

VSEA Candidate Survey:

Name: Katherine Sims

District: Orleans-Lamoille

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

- Yes. State employees are an integral part to keeping a functioning state government. They provide an expertise and unmatched internal knowledge of the systems in place that help our government run effectively and efficiently on all levels.

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

- State employees are crucial to a functioning state government on all levels. The safety of its employees, as with all employees throughout the state of Vermont, should be of the utmost importance. The systems in place to report any and all safety concerns should be strengthened to protect workers and their rights in the workplace.

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

- Rising healthcare costs are burdening the budgets of our schools, communities, businesses and families. An economy that works for all Vermonters must include a health care system that is efficient, affordable, and rewards providers for keeping people healthy rather than fitting as many procedures as possible into a fifteen minute slot. We can secure accessible and affordable healthcare for all Vermonters and ensure that we spend our dollars on high-level medical care, not paperwork, bureaucracy, and profit.

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

- Yes. Right to work legislation has no place in Vermont.

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

- State employees are the backbone to a functioning state government. They need representatives that understand in order for state employees, and all working Vermonters, to succeed they need access to advancement in the workplace, affordable housing, and a healthcare system that doesn't send you into debt for getting sick.

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

- Working Vermonters must be a priority in our citizen legislator. We must look for efficiencies and consider raising revenue to meet the state's needs. By asking everyone to pay their fair share, we can ensure that all Vermonters are given a fair shot. We can make sure that Vermont works for all its people, not just the few.

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

- Affordable higher education is a key keeping young Vermonters in the state, living and working, and having a larger, more educated workforce which will positively affect our economy. All high school graduates, no matter their families income, should have the opportunity, and be encourage, to enroll in postsecondary education without being burden by huge sums of debt. I believe we should invest in our existing institutions and provide, to any and all qualified students, two years, tuition free attendance to the Community College of Vermont and Vermont Technical College. Further, students wishing to attend other post-secondary education institutions should have access to easy, streamlined lending options that are capped and regulated.

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

- The state college system is an important Vermont institution that should be preserved and further invested in. By making state colleges even more affordable, it will provide young Vermonters with the opportunity to further their education while leading to a more educated workforce with greater earning potential.

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

- Yes. Working Vermonters deserve to be paid a wage in which they don't have to choose between the medicine for their sick child and food for the week. A minimum wage of \$15 an hour should be phased in over the next several years. It will ensure all Vermonters are able to meet basic needs while providing many with increased buying power that will stimulate the economy.

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

- As a representative I promise to lend a strong and loud voice to working Vermonters. Our state is better off when we grow from the bottom up. I am seeking the endorsement of the VSEA because I believe, your support will help bring a new voice to the Statehouse and together can work together to support Vermont workers.