

PA PAC Questionnaire for North Carolina Governor/Lieutenant Governor – 2020

Please return the completed questionnaire along with your resume or biographical statement describing education, work history, community service, and prior political experience as soon as possible, but by January 1 at the latest.

You may e-mail your responses to Tom Miller at tom-miller1@nc.rr.com or you may send a printed copy of your responses to PA PAC c/o Tom Miller 1110 Virginia Avenue, Durham, NC 27705-3262

Please note that following the January 1 deadline, the People's Alliance PAC may publish your responses to this questionnaire and your resume.

When answering this questionnaire, please repeat the questions in your response document with each question numbered and organized as it appears here. Type your responses in italics, bold, or a different font to distinguish your responses from the questions. Do not use colors or shading.

Please try to confine your responses to no more than 300 words unless another word limit is indicated. Do not feel obliged to exhaust the limit for each question.

If you use words or ideas from another person, please attribute your source.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire and your willingness to serve the people of North Carolina.

Candidate's name: Chaz Beasley
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Why Are You Running?

1. Of all the issues confronting the State of North Carolina which single issue is most important to you and why? What would you do about it if you are elected?

Our state has several pressing issues it must address, but many of them stem from a lack of economic empowerment. We must create an economy that includes everyone. I was raised by a single mom here in North Carolina. She had to work two jobs to put food on our table. This is an all-too-common story for a lot of families in our state, particularly families from marginalized groups. As our state economy grows, whole pockets of our community are left out of our state's success. The Lieutenant Governor appoints the members of several economic development-related boards. As Lieutenant Governor, I will appoint members who understand

the need to build an economy with everyone in mind. I will also use my tie-breaking vote in the State Senate to support equitable policies that help working families.

Politics and Voting Rights

2. What changes would you make to North Carolina's election and campaign finance laws and why?

Our election and campaign finance laws are outdated. The vote stealing that happened in Bladen County exposed major vulnerabilities. We made some improvements in this session of the General Assembly, but we need to do more. For example, we need to simplify voter registration by making it automatic at 18 years old. We also need to move toward paper ballots and away from machines that lack fully-auditable, human-readable paper receipts.

Our state's campaign finance laws allow people from privileged backgrounds to maintain their power. This results in underrepresentation of candidates from marginalized groups. This is a problem in both parties. We should move away from big donor-funded campaigns and candidates self-funding their races to the tune of hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars. Instead, our campaign finance laws should encourage campaigns to raise more from smaller donors. We should also increase transparency by requiring more regular campaign finance reporting.

3. Support or Oppose – Please indicate whether you support or oppose the following. If necessary, you may explain each of your answers with no more than 100 words.

a. Establishing a non-partisan redistricting commission for congressional and state legislative districts Support Oppose

I have sponsored multiple bills to make this a reality.

b. Affiliated party committees Support Oppose

c. Voter ID Support Oppose

d. Same-day voter registration Support Oppose

I have sponsored a bill to make voter registration automatic as well.

e. A convention of states Support Oppose

The Environment

4. Do state agencies have the authority they need to protect the state's natural resources from sources of pollution such as GenX, coal ash, fracking, and hog waste? What changes would you make, if any?

Our state agencies do not have the authority they need. We have a law preventing our state environmental regulations from being more protective than federal ones. This provision is commonly known as the Hardison Amendment. We need to repeal it.

We should also prohibit corporations from discharging chemicals into our air and water that are not proven safe at particular levels, instead of stopping that discharge once chemicals are proven dangerous. This would make corporations demonstrate safe levels beforehand, not after. This is particularly relevant regarding emerging contaminants like GenX.

Recently, the state and Duke Energy reached a settlement requiring the largest coal ash cleanup in American history. This is a step in the right direction. We must empower our state agencies to prevent future issues with coal ash and groundwater contamination, as well.

Our state does not have the geology to make fracking work. Given the ecological damage fracking can bring, we should not allow fracking in North Carolina. I support repealing the law that allows it.

In the General Assembly, I have voted against multiple bills related to hog waste. One of the worst prevented homeowners from suing if their homes were contaminated by hog waste. The law blocked disproportionately older, poor, and black homeowners from having their day in court. These people were already in positions that made it hard to fight back, and that bill made it harder. We should repeal that law as well.

As Lieutenant Governor, I will continue to be a champion for environmental protection. I will work to keep our water and air clean. And, I will fight for the people most hurt by environmental damage.

