, because the society is in such hardship in many places, the school is the place where children feel safe, except with the gun violence. I will generate a system that gives the homeschooled families the value they deserve to use towards schooling. I will look at alternative methods of healing children who have been traumatized, and of learning, So that we are not spending so much on para's or special ed. Waldorph and Montessorri systems should be expanded in Vermont. I believe the school choices need to be expanded, and the budgets for the schools derived from income, not property tax, which I believe, along with the NEA, should be abolished.

I support pop-up schools and universities, that occur from within the community and create a methodology for testing and state accreditation for knowledge accrued outside the normal means.

## Topic 2 – Ethics

1. **Do you support expanding the ability of the Ethics Commission to investigate and enforce ethics violations in Vermont government, or do you feel their current role is sufficient?** No
2. **The Vermont Ethics Commission recently published their new ethics guidelines for public officials. Do you agree with those rules, and are they strong enough to do the job?** No
3. **What will you do to continue to integrate ethics standards into the activities of Vermont public officials?** I will ban lobbyists, open the process of elections significantly, increase the money supply into the economy, send periodic comprehensive surveys to the people to find out how they judge the bureaucracy is serving them, and whether they are adding benefit to their lives or not. I will myself not accept donations, it should be obvious that donations erode the integrity of political leadership. Today, we judge the power and significance of a candidate by the level of erosion of their integrity.
4. **Do you support expanded disclosure requirements for officials with direct influence on policymaking?** There are two elements of bringing about the world that we know in our hearts is possible. One is to begin to rebuild the sacred trust, and the second is to be motivated by a nurturing and inclusive alternative set of principles rather than a competitive and exclusionary set. Thus, as I am invite you over into this new paradigm, we are working on methods to create inclusion by the people who are most affected by policy in the process of making policy. Less handing down edicts from on high, and more involvement. The public officials should volunteer their disclosure, and the standards should be set, those who do offer transparency may well be untrustworthy. I want to see, for example, an inclusion of those in Vermont who wish to receive notice prior to the third reading of any new bill by electronic methods, and to have a space of time that allows the people more specific awareness of and say in the new bills that are passed. I believe that we also are dealing with a Federal Government that has committed multiple treasons against the people, and that we must direct our attention to our relationship to that entity and recalibrate our contract.

