



Jane Garibay

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Candidate Questionnaire Responses

- 1** Local governments are overly reliant on the regressive property tax to fund municipal operations and provide essential services. This burden will become even more problematic for property taxpayers because of the federal tax reform law that went into effect in 2018. Besides state aid, there are very few other mechanisms outside of the property tax for municipalities to generate revenues. What are your plans to address municipalities' over-reliance on the property tax and are you supportive of efforts to allow cities and towns to directly diversify their revenue streams? If yes, what revenue options would you consider? If not, what course of action would you pursue instead?

A: Yes, I would be supportive of allowing cities and towns to diversify their revenue streams. What works for each individual town will be different, and allowing that flexibility is what we really should be doing. Specifically, expanding local taxes on rental cars and hotel accommodations are just a couple of examples that I think could help local communities without putting a large tax burden onto the residents of the town as a whole. I think we need to get creative in tackling the challenges ahead, but the first step is allowing municipalities to start exploring what options they have in front of them.
- 2** Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) payments for state owned property, colleges and hospitals have routinely been underfunded. CCM has advocated for a proposal to allow municipalities to charge fees on these institutions as well as other non-profits for Services-in-Lieu-of-Taxes (SILOT) to help offset the costs of providing these important municipal services to them, such as public safety and road maintenance services. Would you support this proposal? If not, what are your plans to address the chronic underfunding of PILOT payments?

A: Yes I would support this proposal because these institutions use police, fire, ambulance, public works, etc and the cities and town bear the burden. Towns also pay for bus transportation, nurses, special instruction and other services. Cities and towns cannot afford to shoulder this cost while our PILOT payments are underfunded.
- 3** Each year the state imposes new unfunded mandates on towns and cities, which require municipalities to provide a service or offer a tax break without financial assistance from the state, even if the towns do not have the ability to pay for the service themselves or if they no longer want to provide the service. These mandates impose a great burden on residential and commercial property taxpayers that are required to pay for them. How would you address the growing issue of unfunded state mandates and reduced municipal aid? What specific unfunded mandates are you willing to eliminate or fully fund?

A: I think the state often times makes decisions to impose mandates on cities and towns that can be detrimental. I would evaluate any mandate imposed by the state by whether it will have a beneficial impact upon the community or if it will place undue burden on our already struggling towns. In my home district, the state has repeatedly imposed mandates such as requirements on the town that manufacturers pay reduced property taxes. Additionally, the state allows Bradley Airport to pay less than the agreed percentage in taxes so the amount paid has been reduced over the years. Decisions such as these that directly impact the revenue and costs to the town should be left up to the local municipalities, not the state.
- 4** Currently, there are 77 mandated and unfunded/underfunded property tax exemptions placed on municipalities. This is especially problematic in our urban centers where a significant percentage of their property tax base is tax exempt, in some cases it is in excess of 50%, which shifts the burden onto residential and business taxpayers. How will you support efforts to reduce the number of property tax exemptions or mitigate the negative impact they have on towns and cities? Will you champion legislation allowing municipalities to generate alternative revenue sources?

A: Yes I believe municipalities should make the decisions and get creative with non-profits and how they can contribute to the communities where they are located. As state representative, I will use my experience with small businesses and organizations to try and bring local government together with businesses and nonprofits to evaluate how we can best account for these exemptions.
- 5** How will you address Connecticut's unfunded pension liabilities, which are crowding out discretionary funding for municipal aid and social programs?

A: I think an independent trust to manage underutilized state assets and pay off our pension obligations. Connecticut has roughly \$18 billion dollars of assets values at cost. If properly managed, some of these assets could provide a pathway out of our fiscal nightmare. The Legacy Obligation Trust model, which involves the public contribution of real assets, has been successfully used in Detroit and Australia to overcome the burden of public debt.
- 6** In February 2016, former US Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, spoke of education disparities in the country and singled out over-reliance on the property tax for public education as a major culprit. How do you propose lessening the inequities within our public education system and closing the achievement gap between our more affluent and poorer school districts?

A: There's no easy answer to this question, but the reality is it is the responsibility of the legislature to roll up their sleeves and tackle this. I think we've previously designated outside sources of income (casino and lottery revenue) for education but we've rarely followed through with it. I think we need to take a serious look at adjustments to our current funding system through property taxes and reevaluate how our ECS formula can be made most effective at tackling education disparities.
- 7** Special education costs are one area of local education budgets that is often unpredictable and difficult to control. What proposals will you initiate to help mitigate the rising cost of providing special education services for school districts? Do you have any specific proposals to expand regionalization initiatives for the delivery of special education services?

A: I think regionalization could be beneficial in both cost saving and providing for students with special needs. Schools that share their resources could significantly reduce costs. The ultimate goal is to provide the best education for every child, and reducing costs while maintaining quality of education should be the top priority.
- 8** Connecticut has over 17,365 miles of roads, of which 73% are classified as in poor to mediocre condition. What are your plans to fund needed maintenance and improvements to Connecticut's state and local road infrastructure? Do your plans include tolling?

A: I support smart tolls on the borders with other states if the money is lock boxed for infrastructure. Our failing transportation

Candidate Questionnaire Responses continued

system is part of what is holding Connecticut's economy back, and if we're going to grow we need to invest in the transportation of the future. To keep and attract residents and businesses we need to keep our roads and bridges in good condition.

9 What specific proposals do you have to increase regional efficiencies and remove barriers that are inhibiting regional municipal efforts?

A: For many people in CT the idea of regionalization is scary and I think the only way this can be done is for towns, schools, unions and the community to learn about how we can work together to achieve greater efficiencies and real cost savings.



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