



# QUESTIONNAIRE & RESPONSES

FIRST NAME:  LAST NAME:   
SEEKING TO BE ELECTED TO:

## GENERAL QUESTIONS

- 1. While in office, what will be your top priorities?** Addressing the affordability crisis around home insurance, lack of affordable housing and lack of affordable and accessible healthcare, especially regarding women and POC who are disproportionately being impacted by healthcare service limitations in the area are all high priorities. In addition, the coastal nature of District 30 brings with it a bevy of water related issues that must be addressed regarding flooding, shoreline erosion, IRL restoration and septic tank issues. This area has massive potential for growth and greater economic prosperity for businesses and members of the local communities, but action needs to be taken to spurn on that progress.
- 2. What influenced you to run for office?** Many of the issues of this district are human issues, people issues not strictly political party issues because these are issues related to basic human rights, equity, justice and respecting the inherent worth of all persons. I believe that we can put Florida on a new path by taking action, advocating for the people and businesses of this district and holding elected officials accountable so that we can grow and prosper.
- 3. Who do you look to for advice and consult when making decisions that will affect the public?** Most issues are complex so I like would educate myself about the multiple layers of the issue, consult relevant experts from different perspectives and engage the community and community leadership to make the most informed decision that accomplishes the most for the community.

## GOVERNMENT / BUSINESS REGULATIONS

- 1. What are your thoughts on government's involvement with regulations for businesses?** Reducing the cost of regulations is an important issue for small businesses. Complicated rules and duplicative requirements can create burdens for small firms across a wide range of industries. Unchecked regulations can, over time, become out-of-date, requiring companies to devote significant resources to compliance. This hurts their bottom line and their ability to hire new employees. However, regulations are an important tool to protect businesses, consumers, workers, and the general economy. It is important to strike a balance between overburdening small employers and creating sensible regulations.
- 2. Where do you see yourself on taxes and fees? What is your opinion on the current structure?** The fact that the sales tax dominates all other revenue sources, including the CIT, means that Florida's tax code is upside-down. Florida's Corporate Income Tax rate was last increased in 1984 and like 80% of Americans surveyed in a recent poll, all persons and entities should pay their fair share of taxes. I believe the CIT should be reviewed and updated to close certain loopholes that benefit very large corporations but NOT in a way that overburdens small businesses. Taxes and fees should be transparent and have a more simplified structure.
- 3. Do you believe businesses play a pivotal role in our community?** Absolutely! Small businesses are the engine of America's economy, representing more than 95 percent of all employers. Nationally, they create half of our gross domestic product, create 7 out of 10 new jobs, and employ over half of the private sector workforce. Small business owners are leaders in innovation, creating new technology, new products, and more effective business operations.
- 4. What role do you see for yourself in helping to grow businesses of all sizes in your position?** I would support the development and funding of state programs that increase the availability of seed capital for start-ups, loans for maturing companies, and venture capital for fast-growing firms and explore how the state can utilize Federal SBA resources, funds and grants to the benefit of local business owners. I would also support providing training in business practices – including accounting, budgeting, and marketing - to burgeoning entrepreneurs and funding educational workforce training programs to grow the employee pool for area businesses.

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5. **What are the most pressing issues in the office you are seeking as it relates to local businesses?** This area has huge potential for economic growth. How do we jump start that growth, bring in more businesses, help existing businesses grow and build a stronger, well-trained local workforce? I would work on addressing those questions.
6. **What does growth mean to you as it relates to business?** Growth within the context of local economic development involves creating jobs, and ensuring that residents have a better quality of life. This may come in the form of cities investing in initiatives and companies that promote local economic development. When local economies thrive, it results in more jobs, more tax revenue to fund capital projects that improve the community at large and increase community engagement. This will then attract more businesses, leading to companies and entrepreneurs flocking to the city. Overall, this ends up creating a cycle that continuously encourages more growth.
7. **What have you done to enhance the business community in your area?** I am a professor at a University so my main interaction with the business community involves my personal commitment to supporting local businesses by purchasing goods etc. from locally owned small businesses as much as possible.
8. **What are your thoughts on tax structures for local businesses?** I would like to learn more about this, especially by hearing local business owners' thoughts on the structure and issues they have with it and how they would like to see it improved.

#### RESILIENCY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

1. **Given our geographical area, what do you believe are some best practices for resiliency, and how do you believe our businesses can play a role?** We can embrace a Florida Climate Initiative to combat climate change, and make Florida the nation's leader in green industries. We can fund resilient infrastructure and create high-paying jobs in new green technology sectors. We can develop and implement Coastal Community Planning in line with FEMA and the DEP to address the complexity of Flooding, shorelines, emergency management, storm preparedness while Anticipating challenges and long range issues. Businesses can help drive this shift and be on the forefront of our new normal.
2. **Climate resiliency is becoming a heated topic of discussion as it relates to our community given the natural events that occurred over the past two years. If elected, how do you see your office assisting to alleviate and reduce some of the detrimental effects of such occurrences?** MORE funding to address inland and coastal flood risks—drainage, maintenance of storm water infrastructure, rising water table with SLR, connection to fill-and-build development, how to store water for drought periods, and utilize FEMA's Community Rating System. Support city and county efforts to conduct Vulnerability Assessments and to implement infrastructure upgrades to address risks (elevate or reroute roads, move critical, public services like hospitals, fire stations, police stations, schools, libraries up or inland)

#### WORKFORCE HOUSING / LIVE LOCAL ACT / EMPLOYMENT

1. **There have been conversations about workforce housing in our area, and the need to keep those that are working in the community, living within the community. Where do you see the need? And what are your thoughts on the Live Local Act?** Addressing affordable housing shortages by encouraging the development of mixed-income projects with at least 40 percent of all dwelling units designated as affordable for households earning less than 120 percent of area median income is a good start. I support aspects of the Live Local Act but question local preemption.
2. **Workforce housing is only a part of the problem. How can we hire the best employees? How do we attract good applicants?** Businesses and the required skills needed to succeed in that business truly depends on which business and industry we are talking about. There is no standard "good applicant". But one option would be to incentivize relocation of more businesses that utilize higher skills, and well -trained employees. Also, becoming a center for skills training so that local individuals can become a more desirable hire as a result of that local training.

FIRST NAME: Kelly

LAST NAME: Smith

SEEKING TO BE ELECTED TO: State House of Representatives District 30

\*\*\* For State Candidates Only \*\*\*

**PROPERTY INSURANCE (STATE CANDIDATES ONLY)**

- 1. Name ways that you believe your office can assist with the cost of property insurance.** Implement Low Impact Development Standards land development to manage stormwater and keep flood insurance rates lower (related to rising costs of housing). Lean into FEMA's Community Rating System to see what community capital improvements could be made to improve that score, which would positively impact insurance ratings and lower rates.  
Annually fund My Safe Florida Home and switch to multi-year grant approval for home owners so that lower income bracket grant recipients would have a longer period of time to self-fund the repairs since the program requires payment in full before reimbursement from the state.
- 2. Do you believe current measures taken to lower insurance, such as, reducing frivolous lawsuits, will have a positive impact? If not, how so and how can it be fixed at the local level?** Tort reform was a good thing. But I would also support city and county efforts to conduct Vulnerability Assessments and to implement infrastructure upgrades such as improved stormwater systems. Lean into FEMA's Community Rating System to see what community capital improvements could be made to improve that score, which would positively impact insurance ratings and lower rates.