

**PA PAC Questionnaire for  
North Carolina General Assembly – 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 5 at the latest.

You may e-mail your responses to Tom Miller at [tom-miller1@nc.rr.com](mailto: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 5 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 Durham and North Carolina.

Candidate's name: Zack Hawkins

Seat you are running for: NC House of Representatives, District 31

Address: 130 Elmsford Street Durham NC 27703

E-mail Address: [zack@zackhawkinsnc.com](mailto:zack@zackhawkinsnc.com)

Phone: 919-824-3090

Website: [zackhawkinsnc.com](http://zackhawkinsnc.com)

**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? Education remains the most important issue in the North Carolina. Providing a strong education to students K-12 is the promise that we have made and a promise worth keeping. It is the greatest equalizing asset in our toolkit as a state. Kids like me from financially distressed, single parent homes that have an opportunity to attend college, have mind opening experiences and serve their communities. Even if they decide not to attend college, our education should have well paid teachers that can sustain their own lives and households and a well rounded curriculum that can broaden their horizons and build a foundation for future success. It is not too much to ask.**

## Politics and Voting Rights

2. What changes would you make to North Carolina's election and campaign finance laws and why? **I pushed for automatic voter registration this session and intend to work until it's the law of the land. We need to remove the barriers that come with registration and move to a pure focus on voter engagement and education of laws on the books issues facing their lives and, I think, would give even more power to the voter.**

**I also would like to remove the barriers related to felon voting and increase access to incarcerated non-felon voters. As with Kentucky, many non-violent felons with completed sentences were restored their rights, to the tune of 200,000 +. I would like to start the ball rolling on this type of legislation in the next term.**

**There are also many that would like access to jails and detention centers to register and/or help with voting process, but find that it is mainly determined by the will of the Sheriff. I would like to work along the association to propose legislation to make this easier across the board.**

**This antiquated practice of misinforming and disenfranchising people in our community that have made mistakes, has to stop.**

**Related to campaign finance, we should bring back the ability to publicly finance campaigns for judges and select statewide races.**

**I was a primary sponsor of bipartisan legislation to create a social media "stand by your ad" law.**

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 **X Support**

b. Affiliated party committees **\_\_X\_Oppose**

c. Voter ID **\_\_X\_Oppose**

d. Same-day voter registration **\_X\_\_Support**

e. A convention of states **\_\_X\_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? The power lies within the legislature, DEQ, the Governor and advocacy organizations dedicated to the environment. Bills pushing for more money to be proactive were stalled. The major change that I will continue to push for is expanding DEQ's scope to test for emerging contaminants. DEQ and the Governor need to continue to stay on the path of forcing cleanup efforts by polluters like Duke Energy. We need to set ourselves on the path to get a handle on hog waste/lagoons over the next decade. It can be done but will only happen if we break the majority in 2020.**

5. Under what circumstances should polluters be exempt from fines and civil penalties imposed by the state? **None. Tax payers already suffering the environmental and health costs, why should they have to shoulder the costs of clean up, too?**

6. How does climate inform your policy view with regard to the environment, economic development, energy production, and transportation? **It is the main focus, as we do not have to look much further than the number of cars on Durham roads, new apartments and concrete poured and the number of trees torn down to make way for our new residents. This will only amplify as North Carolina moves from number 9 in US population to number 7 in the next few decades. Though the idea of light rail is behind us, we can still move forward with commuter rail to help lessen the need for cars, use my Clean Energy 2050 bills (HB767/HB 768) and NC Green Schools (HB 892) (was primary sponsors on all) and HB330 creating energy efficient buildings as roadmaps to continue growth with the environment and climate change in mind. Everything we do has a direct impact on climate change and the environment. One of the bills I was most proud to primary sponsor was the ban on single use plastics in North Carolina. This legislation would be a game changer for the amount of waste we produce and greatly diminish the pollution in our streams, rivers and oceans. I co-sponsored HB568 calling for additional measures and resources to test for emerging contaminants, as I thought it was the right thing to do to ensure for clean air and water.**

