

VSEA Candidate Survey:

Name: Denise Smith

District: Franklin County

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

Yes. I believe work of the State government should be performed by State employees and that public, private partnerships are essential to creating an equitable society.

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

I have thought a lot about this since the shooting Montpelier last year of a state employee. I believe one of the ways to help create safety is to invest in safety and provide employees with protection. Team systems is one way to address risky situations for employees.

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

I believe that health care is a human right and that we need to figure out a way to provide quality health care in an equitable way. I would like to look at the model that VSEA has and see if expanding it would be an option for all Vermonters.

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

Yes

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

I see the role of State employees as being the people that conduct the business of the State and work on implementing the laws, policies, and procedures of the State. I have had an opportunity to both be a State employee and work with many State employees in my career. I understand the role that they have in the functioning of our society and improving the outcomes we are seeking.

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

Use of rainy day funds.

7. What approach would you take to make higher education more affordable for Vermonters?

This question is one that keeps me awake at night. The cost of college is hurting children, families, and the potential of bright, young minds that want to participate fully in their lives and contribute to the whole, but are unable to because of costs. I would support ways for children to access higher education while in High School and I would support paying for technical education or college for children who want to pursue their education.

8. What would you do to ensure the viability of the state college system?

Many children from Franklin County attend State Colleges in Vermont. We need to work harder to ensure that the viability of the system is intact and that children have the resources to access it. We need to support the colleges at a higher level. Investing in education in our state will help us retain young people, improve economic outcomes for Vermonters, and increase our potential to solve problems and create jobs.

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

Yes - \$15 for anyone who is working full-time. I think for high school students working part-time, we could possibly have a different wage.

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 think the VSEA should endorse me because having been a State employee, I have a good sense of what it means to be State employee and I have a great deal of respect for State employees and the work that they do. I am also engaged on a daily basis with State employees and see how hard they work to accomplish the work of the state for the good of the people. If elected I will work on behalf of State employees and protect their interests.

Because I have never run for office, my name is the least recognized and I would be looking for funding to help me get my name out to the public. I would also look for a mailer that could be done to State employees on my behalf to encourage them to get out and vote for me.