## Topic 3 – Economy

- 1. Taxpayers are on the hook for more than \$4 billion in unfunded liability for the pension and healthcare plans covering 32,000 Vermont teachers and state employees. The state has been making only the minimum payment to the pension plan fund and no payments to the healthcare fund. How will you lead Vermont taxpayers out of this unsustainable tax burden?** Money need not be scarce for any of the things we need to do. We create a licensed public bank, so value of our dollars supports local loans, and the interest and fees are recycled into the treasury. Pierce is taking an enormous risk holding our state checking account in TD bank, it is an unsecured creditor, and in the next crash, our VT state money will be most vulnerable. I think Beth is a nice person, but I see she is in the pocket of the commercial banking empire, and the commercial banking empire has not intention of sparing Vermont economic hardship. WE need to be able to circulate money or its equivalent for the things that we know in our hearts is possible. Over here in the new paradigm we have many methods of doing so, work/credit, an additional common good system of exchange, not unlike the VBSR's established system, and a canna-currency, a credit card for VT, a simplified and less expensive means to allow self directed IRA's to invest in Vermont. WE must allow for creative solutions to problems that are getting worse in the old paradigm, for example our incarceration and subsequent cost of maintaining ex convicts who are unemployable, and have no means to house themselves. I will stop export of persons convicted of crimes, a for profit prison system is directly subverting our society as is a for profit health system and a for profit insurance system, not that these latter two cannot continue to exist for the choice factor, but they cannot be mandated. I want to work towards a circulation of credit and money to lead to a complete end to taxation, most people cannot envision this, but I can, and it will take steps and time to alter our flow of credit and money such that this can occur, for no one will be left without. It IS burdensome. There is a new way. Lets start with ending the property tax - is there actual private property if one is paying tax which could be called a rent, to stay on one's land? and Ending tax on Vermont made items, licensing the State for a legal bank (our own mini federal reserve), and establishing a common good system of exchanges, thereby increasing our access to to dollars for investment.
- 2. What will you do to support a workforce that meets the demands of today's employers?** WE need to establish a wider education for service exchange, and we need to establish zoning for advanced sustainable communities, we also need to reduce taxation on businesses and allow for businesses to create standards of practice and by their competition oversee the compliance amongst themselves, reducing the need for ineffective and awkward bureaucracy. WE also need, and this may have been better placed in a different part of the questionnaire, a system of justice completely based on restorative practice, even where that practice is lengthened and individuals are held apart until society is safe. WE need to hire mentors in communities that will aid the process of educating for productivity and helping those who need better decision making capacity to have a model.
- 3. What does the State of Vermont need to do to draw new businesses to the state, encourage the development of existing business, and create employment opportunities to allow families to survive?** The Students of Vermont Universities will be offered an organization when I am governor that allows them to invest their time and energy into hand raising and building sustainable small communities based on perma-cultural practices, and their work efforts are translated into rights to reside within the communities. It is community that we must rebuild, and community that is free to experiment with new products and materials, education and food as medicine, movement and touch for health, laughter and art for health. This must be done to give our generations to come a fighting chance. WE also will establish the cannabis trade in Vermont in such a way that small growers can sell their product and have it tested to a standard and sold in a cooperative. The revenue from those sales will serve the plan as well as serve the creation of an ag hemp processing plant on the west side of the state to provide the raw material for new businesses with which to create sustainable good.
- 4. What is your proposal to support the financial requirements of cleaning up Lake Champlain and Vermont's waterways, a source of significant, statewide social and economic benefit?** Of course. But again, the old paradigm doers are stuck in their boxes, lets climb out of the box and begin to see the changes we know in our hearts are necessary, and possible. Clean water and clean air, these are of paramount importance, and the cleanliness of Lake Champlain is as well. We need to ask the question, would you poop into your drinking water? Would you spray Wd30 into it and then drink it? Of course not! Lets raise the standard of behavior by

raising the idea of clean water and air as a fundamental right to life. Then lets work backwards and see by what combination of work/credit, tax relief, state money, and reward for non pollutive behavior we can go to the end result. Do we need to embrace composting systems instead of using our potable water to defecate in? Of course we do!!!!!! Lets climb out of this confining box, and stretch our minds and abilities to meet the demands of the future which are, obviously crystal clean water, and healthy non chemical food, and clean air, absent chemicals and heavy metals floating down from above.

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## David Zuckerman: Candidate for Lieutenant Governor

### Topic 1 – Education

**1. Where do you stand on an adjustment to the student-teacher ratios that will bring Vermont per-pupil costs more in line with the national average?** I do not support arbitrary student-teacher ratios. Local school boards, voters and districts know the best ways to support all students, improve outcomes and contain costs. I do believe there is a role for the State in identifying and reducing Agency redundancy and cost drivers. Right now, our schools are providing social services to kids that are already serviced by the Agency of Human Services. If we want to save money, we need to do the hard work of finding the overlap of AoE and AHS social services. By reducing redundancy and making a more seamless continuum of services we will lower costs and improve outcomes.

**2. What will you do to ensure Vermont public schools are preparing students for careers in a constantly changing world?** We need to teach critical thinking and skill sets that are not about rote memorization. A nimble mind will be far more prepared to adjust to changing economic and social conditions as one travels through life.

**3. What importance do you place on technical centers and apprenticeship programs as part of the public education system?** I believe we need to increase the importance and validity of these options for our youth. There are many technical jobs that pay well that are currently hiring, but we do not have the youth to fill them. We need more trades, and hands on skilled labor.

**4. Do you support Vermont's school choice system as it stands now? If not, what changes would you like to see?** I support how it stands now. I am not completely opposed to changes but I think it is important to remember public education is mandated to ensure every child has access to high quality, individualized education. I am concerned independent schools are not prepared to meet the needs of all students and I am concerned their efficiencies would be challenged by meeting this mandate. We have some of the highest performing public schools in the nation and I am very proud of the work they do to prepare our future generations.