## 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 believe that teacher pay needs to be increased to the national average as soon as possible, but definitely in the next 5-10 years. NC still produces the most board certified teachers in the nation, but lacks the proper incentives, including master's pay to retain them. I filed a bill this session to restore pay for teachers with master's and doctoral degrees. Teachers should be rewarded for their hard work and education, which not only allows them to afford a basic lifestyle but provides a deepened opportunity to focus on their students. Teachers should have to work about making ends meet. Charter schools should not be direct mirrors of public schools and I believe that a cap of 100 should return. Republicans pushed bills in the past to allow cities to finance their own charter schools, mostly in non-diverse locations, which speaks to their intended use for resegregation by socio-economic status and racial status. Returning the cap, allows for an evaluation of those schools that are not providing the basic needs for students (transportation, lunch, etc) and are failing students. It allows for an evaluation of those that are overly saturated in urban areas and are working at the detriment***

*of the traditional public schools. They were meant to be specialized opportunities for students, but have turned into direct challenges to the viability of our foundation of public schools across the country.*

*There was a lot of debate about Innovation School District this session. Democrats fought to make fellow legislators to understand the demoralizing impact it has for a school to be placed on the ISD list, without an understanding of the principal and students track record of building towards success. As with Durham Lakewood Elementary, the school was placed on the list even though the new superintendent and leadership were making strides. The end result with the bill was a multi year phase in with notifications and watch lists to give more time for turnaround. I believe that if schools are struggling, the state should pony up and provide more by way of per pupil spending and not this model, but at least we made a bad bill better than where it started.*

## 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, Certificate of Need laws, and the roles of managed care organizations, Medicaid, and subsidized healthcare insurance under the Affordable Care Act.

**I am not satisfied.**

- **The number of people that could be helped by medicaid expansion is now over 600,000 NC residents. They are uninsured because of our state legislature's unwillingness to act and not accept federal medicaid dollars. As someone who personally worked statewide in support of the Affordable Care Act, I understand the impact of people making decisions between pills and bills and the burden high-cost healthcare has on working families. Not to mention the hospitals pick up the tab for the remainder of what the federal government doesn't pay.**
- **We are fighting like hell to push on medicaid expansion and are even on board with the Secretary of DHHS in accepting the ill thought work requirement, to show we are willing to compromise.**
- **In discussion with hospital association and many others, repeal of Certificate of Need is a bad idea. Private imaging and dialysis centers popping up on every corner, along with behavioral health centers, would ruin local health care systems in small towns. It would in many cases continue profitization of healthcare needs.**
- **MCOs are about to make a ton of money from medicaid transformation and I hope will do a good job in providing services and creating choices for our most vulnerable population. I am not sold on the for profit sector being in this space because its a continued push toward privatization. I am more aligned with the Secretary's strategy to address social determinants of health.**

## Economic Welfare and State and Local 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 no more than 400 words.*

**No, the current tax structure isn't fair. Due to more corporate tax cuts, the state has infrastructure needs that cannot be met, programs being slashed, all in the name of "cuts help grow economies".**

**Direct remedies are to repeal cuts made in previous sessions and replace with investments in education, transportation and evening the playing field for working families across our state. Otherwise, out of control higher education tuition, decreased K-12 spending and decreased teacher pay will be our fate for the foreseeable future. Other states led by Republicans try and fail at cuts over investment.**

**The party of low taxes has adds taxes to everyday working people and raises fees that are disproportionately meant to build on the backs of the poor.**

10. 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? **Absolutely.. I have had quite a few conversations about exceeding the state minimums for local hires, MWBE and benefits. State and local governments should be able to best advocate for their residents. We have experienced way too much of that in Durham, where workers are from across the state, when local people could have been trained and employed. Millions are sometimes given with business expansion by state and local govt, with no guarantee of return.**

11. What should be the minimum wage in North Carolina and what workers should it cover? **\$15 for anyone with a job in our state. It should cover all workers across North Carolina. I was a sponsor of bills towards this effort and co-sponsor for the inclusion of the classified employees, including cafeteria workers and bus drivers. I stood with workers this session to fight for this living wage. It brings dignity to a household, when you know that you can keep the lights on and put food on the table.**