5. Under what circumstances should polluters be exempt from fines and civil penalties imposed by the state?

I believe in the old rule that "if you break it, you pay for it." The same applies to polluters. If polluters illegally harm the environment, they should pay to clean it up. Fines and civil penalties provide a deterrent to these damaging actions happening again. I support due process, so a rigorous appeals process is appropriate. Still, I believe in a level playing field. These processes should apply to all corporate actors and no industries or companies should get special exemptions.

6. How does climate change inform your policy view with regard to the environment, economic development, energy production, and transportation?

Climate change is real. Our state has lots of variety in topography and ecology. This means that climate change affects parts of our state differently. It also affects individual people differently. The people most harmed by climate change are also the people that are already most vulnerable.

From the mountains to the coast, preparing for climate change should be integral in our development. Our state should encourage development away from floodplains and protect our riparian buffers from encroachment.

For energy production, our state has goals on what share of our energy should be from renewable sources. These goals are called Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standards (REPS). We should expand and extend the REPS into the future. In my professional career, I have worked to finance renewable energy projects across the United States. I have seen firsthand how strong an appetite there is in the economy for new renewable energy projects. Our state should capitalize on this demand and remain at the forefront of renewable energy production.

In the 20th century, North Carolina was known as the "Good Roads State." In the 21st century, I believe we can be known as the "Good Rail State." We should continue to fund the development of light rail projects in our cities. We should also invest in a statewide commuter rail system that ties our small towns with growing metropolitan centers. Locating dense development around rail stops will decrease dependence on cars and the air pollution traffic brings. Building our transportation system upon multiple modes of transit will allow us to build a more sustainable future.

Educating Our Children

7. What measures, if any, do you believe are necessary to improve public education in North Carolina? In your answer please address teacher qualifications, compensation, and retention; the role of charter schools and vouchers; re-segregation; and takeovers of struggling schools. Please limit your answer to no more than 450 words.

I am a proud product of North Carolina's public schools. Improving our schools is personal to me. Despite growing up in poverty, I was able to get a quality K-12 public school education here in North Carolina. Too many kids - particularly kids from disadvantaged backgrounds - do not get that same opportunity. Our schools are underfunded and our teachers are underpaid. Schools in low-income communities are often hardest hit by a lack of resources and struggle to hire quality teachers. That needs to change.

The best way to attract and keep qualified teachers to our public schools is to pay them more. Instead of providing huge tax cuts to people who do not need them, we should raise teacher pay to, at a minimum, the national average.

Racial and socioeconomic segregation is at levels comparable to the 1970s. Segregation particularly hurts kids that look like me and are living the life I lived. State policies toward private schools and charter schools are a major factor in this resegregation. We should use our state tax dollars to fund our public schools, not private ones. Instead of complementing traditional public schools, charters have often stripped critical funding from them while lacking key accountability measures. I have not supported voucher programs and unchecked growth in charter schools that would divert public funds. I do not plan to support these programs in the future.

Allowing more state takeovers of schools is wrong. There is no evidence that these takeovers actually make schools better. I have strongly opposed these bills in the General Assembly and will continue to do so as Lieutenant Governor.

Our Lieutenant Governor serves on both the State Board of Education and the State Board of Community Colleges. As Lieutenant Governor, I will fight to ensure that we prioritize our children and our teachers by giving them the resources they need to succeed.

Healthcare

8. Are you satisfied with the current system of providing healthcare to North Carolina residents? In your answer please address health care costs, the availability and distribution of healthcare services, and the roles of managed care organizations, Medicaid, and subsidized healthcare insurance under the Affordable Care Act.

Our healthcare system needs major changes. Costs are skyrocketing, options are shrinking, and hospitals are closing. Strengthening our healthcare system is a matter of life and death - literally.

I support Medicaid expansion and cosponsored the bill to make it happen. We talk a lot about the benefits of Medicaid expansion: providing insurance to thousands of North Carolinians and adding billions of dollars to our economy. But, we do not talk enough about how lacking healthcare has major consequences for people - particularly people in marginalized groups. I know what it is like to live in a county without a hospital because it could not afford to stay open. I have experienced the stress of a loved one getting sick and not being able to get the care they need. Medicaid expansion benefits the people who get insurance, the hospitals struggling to stay afloat, and the individuals and families who would be more vulnerable if they lost access to healthcare.

