

MainPAC Candidate Survey

2021 Kansas Elections

Q1-5.

Candidate Name: Cole Robinson
Candidate Email: colemrobinson@gmail.com
Candidate Phone: 7859796094
Office Sought: City Councilmember
Office County: Johnson
Office City: Prairie Village
Office District: 1

Candidate Rating: 100%

Q6. Political discourse in Kansas could be characterized as siloed and divisive. How do you intend to engage citizens and colleagues in potentially difficult conversations? (Available points: 1)

- A. If elected I will seek to find compromises when it is clear my constituents are divided. (1)
- B. If elected I will be loyal to the ideology associated with my party affiliation.

Candidate Answer: If elected I will seek to find compromises when it is clear my constituents are divided.

Candidate Comment: My election is non-partisan and the vast majority of issues we deal with at the municipal level do not fall into the traditional party-line partisan politics that you see in Topeka or D.C.

Q7. Which of the following statements best aligns with your stance on local elected officials making decisions for their communities, particularly local tax and revenue decisions? For information about Home Rule please see https://www.lkm.org/page/Home_Rule. (Available points: 2)

- A. Local elected officials should have ultimate authority in decision making for their communities, consistent with Home Rule. (2)
- B. Local elected officials should have limited authority in decision making for their communities. (1)
- C. Local elected officials should not have authority in decision making for their communities. Decisions should be made by the state.

Candidate Answer: Local elected officials should have ultimate authority in decision making for their communities, consistent with Home Rule.

Candidate Comment: The most effective decision-makers will be those that have to live with the consequences and outcomes of those decisions, as well as those that receive continual feedback from their constituents and neighbors. In these partisan and polarized times, especially with the dynamic in Topeka and in D.C., the last thing we need is the risk of hyper-partisan ideology overriding the wishes of local communities and their elected officials.

Q8. Do you support allocating additional resources specifically for implementing/expanding mental health programs?

(Available points: 1)

- A. Yes (1)
- B. No

Candidate Answer: Yes

Candidate Comment: The communities that can successfully implement a culture and infrastructure around protecting the mental health of its citizens will see enormous, far-reaching benefits as we continue to progress through the 21st century. It's clear that modern society creates an environment that is increasingly challenging to our mental health. If we can find solutions to put into place structures to help people openly discuss and navigate these issues, the benefits will be seen all across our society. I don't pretend to know how to do this or even where to begin, but it needs to be an enormous priority for our communities.

Q9. Which of the following statements best aligns with your opinion about transparency in local government?

(Available points: 1)

- A. Local government should be as transparent as is legally possible in all circumstances. (1)
- B. Transparency is important, but should be secondary to efficiency.
- C. There are some times when transparency is important, but there are other issues the public doesn't have the capacity to understand and transparency becomes less important.
- D. The people vote for a candidate because they trust them, so transparency is not as important for elected officials as for other public leaders.

Candidate Answer: Local government should be as transparent as is legally possible in all circumstances.

Candidate Comment: A core tenet of our democracy involves maintaining well established guardrails so that in times of political crisis, the system can stand the test of time. Transparency around decision-making, while it can sometimes be inconvenient or more difficult for law makers that wish to operate more quickly, is a bedrock of any democratic and open society.

Q10. Which of the following statements best aligns with your opinion about access to health care? (Available points: 2)

- A. Local government has a responsibility to support access to health care. (2)
- B. Local government in my area is currently meeting the community's access needs. (1)
- C. Local government has no role in health care.

Candidate Answer: Local government has a responsibility to support access to health care.

Candidate Comment: Although the state and federal governments can play a much more impactful role in access to health care, the municipal level needs to be constantly accessing if there are gaps to be filled or extra work to be done around the policies of state and federal officials. When local and state/federal governments are at odds about the need to access to healthcare, then it is necessary for local government to play a larger and louder role at filling that coverage gap by whatever means necessary.

Q11. To what degree do you believe that diversity in representation at all levels of government is critical to effective governing? (Available points: 1)

- A. Extremely Important (1)
- B. Neutral
- C. Not important

Candidate Answer: Extremely Important

Candidate Comment: Bringing together different and diverse voices in our government is essential for crafting policy that is responsive to the needs of the largest number of people in our society. Government should look like and represent the constituents that they serve.

Q12. Professional public entity staff are expected to bring expertise, research, and accuracy to assist elected officials in their work. These may include health professionals, legal experts, research librarians, school administrators and the like. Regarding these professionals, which of the following is generally most true?

