

STATE REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 3B

QUESTION 1: CANDIDATE TIM BRANDON:

Please provide a brief statement about who you are and why you are running for the office of State Representative.

I am running for House of Representatives because I have seen our government fail to work session after session. The political divide in this country and state has begun to take its toll and I believe I can be a different kind of candidate. We need to elect people with new ideas and the ability to ask tough questions. Being a small business owner and growing up in a family owned business I learned early on about honesty and integrity. My family instilled in me that you work for your pay and you show respect even to those you may differ from. This is what we need in St. Paul representing our district. We have had single representation for 40 years now and it is time for a new voice for our area.

CANDIDATE MARY MURPHY:

I love the job and I make a difference! I work hard, listen and suggest solutions that others enthusiastically accept because they participated in the process. Over the years I have earned recognition and respect for my leadership style which is democratic, supportive, encouraging, inclusive and promotes consensus. That being said, *experience* and *seniority* matters at the legislature and I have both and I use it judiciously. The concerns and interests of the people who live in district 3B hold priority and I demonstrate that by being available all year long not *just* at election season. I am constantly involved, committed and I treasure the confidence the voters given me. Thank you.

QUESTION 2: CANDIDATE TIM BRANDON:

What should state government do about the growing economic disparity between the poor, the middle class and the wealthy?

At this time I feel governments' role in this matter is to help close the gap. But we must close the gap in some areas in new ways. As a state we have to keep providing help for those that need it. We need to provide programs and the ability for our population to bring itself to a higher level. We currently fund our schools K-12 with 46% of our current tax revenue yearly and healthcare has been progressing to take over 20%. The taxpayers of this state have already begun to feel not only the societal strain but also a tax strain. By creating a more positive business atmosphere in Minnesota, we can provide additional revenue and help lift the burden from taxpayers. Some programs that we use to help close the disparity gap need to be audited to make sure the money is getting to the source of the need and not being used up in redundant systems and staffing. I believe going forward with new ideas and new representatives we will be able to have a new outlook on closing the gap and creating a more prosperous Minnesota.

CANDIDATE MARY MURPHY:

One way to address economic disparities is through the tax code. Ensuring an equitable education system is another approach. I also think it would more likely happen if voters would return a DFL Majority to the Mn. House and Senate to work in cooperation with Governor Dayton.

In 2012 Minnesota voters voiced their concerns over the State's growing inequality, and in 2013-14, the DFL Majority followed through on the promises to restore fairness to the tax system, structurally balance the budget, and make overdue investments in middle income tax relief, education and job creation.

Specific to the tax code, the 2013 Legislature and Governor Dayton made substantial progress in making Minnesota's tax system more equitable by requiring high income Minnesotans to pay their fair share. During 2013-14, the DFL Majority also boosted progressive Property Tax Refund programs for homeowners and renters by \$177 million and middle income tax cuts by more than \$100 million, including an expanded Working Family Credit. These efforts made the tax system more fair and progressive.

A \$100 million drafting error prevented the 2015-16 Omnibus Tax Bill from being signed into law.

QUESTION 3: CANDIDATE TIM BRANDON:

What are the most important things that should be done to improve the region's economy?

In 2013 Minnesota's state and local tax collection ranked 6th highest in the country and has not improved. In order to bring in new business and keep the graduates we must provide a better tax climate. Snow birds and college graduates are leaving the state yearly for states that offer no state income tax or a better tax climate. Minnesota is very proud of its colleges and universities. Unfortunately after we educate our students they realize this is not the best state to start a business and save for their future. Snow birds and the older population also begin to move to other states to escape the taxation and have the money they need to live on fixed incomes etc. In order to improve our region's economy we have to get new businesses and large companies to stay and also come back to the state with people tax friendly legislation.

CANDIDATE MARY MURPHY:

- a. Support and invest in education from early childhood through higher education with affordable lifelong learning opportunities. Support the plan that will reduce Higher Ed tuition and student debt. Offer family incentives to begin college savings accounts before the child starts to walk. Expand grants to "full service" k-12 schools.
- b. Restore the cuts and expand the state share to MN Investment Fund and Job Creation Fund at DEED.
- c. greater Mn communities need help in establishing workforce housing when businesses want to expand.
- d. Pass a Bonding bill that includes all the NE Mn regional projects.
- e. Develop a twenty year bipartisan, sustainable, statewide comprehensive transportation plan that improves our roads, bridges and public transit.
- f. Protect our environment, especially our water resources.
- g. Work to retain the good jobs we have and offer incentives to employers who offer full time living wage jobs in our area.
- h. Support increase of state investment in Natural Resources Research Institute for their base funding. NRRI has proven over and over again to be a gem in Minnesota's northland. During the past year alone this organization of top notch scientists and engineers have assisted 123 businesses with technical R&D to help them succeed, and provided tools for wise environmental decision-making to local, federal and international agencies.