Medicaid expansion, however, should be the first step, not the only. To lower costs, I support drug parity to prevent companies from quickly marking up rare life-saving drugs. I support increasing the number of slots our medical schools provide, so we can train more doctors faster. In addition, I support programs incentivizing doctors to open practices in medically-vulnerable communities. This will help attract doctors to places where they are needed most.

The stated goal of managed care organizations (MCOs) is to control costs. All too often, these cost controls lead to severe limitations on access to care in struggling communities. Families who need care can struggle with the red tape and barriers they face in getting necessary procedures. We must support policies that prevent MCOs from rationing care for people who need it.

As Lieutenant Governor, I will engage with healthcare stakeholders to ensure our healthcare system improves the lives of North Carolinians.

State and Local Government Finances

9. Is the current system of state and local taxation and fees fair and adequate to meet the needs of North Carolina residents? What changes should be made, if any? Please cite specific examples. Please limit your answer to 400 words.

The goal of Republican leadership in the General Assembly is to create a regressive tax system. They cut taxes for the wealthiest North Carolinians and the biggest corporations. Meanwhile, they have increased the number of items subject to taxes. They also increased fees, claiming that this is not the same as raising taxes. The result is clear: working families are paying more while the rich and privileged are paying less. This shift in tax burden happened while many families struggled to recover from the Great Recession. When we have advocated for larger raises for teachers, more investment in healthcare, and other critical needs, Republican leadership has claimed there is "not enough money." This needs to stop.

Our state should, at minimum, freeze the future tax cuts planned for the well-to-do. We should stop a new round of huge tax cuts from becoming law. Right now, SB 622 is awaiting a vote in the NC House. It would create another \$1 billion hole in our state revenue - at a time when our schools are, according to a recent report from WestEd, underfunded by \$8 billion. I oppose this bill (and bills like it).

Working families in North Carolina should not shoulder more of the tax burden. We should have a progressive tax structure where the wealthy pay their fair share. As Lieutenant Governor, I will use my tie-breaking vote in the State Senate to support a tax code that does so.

10. What is your position on the use of public funds for economic incentives for private businesses?

I understand why many people oppose incentives. However, I believe that conditional incentives with clear and firm requirements, including local job benchmarks and corporate investment baselines, can be a helpful tool in recruiting new businesses and creating new jobs. Incentives should make sense economically and not incorporate rosy forecasts as though they are fact. I do not support giving blank checks to corporations. I also think we should avoid "race-to-the-bottom" competitions where corporations pit states against one another for ever-bigger incentives. Governor Cooper's Department of Commerce has struck a good balance when using existing incentive programs to recruit new employers to North Carolina in an economically-responsible way.

11. Should state and local governments be allowed to condition government contracts and incentives on local hiring and rates of compensation and workplace benefits and safeguards which exceed state minimums?

Yes. All too often, people already living in communities are passed over for new jobs. Worse, jobs that do go to locals do not pay enough for them to get by. That needs to change. Professionally, I am a finance attorney who negotiates contracts for a living. Private companies freely negotiate these conditions like these all the time - governments should be able to do the same.

13. What should be the minimum wage in North Carolina and what workers should it cover?

Working families in North Carolina deserve a raise. Wages have been stagnant for decades. I support raising the minimum wage for all workers, including employees working for tips. By creating a graduated wage increase structure, tied to employment levels over time, and indexing to inflation, we can get to \$15 an hour and beyond. My support of efforts like these was critical in gaining the endorsement of the state AFL-CIO in this race for Lieutenant Governor.

Local Government

14. Should local governments have the authority to control rents and to compel developers to include affordable housing as a part of their projects?

In quickly-growing communities, the best way to control and reduce rental costs is to increase housing supply. Cities should partner with developers in greatly increasing the supply of affordable housing. Including affordable housing targets can benefit communities and builders alike.

Civil Rights

15. Would you support legislation designed to protect gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people from discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodation, and access to government benefits and services? What consideration will you give LGBTQ people when evaluating the impacts of legislation generally? What skills and resources will you draw on to inform your position?

When supporting LGBTQ+ North Carolinians, allies have a responsibility to speak out against discrimination - and to act in an affirming way when the time comes.

I spoke out against HB2 from day one – on social media, on television, in speeches, in communications with supporters, and elsewhere. I also committed to a full repeal. I did so despite running in a competitive district that we were trying to flip from red to blue. Some warned me about the political wisdom of doing so, but I had to be true to my values.