(Available points: 1)

- A. It is the role of locally elected leaders to **support** the professionals who work in public service (1)
- B. It is the role of locally elected leaders to **scrutinize** the professionals who work in public service
- C. It is the role of locally elected leaders to **stay distant** from the professionals who work in public spaces
- D. It is the role of elected leaders to **closely manage** the professionals who work in public service

Candidate Answer: It is the role of locally elected leaders to support the professionals who work in public service

Candidate Comment: It is the role of locally elected leaders to hire and empower competent staff and administration. If this is done thoughtfully and successfully, as it has been done for years in Prairie Village, then the talented and competent people that have been hired to manage the city's affairs should be given the autonomy to do so. The council's role is to broadly oversee their work and lean on their expertise in times of decision-making.

Q13. Which of the following most closely aligns with your view of the role of local government in each of these policy issues? (Available points: 6)

- A. Very Relevant (2)
- B. Somewhat Relevant (1)
- C. Irrelevant

D. Not Applicable

Issue: Climate Change

Candidate Answer: Very Relevant

Candidate Comment: Climate change or environmental sustainability in general needs to be on the mind of any elected official. All levels of government need to play a role in ensuring that future generations are not in an impossible situation of dealing with overwhelming changes in climate.

Issue: Gun Safety

Candidate Answer: Very Relevant

Candidate Comment: There are numerous, simple gun safety reforms that can be done at the local and state level that do not infringe on the right to bear arms but are a benefit to public safety. Limits on capacity of ammunition clips, mandatory background checks and eliminating background check loopholes are easy examples of that.

Issue: Voting Access

Candidate Answer: Very Relevant

Candidate Comment: All policy around voting should be directed at increasing the number of people that vote and making that process as easy as possible for voters. Any changes to voting access that are restrictive in terms of polling hours, locations, mail in voting, voting registration, etc are undemocratic and threaten the foundation of our democracy.

Q14. Which of the following statements best aligns with your opinion about K - 12 schools? (Available points: 1)

- A. Public money should only be used to support public schools. (1)
- B. Public money should be used to support all schools, regardless of their public or private status.

Candidate Answer: Public money should only be used to support public schools.

Candidate Comment: We have exceptional public schools in Johnson County. The right to a free and high-quality education is something that every child is entitled to. The diversion of tax-payer funds to private schools creates a long-term erosion of our public schools and the possibility of a two-tier education system that threatens the right of a quality education that every child deserves.

Q15. In light of the current political landscape, what is your stance on the role your personal religious beliefs should play in policy decisions? (Available points: 1)

- A. If I have personal religious beliefs that are important to me, I know they might differ from other's beliefs; therefore I will strive to respect the separation of church and state in policy decisions and my votes. (1)
- B. My personal religious beliefs are important to me therefore my religious beliefs will be the driving factor in policy decisions and my votes.

Candidate Answer: If I have personal religious beliefs that are important to me, I know they might differ from other's beliefs; therefore I will strive to respect the separation of church and state in policy decisions and my votes.

Candidate Comment: Religion has no role in government. Government and religion can find plenty of common ground around concepts of morality and what is right and wrong without needing to ascribe to the dogma of one religion while possibly excluding followers of others. Any elected official who serves in public government and attempts to govern through the limited prism of their own religious beliefs deserves to be closely scrutinized and questioned. To admit to such a bias as an elected official is, in my mind, unacceptable.

Q16. How do you understand the role (the duties, responsibilities, and scope) of the position you are seeking?

Candidate Answer: My role seeks to aggregate the will of my potential constituents and bring that to every council meeting. However, understanding that no constituency is monolithic, an election confers a trust in the judgement of that elected official. In the role of councilmember, I will seek out the advice of my constituents as well as local experts and our city staff when attempting to navigate policy decisions. Specifically in the city of Prairie Village, I am very pleased with the decision-making of the council that has led us to this point and intend to maintain the high standard of governance that we have in our city.

Q17. You will have to publicly account for your political contributions. To date, how much money have you collected or has been pledged to your campaign?

Candidate Answer: I've raised around \$3000.

Q18. How many donors does your answer above reflect?

Candidate Answer: Around 40 donor.

Q19. From which other organizations have you received endorsements? (Enter "n/a" if none).

Candidate Answer: None.

Q20. From which other organizations are you seeking endorsements? (Enter "n/a" if none).

Candidate Answer: None to this point.

Q21. Is there anything else you'd like to add to this survey? Please do that here.

Candidate Answer:

END SURVEY