

VSEA Candidate Survey:

Name: Caroline Bright

District: Franklin - 1

1. Should the work of State government be performed by State employees?

State employees are the best people to perform the work of state government. Outsourcing state work would lead to a breakdown of the accountability to Vermonters.

2. As an elected official, how would you improve the overall safety of state employees?

So many state employees are the frontline of contact between Vermonters and our state infrastructure. Ensuring the safety of the workers who give so much must be a top priority of any elected official in Vermont.

3. What is your plan to make the health care system more fair and equitable for working Vermonters?

The first step is to fix Vermont Health Connect. Vermonters are literally sick and tired of the constant frustration they face whenever they have a Doctor's appointment where they are told that their health coverage has been cancelled or can't be found.

The second component is to work with our health care network in Vermont to move towards an outcome based reimbursement system from a procedure based reimbursement system. Paying for results rather than tests will make sure that hard working Vermonters are getting what they pay for, as patients and as taxpayers.

4. Will you support collective bargaining and vote against "Right to Work" legislation in any form?

I am a union member. I am always firmly in favor of collective bargaining. "Right to Work" is not right for Vermont.

5. What do you see as the role of State employees and how would you support them in their role?

State Employees do the hard, often gritty, work of running the state that we all love to call home. Too often they are vilified for the good work that they do by people who are angry or who are simply ignorant of the important role played by State Employees.

The State of Vermont needs to lead the way in demonstrating the values we want to see from all employers in this brave little state. We must lead the way by employing the young people who want to live and work here and by having policies in place that are morally just and economically responsible - like paid parental leave.

6. What mechanisms would you put in place to avoid budget shortfalls?

As an individual legislator I recognize that I could not solve budget problems on my own, so much of my focus would be on working with my fellow legislators to make a sustainably balanced budget a top priority. In doing so I realize that not every entity will attain the level of funding they advocate for, however, we must do what we can to have a sustainable and

mathematically feasible budget.

7. What approach would you take to make higher education more affordable for Vermonters? An important part of the solution involves student loan forgiveness for young people who chose to work and live in Vermont, particularly those who commit themselves to public service. Our legislative representatives who sit on boards of colleges across Vermont must truly be a voice for college affordability.

8. What would you do to ensure the viability of the state college system? It must be economically sustainable for Vermonters to attend state colleges, not just in terms of paying for college, but ensuring there are opportunities for them in Vermont after graduation. It is important that our state colleges not only support Vermonters, but also attract talent from out of state to attend school in Vermont. Our State College system has been doing an excellent job, and as a legislator I plan to work to support bills that support one of our most important economic sectors: higher education.

9. Do you support a livable wage for Vermonters? If so, what do you think that amount should be?

I do support Vermonters receiving a livable wage, but I feel it is necessary to consult with experts in economics to ensure the appropriate amount is determined that will support the cost of living here in Vermont. As a legislator, it would be a priority of mine to connect with experts in various policy fields to ensure I am making informed decisions based on the best data available.

10. Briefly state why the VSEA should endorse you, and describe the type of assistance that you would be seeking from a VSEA endorsement.

I am the granddaughter of a retired Vermont State Employee, I am a union member in my field of work, and I support the mission of VSEA. I hope that an endorsement from the VSEA would let union members from every field know that if elected, I will be a voice for Vermont workers. Additionally, I am committed to funding my campaign with the support of individuals and organizations who share my values - not corporations. I hope that a VSEA endorsement would support that goal.