QUESTION 4: CANDIDATE TIM BRANDON:

What do you believe state government should do to limit the impact of global climate change?

I believe that the state of Minnesota has begun to show itself as a leader in environmental studies. We have in recent decades managed to undo some of the wrong we have done to our environment at a state level. Our state has also become a leader in trying to decrease our dependence on foreign fuels. We can help even further, by creating a better business climate and creating products here at home instead of importing them in from countries who pollute and do not care about our climate. There are foreign countries that produce multitudes of CO2 emissions compared to us and if we cannot get them to stop via world agreements, the next step is to slow their progress by no longer relying on their products. We have the ability to mine and produce products in environmentally friendly ways. We should continue to be the leader in this field.

CANDIDATE MARY MURPHY:

Under the federal Clean Power rule each state has to develop a plan and submit it to EPA on how it will reduce carbon emissions (in the energy sector) by 30-40% by 2030. MN agencies, utilities and most stakeholders have been moving forward with our state plan. If Mn. implements a sound and ambitious carbon reduction plan we should have very little problem meeting those goals. For at least 15 years MN has been a national leader in developing renewable energy and reducing energy consumption . We should continue the policies we have in place for the Renewable Energy Standard and the Conservation Improvement Program as well as existing long- term plans for MN.Power, Xcel and Otter Tail. By being out in front we should reach 40% and make an impact.

QUESTION 5: CANDIDATE TIM BRANDON:

What should the state government's top three priorities be in setting a sound energy policy?

- 1) Reduce our dependence on foreign energies.
- 2) Invest in renewable energy as prices become sustainable and cost effective.
- 3) Invest and create programs for new entrepreneurs and colleges to find new ways to provide energy.

CANDIDATE MARY MURPHY:

When setting sound energy policy we should consider: 1) developing renewable energy, 2) conserving energy, and 3) complying with the Clean Power Rule. Renewable energy has been a huge success story in MN. In 2002 less than 5% of our electricity came from renewable sources but by 2015 over 21% was produced. I initiated legislation that established the wind power industry in MN. In 1991 I received the American Wind Energy Association Achievement Award for leadership advancing the cause of Clean Energy Development. In this century Solar and biomass have made great strides and we could still do much more with hydro-electric power.

The Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) was part of legislation since the early 1990's. Under CIP gas and electric utilities are encouraged to find ways for their customers to use less energy. In the last 20 years CIP has avoided 82 million tons of carbon emissions and saved consumers over \$6 billion.

Implementing Minnesota's plan under the clean Power rule could also be a big part of our future energy policy. If so, there could be further improvements to CIP, and further development of renewable energy using discoveries and recommendations of NRRI. Some individuals think we should include a carbon allowance trading program ("cap and trade") but I am not totally convinced that would be a benefit for the nation, world or planet.

QUESTION 6: CANDIDATE TIM BRANDON:

What should be done to ensure that every citizen has the ability to vote and have their vote counted without undue barriers?

This issue has become a hot topic on both sides of the conversation. While I firmly believe we should not allow there to be an undue barrier to voting, I also believe that the ability for a person to vote in the United States is a fundamental core freedom we have. In this day and age we have to prove who we are to do many things such as applying for welfare, social security, flying on a plane, and even buying groceries with a check or credit card. As we have grown into the world of technology we have been forced to provide identification more and more. We are asked to give our social security numbers over the phone and provide ID to purchase alcohol and tobacco. As time progresses I believe you may even be able to vote online. If we can pay our taxes and do 99% of our daily lives via electronic, the time will come when we are also able to vote online. Currently we have security issues that prevent us from doing this but the time will come when we do not. At that time the barriers to voting will fall and I hope that we will be able to see our participation rate on a national level sky rocket.

CANDIDATE MARY MURPHY:

In this 2016 election we will be using "no excuse absentee voting" for the first time. All citizens can vote by absentee ballot without having to state a reason why they are voting early. This will offer all voters the opportunity to complete their ballot when it is most convenient for them to do so.