### Topic 2 – Ethics

**1. Do you support expanding the ability of the Ethics Commission to investigate and enforce ethics violations in Vermont government, or do you feel their current role is sufficient?** I support expanding the Ethics Commission and believe more oversight is beneficial. It is also important to understand that, with a citizen legislature and even citizen executive branch, there will be overlap between the public and private sector. I believe transparency is a critical piece of keeping the policies ethical.

**2. The Vermont Ethics Commission recently published their new ethics guidelines for public officials. Do you agree with those rules, and are they strong enough to do the job?** Yes, I support the efforts of the legislature to have more transparency at all levels.

**3. What will you do to continue to integrate ethics standards into the activities of Vermont public officials?** The Lt. Governor has an opportunity to lead by example. I will work to highlight the need for ethical standards and be honest about the overlap that occurs with our system of a citizen legislature.

**4. Do you support expanded disclosure requirements for officials with direct influence on policymaking?** Yes. I have voluntarily offered my tax returns in my statewide races while most of my opponents over the last two years were not willing to do so.

### Topic 3 – Economy

**1. Taxpayers are on the hook for more than \$4 billion in unfunded liability for the pension and healthcare plans covering 32,000 Vermont teachers and state employees. The state has been making only the minimum payment to the pension plan fund and no payments to the healthcare fund. How will you lead Vermont taxpayers out of this unsustainable tax burden?** I supported the effort last year to put “one-time” money into the pension plans rather than provide a one-time small tax break on property taxes. We must pay down the unfunded liabilities. Unforeseen surplus, whenever available, should be used to remove debt. Underfunded pensions offer a great return on this type of allocation.

**2. What will you do to support a workforce that meets the demands of today’s employers?** This is an area where we have great opportunity for improvement. We have an aging population so we must attract and retain younger people who are prepared to meet the needs of our employers. Vermont has great assets to help us do that, such as high quality public schools, strong communities, and lots of outdoor activities, but we must be consistent and positive in our messaging to attract people here. It is imperative we expand broadband to rural areas. We need to support and expand technical training programs, as mentioned above. We must make higher education more affordable; I support programs that offer student loan forgiveness for people who remain in the state working for a set number of years. Finally, raising the minimum wage and offering paid family leave will make Vermont a more desirable place to live, work and raise a family.

**3. What does the State of Vermont need to do to draw new businesses to the state, encourage the development of existing business, and create employment opportunities to allow families to survive?** Many of the above proposals to attract employees will also attract employers. We need to continue to promote our strengths such as our proximity to Montreal, Albany and Boston. Our software and technical engineering/manufacturing firms are a great foundation for growth. We need to be sure to have a reliable and affordable electric grid, better internet and broadband and expanded higher education access. We should engage and promote our colleges and universities because they attract students to Vermont and put an educated and entrepreneurial population right in the heart of our state.

**4. What is your proposal to support the financial requirements of cleaning up Lake Champlain and Vermont’s waterways, a source of significant, statewide social and economic benefit?** There is no doubt that cleaning our waterways cannot be pushed down the road. There are three primary contributors to run-off causing water pollution in Vermont; large non-porous surfaces such as parking lots, transportation/roads, and farms. All of these must be address in a comprehensive way for a successful clean-up effort. One idea to help with farm related clean-up is to invest in a public private collaborative to create a Vermont Brand of Milk. This could reinvigorate our dairy industry and rebuild our rural economy. With farms more profitable, there will be less need to push our soils and waterways to the extreme. With cleaner water our tourism will thrive, bringing in additional revenue. We can also increase tourism and tax revenue with comprehensive cannabis reform. Ultimately we must agree on reliable, long-term funding sources. A few years ago we proposed a \$25 per parcel fee that would be borne by all and would generate reliable funding for a wide range of improvements to our waterways. This is just one option and I am open to other funding ideas. We must prioritize our waters; the costs of inaction are far greater than the costs of action on this issue.