

Name: Maida F. Townsend

District: Chittenden 7-4

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

Yes.

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

I would want to hear from a sampling of state employees their suggestions for improved safety. Perhaps a survey by VSEA of the membership would facilitate this. We then have to figure out in the appropriations process how to pay for/implement the changes. In any case, I seem to remember that a proposed plan is due in January. This is a concrete starting point for further discussion. Regardless, improved safety across state government needs to happen, and in a timely fashion.

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

Vermont Health Connect has been a quagmire for many Vermonters, albeit not all. It gets fixed, or we need to “pull the plug” and perhaps join with another state. I am leary of going with the federal system since I believe that would put subsidies for lower income folks at risk. I support looking at the expansion of Dr. Dynosaur to age 26. It is, I believe, an important step to universal health care. Health care/health care insurance should not be linked to a person’s employment. I also believe that, even though the Green Mountain Care Board has tried to tamp down on hospital budgets and insurance rates, the downward pressure has not been strong enough.

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?

State employees deliver the state's programs. Without the state employees, the work would not happen, the government would not "operate." How would I support them? Respectfully. Even if I make decisions that are not popular, it is not with animus or a lack of support for state employees. Rather, it is a matter of forcing conversations to be had that are otherwise too easily put aside.

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

If I had the silver-bullet answer to that, I would be queen for a day. As it is, there is discussion of increasing the budget less than revenues projected, having a multi-year budget, continuing to bend the curve downward in spending, and the like. I happen to believe that overall tax reform would help regarding shortfalls as well as the tax burden overall.

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

I support Sue Minter's proposal as a step in the right direction... two years free tuition at CCV and VTC. We also have to find ways to help students going to other schools also not be buried under student loans. I am open to suggestions. Education as well as health care should not be a factor of wealth.

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

Cough up more dollars in state support and also implement Sue Minter's proposal.

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

Yes. There is a formula for determining "livable wage" which should be adhered to as the "right amount."

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

You could do a lot "worse" than me. I have a solid labor background, a solid worker's view of the world. Even when I make decisions that VSEA may hate, I am not "the enemy" nor do I see VSEA or state employees as "the enemy." I have to make decisions in good

conscience, weighing all factors. I would not ask for any particular assistance if endorsed by VSEA.