#### **Local Government**

12. Do state laws authorizing local zoning and land use regulation properly balance the rights, interests, and expectations of developers, local governments, and ordinary residents? **Durham like Northern Va and other emerging areas have to make the case for sections of town remaining affordable in order to not wipe out low and moderate income residents. Currently, state law favors developers and doesn't give enough balance to the relationship with governments and residents. Increased power doesn't mean renegade local leaders, I believe that they will make best determinations to ensure that emerging needs are met. NC has an opportunity to create its own destiny as we march on the path to number 7 in US population in the next few decades. I hope that this conversation can have real teeth after 2020.**

13. Should local governments have the authority to control rents and to compel developers to include affordable housing as a part of their projects? **I am still in favor of the use, long term of inclusionary zoning, though I realize that it will take a while to build support against the lobbying organizations. I believe that with the pressure of it on the table, compromise can be made to towards ensuring that development deals include affordable housing.**

**Rent control should be a local issue.**

**Civil Rights and Race Equity**

14. 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?

**I am very supportive of the LGBTQ community and absolutely keep this population in mind in my decision making and life. When I taught at Southern High in DURham, I was also President of the Young Democrats of NC, where we fought to ensure that the anti-bullying legislation moved forward because we were well aware of the impact in protecting gay and transgender students. It was important to create a process to ensure students were protected, this was a decade ago. In my professional life, worked to build the fundraising infrastructure to name and stabilize the LGBTQ Center, so that that space could serve as a beacon for progress and welcome in Eastern NC. It was one of the first named LGBTQ Centers in the country.**

**I also, as vice chair of the state democratic party, worked hard to fight against the impacts of HB2 and as a legislator, will work to ensure that a full repeal happens in a democratic majority. Anyone should use the bathroom of their preference/gender/expression.**

**Though simple, I work to ensure that I use the proper pronouns for expression and preference. It is essential that we work to recognize the way people present themselves and honor it. I can understand how hurtful it is to not be supported in living one's truest self.**

15. 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?

**I worked with the Governor's office to start the first ever Diversity summit targeted at recruiting, hiring and retaining teachers of color and understanding the barriers to making our state more reflective of the student population that it served. Over one hundred professional attended with the Governor signing an Executive Order to create the first ever task force for the work to continue year round. I am very proud of this work. I was also the only other government/legislative official to address the group other than Governor Roy Cooper.**

**I am also leading the charge to get an HBCU on the Teaching Fellows Program list, as a way of creating a strong pipeline of teachers of color and maximizing our resources by including schools that are known for education.**

**The key to tackling this issue is also making available equity and diversity training for all incoming (and hopefully current) educators, as we are working to do with the Durham Public Schools foundation, where I serve as Vice Chair of the board.**

## **The Courts, Law Enforcement, and Punishment**

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

**My colleagues Marcia Morey and Christy Clark led this charge this session. Extreme Risk Protection Orders, people who are a potential harm to themselves and others don't need guns. Limit the size of magazines. Make mandatory background checks and close the gun loophole. Ban bump stocks. Never allow a teacher to have a gun at school. Ensure that we check the point of entry into poor communities and communities of color. As is popular stated, no one in those communities is manufacturing weapons. We need to fight to punish dealers who push illegal weapons.**

**Every child and resident deserves to go home in peace frequent popular locations in their town and play outside without fear of gun violence.**

17. 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?

**It should be abolished. I filed and was primary sponsor on a bill to repeal the death penalty this session and believe that it wastes money and does not deter crime. Not to mention, so many people are innocent and/or have not been given proper representation.**

18. 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, they should. I and others in the Durham delegation worked hard against the ICE bill and stated that constitutionally elected officials should be able to decide what is best for their communities.**

19. What, if anything, should the State of North Carolina do to promote restorative justice?

**Pretty simple. Every professional involved in the criminal justice system should be trained and connected to a restorative justice program, like the one at Campbell School of Law. We should be in the business of rehabilitating the whole person, so they can return to society and reduce recidivism. Even if it began as a voluntary program, it would improve awareness of the impact on lives and the justice system.**

## **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? **I voted for Barack Hussein Obama in 2012 and Hillary Rodham Clinton in 2016. I voted for Walter Dalton in 2012 for Governor and Roy Cooper for Governor in 2016. I voted for Deborah Ross in 2016 for US Senate. I proudly voted for all of them.**

*Thank you for completing this questionnaire.*

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

