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Name

Jim Gibbons

NEVADA STATE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION  
2010 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE  
GOVERNOR

Your responses to the following questions are of great importance to the 28,000 members of the Nevada State Education Association. Please answer all questions as completely as possible.

1. What do you believe is the purpose of public education in Nevada and what part can the Governor play in fulfilling that purpose?

As a native Nevadan and a product of both K-12 and higher education in our state, I understand the importance of educating our children. My children and grandchildren have been and continue to attend the school systems in our state. We have many very talented and wonderful teachers in Nevada who do their best to educate our children and young adults daily, but they cannot do it alone. Nevada schools and teachers need the help of parents. My staff and I are working on programs to educate parents on how to get involved and stay involved in their children's education and their future. We are also working to further discussions and proposals regarding dropout prevention and higher graduation rates. We must empower parents, school children and educators to transform their schools into places of learning and growth for each and every child. Our children are the future of this Great State.

2. Do you believe Nevada's revenue structure is broad and stable enough to provide the revenue necessary to fulfill the purpose of Nevada's public education system as you see it? If not, what is your proposed solution and how would you demonstrate this solution as a priority in your administration?

The primary issue for state government is an expenditure issue and the lack of prioritization of programs. In 2004 I sponsored the Education First ballot initiative. The education budget was continually being held hostage during budget negotiations in the Nevada Legislature. Education First prioritizes the debate so that education will continue to be the first area funded in the state budget. I will continue to support funding necessary to educate tomorrow's leaders.

3. Do you believe there is a connection between salaries and having highly qualified educators in our schools?

Yes, you can't pay teachers minimum wage and expect our children will have qualified teachers.

4. Do you believe it's the responsibility of the Nevada Governor to create a budget that provides sufficient funding to increase the salaries of K-12 public education employees?

The Nevada Constitution requires that the Governor submit a balanced budget. While meeting that challenge, I will do everything in my power to assure a quality education for our children. Until Nevada's economy rebounds, maintaining education funding and preventing cuts must be the first priority. It is the responsibility of the Governor to appropriately balance the needs of all Nevadans.

5. Do you believe it is the responsibility of the Nevada Governor to create a budget that offsets the impact of increases in the health care costs for both active and retired K-12 employees?

The Nevada Constitution requires that the Governor submit a balanced budget. While meeting that challenge, I will do everything in my power to assure a quality education for our children. Until Nevada's economy rebounds, maintaining education funding and preventing cuts must be the first priority. It is the responsibility of the Governor to appropriately balance the needs of all Nevadans.

6. What is your position on the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act—currently referred to as No Child Left Behind—and its reliance on a single test score to measure student achievement?

Student achievement has to be measured to ensure accountability in our schools and to measure the success of our teachers.

7. Would you support any legislation that would allow teacher evaluations to be tied to students' standardized test scores?

Yes. Nevada is one of few states remaining which prohibit this. In order to infuse new federal "Reach for the Top" funding this provision must be repealed.

8. Would you support a bill to require professional incentives—such as working in an at-risk school and enhanced compensation programs—to be made available to all educators and bargained at the local level?

Innovations at the local level which benefit our students should be encouraged, so long as the local school district may implement them within their budget. We must empower parents, school children and educators to transform their schools

into places of learning and growth for each and every child.

9. What is your position on school voucher programs?

I support the school voucher theory.

10. What is your position on class size reduction for all grade levels and all subject areas?

The Nevada Constitution requires that the Governor submit a balanced budget. While meeting that challenge, I will do everything in my power to assure a quality education for our children. Until Nevada's economy rebounds, maintaining education funding and preventing cuts must be the first priority. It is the responsibility of the Governor to appropriately balance the needs of all Nevadans.

11. Statewide we have more than \$450 million in deferred maintenance in our public schools and facilities. What is your position on providing state funding for maintenance and repairs of these buildings?

I would support and assist schools in looking for external funding sources such as federal stimulus funding, grants, etc. to accomplish these needs. In a perfect world, the state could help provide funding. However, until Nevada's economy rebounds maintaining education funding and preventing cuts must be the first priority.

12. What is your position on the privatization of jobs that are currently held by school district employees?

Privatization has worked in some areas, and not in others. Any proposals should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

13. Would you support any legislation that would seek to diminish the benefits of the Nevada Public Employees Retirement System?

Current PERS participants should be and are guaranteed benefits levels based on the laws in place at their entry date into the PERS system. If proposals are presented to change PERS benefits, I would have to evaluate their impact on the state workforce. I do not plan to introduce such legislation myself.

14. Would you support any legislation that would alter the intent of Initiative Petition 1 of

the 2009 Session?

If the voters of Nevada choose to pass Initiative Petition 1 to provide additional funding for K-12 education, both the Legislature and the Governor should abide by the wishes of the voters. I support the initiative petition process because it allows the public to have a voice in state government policy and priorities. It would be both arrogant and disrespectful of the general public who elects us to represent them to try to subvert or circumvent their wishes.

15. Do you believe Nevada's friendly tax climate is the main reason corporations choose to relocate to our state?

While our primary driver may be our beneficial tax climate, it is balanced with the need for a quality educational system and an educated labor force.

16. How will you utilize communication channels when handling issues that affect the Nevada State Education Association and its goals?

I am always open to dialogue with the NSEA and welcome you to contact my office at any time.

I do want to be interviewed and considered for endorsement by the Nevada State Education Association. Please call me to schedule an appointment.

I do not want to be interviewed. I understand that without an interview, I cannot be considered for and endorsement.

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Signature

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