When the time came to act against HB2, I supported full repeal. I remained convinced that affirming any form of discrimination with my vote was bad for our people and contrary to my values. I voted against HB 142 because I could not, in good conscience, vote for a bill that did not completely repeal HB2 and continued to enshrine discrimination in state law. I am the only candidate for Lieutenant Governor who voted against HB 142.

Hiring and firing decisions should be made based on competency, not identity. It is flat-out wrong that employers can fire or refuse to hire someone based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. It is contrary to our values - and it is bad for business.

People of all backgrounds should be able to travel safely and sleep soundly throughout our state. Businesses should base decisions on who to serve in our public accommodations and who can rent from them on ability to pay, not on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Many of these restrictions remain in place because of HB 142.

After voting against HB 142, I continued to work hard to better protect LGBTQ+ North Carolinians from discrimination. As a state representative, I have sponsored and cosponsored multiple bills that would ban discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity broadly. I also engaged with stakeholders to expand access to PrEP and ban conversion therapy. I have built relationships with key stakeholders in the LGBTQ+ community and will continue to work with them as Lieutenant Governor to end discrimination in all its forms.

16. What should the state do to promote racial equity and diversity, such as increasing opportunities for under-represented and under-served people of color? Can you provide an example of your advocacy for race-equity and diversity?

As a black man and the son of a single mother, I recognize how blessed I am to have beaten the odds. I also recognize that my success story is an exception, not the rule. There are far too many roadblocks placed in the way of poor families and families of color. Many of these barriers exist because not enough people in positions of power have experienced anything other than a life of privilege and wealth. This is true in both parties. The best way to change our state is to change our leadership.

Our current Lieutenant Governor has fought for policies that hit marginalized groups hardest. As Lieutenant Governor, I will use my lived experiences - and my tie-breaking vote in the State Senate - to do the opposite. In particular, I will support policies that broaden access to the ballot box, invest in our communities in a way that does not accelerate gentrification, and reform a criminal justice system that disproportionately incarcerates people who look like me. Politically, I will also continue to recruit candidates from marginalized groups and help them find the resources they need to run - and win.

Crime, Law Enforcement, and Punishment

17. What, if anything, should be done about gun violence and the proliferation of guns in North Carolina?

I grew up in rural North Carolina in a gun-owning family. I became a gun owner as an adult. Still, we can do a lot more to prevent gun violence while still respecting an individual's right to lawfully purchase and own a gun. This includes instituting universal background checks for gun purchases. We should also ban bump stocks like the ones used in the Las Vegas massacre. I also support extreme risk protective order laws that create a process for threatening individuals to turn over their guns if they receive a court order to do so. Nothing can bring back the people we have lost to gun violence, but we can honor their memories by doing more to keep our communities safe.

18. Should the death penalty in North Carolina be abolished? If you believe it should be retained, would you change the way in which it is applied and administered?

In politics, there is a lot of pressure to have firm yes or no answers to every question. I believe it is best to be direct about my beliefs. I do not see many instances where the death penalty is necessary to achieve justice for victims and their families. Its deterrent value is limited. Black men are disproportionately sentenced to death, and far too many people on death row have been found innocent. As a person of faith, I have often struggled with the idea that it is an appropriate form of punishment. For lethal injection specifically, several states are experimenting with ineffective, painful new cocktails that may violate the 8th Amendment. Still, there may be rare cases where it is the last remaining option. For example, there are circumstances where people can still present a danger to the public while behind bars. Leaders in terrorist organizations or criminal enterprises are examples. If there is a death penalty, it should be extremely rare and maintain an extensive appeals process. In the vast majority of cases, life without parole is a better alternative to the death penalty.

19. Should state and local government law enforcement agencies have the discretion to decide whether to cooperate with the federal government in enforcing immigration laws and policy?

Yes. I opposed HB 370, the bill that would strip local sheriffs' ability to determine what was best for their communities. Unlike the bill's sponsors, I spoke with sheriffs across North Carolina before doing so. I do not believe we should make new laws about our sheriffs without our sheriffs.

Political

20. For whom did you vote for in the 2012 and 2016 presidential and gubernatorial elections? For whom did you vote in the 2016 U. S. Senate election?

*2012 - Obama for President, Dalton for Governor
2016 - Clinton for President, Cooper for Governor, Ross for US Senate*

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

Please do not forget to provide us with your resume or biographical statement.