

VSEA Candidate Survey:

Name: Cindy Weed

District: Franklin-7

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

Most definitely.

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

We need to protect the safety of state employees to the best of our ability by whatever means is available: better equipment or additional personnel. The health and safety is a right of every worker in Vermont and a cornerstone that unions have fought and died for.

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

Short of creating a new single payer or universal health care system, we must make the health care system we have more fair and equitable for working Vermonters. We can achieve this by continuing the current health care subsidy and consider expanding it to serve more Vermonters. I meet people everyday— including parents of small children- that cannot afford ANY health care. Instead, they pay the year end penalty plus out of pocket health care costs. This is unacceptable and ends up costing the state in many different ways.

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

Yes, I will. You can count on me voting in favor of collective bargaining and against ANY "Right to Work" legislation.

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

The role of State employees is to provide state services to all Vermonters therefore State employees need to be provided with the appropriate tools and equipment to do their work.

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

Economic growth and resulting tax revenue can help mitigate a budget shortfall without the need to raise taxes. When the economy is strong, both people and companies pay more state tax. When we have more tourists, we receive more taxes from rooms and meals. Vermont is on the cusp of economic recovery because we are slowly pulling out of the recession. Homes are selling and people are spending more freely. In the last 12 months alone, there were 6,000 new Vermont jobs created. We need to focus on efficiency in programs and services, prioritize where we need to spend first, and ramp up our collection of overdue taxes. We also need to morph policy making with budget creation at the legislative level. During a sluggish economy, however, spending cuts may need to be considered. Lastly, we MUST create fairer tax policies that do NOT favor the rich, but, instead, makes them pay their fair share.

7. What approach would you take to make higher education more affordable for Vermonters? First of all, students should be able to borrow at a reasonable interest rate. Secondly, I believe that state college

should be tuition free and be paid for by a transaction fee on stock market trading. Thirdly, Vermont is near the bottom of the list in its support of state colleges plus there has not been a significant increase in state spending for higher education in years. This needs to change.

8. What would you do to ensure the viability of the state college system? Colleges need to think outside of the box in order to save money and improve efficiencies. They need to invest in more public relations and marketing in order to bolster enrollment. With more students, the state would not need to take such drastic steps as merging the Johnson and Lyndon State Colleges under one administration.

9. Do you support a livable wage for Vermonters? If so, what do you think that amount should be? I do support a livable wage for Vermonters. During the 2012-13 legislative session, I was on the committee that helped pass the minimum wage to \$10.10. The current Livable Wage/basic Needs study needs to be revised because currently it is based on a two person family. At last glance, the livable wage in Vermont was \$12.50/hour for TWO people in one household. Therefore, it stands to reason that a single person household would need \$24.00 hour in order to survive. That said, I would realistically support a \$15/ hour wage over four years with a COLA implemented thereafter. This would save the state money in programs that now have to subsidize low income Vermonters.

10. Briefly state why the VSEA should endorse you, and describe the type of assistance that you would be seeking from a VSEA endorsement. The VSEA should endorse me because I earned a **100% pro working Vermonter voting record** while serving in Montpelier! A monetary donation to my campaign would help me purchase ads and literature in order to help me communicate effectively and regularly with the voters in my district. That could really help bolster my success at the polls!