

Brad Keithley <bgkeithley@gmail.com>

Candidate Questionnaire from Brad Keithley

1 message

Dear legislative candidate,

Earlier this month I announced that I intend to spend up to \$200,000 this coming fall in certain key legislative races.

No decisions have yet been made as to which legislative races I intend to become involved as part of the effort.

In order to help inform my decisions I am asking all legislative candidates in the general election some questions to assess where they stand on state fiscal issues.

To provide time for me to evaluate the responses before reaching a decision on which races I intend to become involved, please complete the form and submit the questionnaire by Wednesday, August 27th, 2014.

Here is a link to the questionnaire:

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message.

Thanks for your participation!

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.

Brad Keithley's Candidate Questionnaire

Introduction

In January 2013, the University of Alaska - Anchorage Institute of Social and Economic Research said [this](#):

“Right now, the state is on a path it can’t sustain. ... Reasonable assumptions ... suggest we do not have enough cash in reserves to avoid a severe fiscal crunch soon after 2023, and with that fiscal crisis will come an economic crash. ... What can the state do to avoid a major fiscal and economic crisis? The answer is to save more and restrict the rate of spending growth. All revenues above the sustainable spending level of \$5.5 [billion] ... [sh]ould be channeled into savings.”

Earlier, in November 2012 following the last election, the new Senate Majority had listed the following as the third of their “[Top Three Areas of Focus](#)”: “Develop sustainable capital and operating budgets for current and future generations.”

Despite those warnings and commitments, in the last two years the state has gone backwards on this issue. [Since 2012](#), the Legislature has passed and the Governor signed back-to-back the two largest deficit budgets in the state’s history and reduced the state’s “cash in reserves” -- the very thing that the January 2013 ISER report said should be increased and are critical to developing a sustainable budget -- by over a third. Although spending has been reduced by some amount from pre-2012 levels, the [reductions have not kept up even with the rate at which revenues have dropped](#), much less been reduced sufficiently to increase savings as required in order to develop long-term sustainable budgets. Although the passage of SB 21 holds the promise of increasing revenues in future years, [not even the most optimistic predictions of increased revenues](#) justify current spending levels.

As a consequence of the first round of deficits enacted by the Legislature and signed by the Governor at the end of the first session of the legislature elected in 2012, [ISER dropped](#) the sustainable spending level from \$5.5 billion to \$5 billion. As a consequence of the second round of deficits, it is probable that [the sustainable level will decline sharply yet again](#), even accounting for an anticipated long-term revenue response as a result of the passage of SB 21. Despite supportive pre-session statements from the Chairs of both the Committee and Subcommittee, the last Legislature failed even to conduct further hearings on [HB 136](#) once the second session began, an act which would require the Governor at least to provide a calculation of what the state’s sustainable spending level is as part of his annual budget submission.

All of these actions are leaving current and future Alaska generations with a bleak future. In [previous reports](#), ISER and Northern Economics have predicted that if the state continues down its current path, the "... institution of a broad based [sales and income] tax, and use of a portion of the earnings of the Permanent Fund" will be required in order to maintain even a minimal level of state government services. The wealth that this generation of Alaskans is extracting from the state's resources belongs to both this and future generations. At the current rates of spending, however, this generation is taking much more than its fair share, leaving little for the benefit of future generations.

As an Alaskan and American, I take very seriously the obligation to leave to our children and grandchildren a better world than the way we found it. Consistent with that, the last few years I have supported candidates who have said on the campaign trail they are prepared to develop and vote for sustainable state budgets, which will allow future generations to share in the wealth created by state owned resources on an equal basis with this generation.

Sadly, however, I have become deeply frustrated as the eager rhetoric offered by candidate after candidate during election season and the commitments they have made when organizing for the session have turned repeatedly into failure once the session has started. I also have become disillusioned with legislative caucus rules that effectively strip rank and file legislative members of the obligation (and right) to vote independently on the state's budgets when they come to the floor, and instead in a non-transparent (and nearly secret) fashion transfer the votes entrusted to the legislators by their constituents on such issues to a select group of leadership.

My personal commitment to the current and future Alaska generations compels me to do what I can to affect the change they need. With that in mind, I recently have decided to commit significant personal resources through an [Independent Expenditure effort](#) to participate in key state legislative races on this issue.

No decisions have yet been made as to which legislative races I intend to become involved as part of the effort. The issues upon which those decisions will be made, however, are clear:

- A candidate's demonstrated support or failure to support a sustainable state budget.
- A candidate's public pledge to decline to join any caucus that requires them to vote for the caucus budget as a condition of joining.

In order to help inform my decisions I am asking all legislative candidates in the general election the following questions. To provide time for me to evaluate the responses before

reaching a decision on which races I intend to become involved, please complete the form and submit the questionnaire by Wednesday, August 27th, 2014.

Questions

Please be aware that your answers or an indication of your choice not to respond will be made available publicly sometime after the deadline date.

***1. Candidate Name**

2. What office are you running for?

3. Have you read the January 2013 Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) report ([Maximum Sustainable Yield: FY 2014 Update](#)) and the January 2014 update ([Maximum Sustainable Yield: FY 2015 Update](#))?

Yes

No

4. Do you support limiting total Unrestricted General Fund (UGF) spending (capital and operating, combined) to the sustainable levels calculated in the manner described in the ISER reports?

Yes

No

If you answered No, please explain what criteria you will use going forward to set the total UGF spending levels you support.

5. If you are an incumbent, how did you vote on:

Yea

Nea

Abstain/Absent

- a. The FY 2014 Operating Budget?
- b. The FY 2014 Capital Budget?
- c. The FY 2015 Operating Budget?
- d. The FY 2015 Capital Budget?

6. If you are an incumbent, did you vote for any amendments to any of the above budgets once they reached the floor? If so, what were the amendments and on net did the amendments you voted for increase or decrease the total amount of UGF spending?

7. In retrospect, do you view the total UGF spending levels set in the FY 2014 and FY 2015 budgets to have been too high? If so, what total UGF spending levels do you believe should have been used instead?

8. If you were a member of the Majority in the last Legislature, would you have voted differently on the amount of total UGF spending in the FY 2014 and 2015 budgets if the

caucus rules had permitted you to cast your vote on the floor independently of the Finance Committee version, without being subject to discharge from the caucus?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain how you would have voted differently.

9. Will you publicly commit prior to the election not to join any legislative caucus that conditions your membership upon your support of and vote for whatever budget is sent to the floor by the Finance Committee?

Yes

No

If no, please explain how you intend otherwise to fulfill your commitment to your constituents to vote only for fiscally responsible budgets.

10. Do you agree that the legislature's approach to budgeting should be changed, to require the establishment, early in each session, of the amount of total UGF spending (i.e., the size of the total UGF spending "box") before deciding on the specific amounts to be spent on each line item?

Agree

Disagree

If disagree, please explain why.

11. Will you publicly commit to sponsor or co-sponsor, support bringing to a vote and voting for legislation substantively similar to [HB 136](#) in the first session of the next Legislature?

Yes

No

If no, please explain why.

Submit