On line Voter Registration is also allowed in 2016. Registered voters may also update their existing information on line. Same Day Voter Registration continues to be allowed at the polls on Election Day.

In person absentee voting will be allowed during the final seven days preceding an election. During this seven-day period, an individual may appear at a county office (some city and township offices may also allow for in-person absentee voting), and ask to vote. The person will receive an absentee ballot, allowed to mark it, and deposit the completed ballot into a vote tabulating machine.

I'm sure that what we experience during this election cycle will result in new ideas for additional law modifications that will make voting and voter registration more available to more people who are qualified to vote in Minnesota.

QUESTION 7: CANDIDATE TIM BRANDON:

Please explain why you do or do not think it is important to reduce the role of money in American elections.

I think to keep our fundamental truths and structure at some point we need to find a way to allow anyone with the qualifications to run. On local levels this may not become such an issue. On a national level I think when it starts to need \$ 1,000,000,000 to become president we have an inherent problem. I wrote the zeros because it's important to ponder. As a first time candidate I have felt the crunch to raise money and felt the internal struggle to question if my goal is to raise money or meet people and give them my concept and ideas. It is a very straining issue. We should at a state level make sure that anyone with the fortitude to step in the ring has an equal opportunity to run. Just as we do not want voters to have an undue burden, we should remove undue burdens from the candidate's process also.

CANDIDATE MARY MURPHY:

I would like to reduce the amount of money a candidate or campaign is expected to raise and spend in an election. I would also like to see more transparency, disclosure and reporting by candidates and contributors. I think local elections and school board elections should have the same reporting requirements.

I strongly support public disclosure of all spending and contributions to campaigns at all levels in America. I support and participate in public financing and voluntary spending limits. I think the Minnesota Political Contribution Refund (PCR) program should be funded so Minnesota residents can contribute to candidates whom they support. I also support the party check off on our state income tax forms.

We need to continue with community conversations about solutions for problems caused by the Citizen United decision; how individuals can run for office even if they don't have personal funding to contribute; and independent expenditures reporting.

We can't give up.

QUESTION 8: CANDIDATE TIM BRANDON:

How can state government, in collaboration with other levels of government, provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre-K through grade 12?

As a state we currently provide 46% of our revenue from taxes to K-12 education. Our state constitution demands that we provide an equal education, unfortunately there is a lot of debate as to this equality. We need to provide an education to our young who are in circumstances beyond their control to help them get out of their situations and become young adult members of society. I have heard over the years a demand and a need to spend more and more on education. While I have no issues spending on education, we need to begin to audit our process. The education gap has not been narrowed due to spending of more money. The dollar bill does not teach our students, the teachers and staff that receive it do. We have to find a way to let star teachers and faculty excel and become a larger part in closing our education gap. Government needs to begin to hold accountable school districts and educators who are not properly using tax payers' assets to teach our children.

CANDIDATE MARY MURPHY:

The Minnesota state Constitution says "it is the duty of the legislature to establish a general and uniform system of public schools. The legislature shall make such provisions by taxation or otherwise as will secure a thorough and efficient system of public schools throughout the state". We should follow the Constitution.

School Districts should not have to rely on regressive property tax referendums for general operating expenses. Pre-K and early childhood programs should be available and affordable for all children and families.

The legislature in this 2015-16 biennium provided grants for full service community schools which are an important strategy in ensuring equity in our schools and reduces opportunity and achievement gaps. In order for schools to offer these "wrap around" services, partnerships within the community is essential. For example, at Myers-Wilkins Community School in Duluth they partner with nine organizations in the area to provide enrichment programs, while also working with Blue Cross and the county in the creation of a community health hub on the campus. I authored HF1709 which provided grant money to foster the development and expansion of full-service community schools across the state. Four competitive grants were awarded and Lincoln Middle School in Duluth was selected.

QUESTION 9: CANDIDATE TIM BRANDON:

How can state government, in collaboration with other levels of government; help address racial and cultural divides in public safety?

As many citizens have seen over the last few months we have a problem that's growing in this nation. We have chosen to ignore the facts and issues that have led us to this level of anxiety in the state and nation. In my opinion we have a respect problem. I was brought up that you shook a man's hand not just because you wanted to but because it was given. In hockey we ask our children and young adults to shake hands at the end of a game no matter how hard the match. If those teams refuse to do that we are quick to point out that that is not how we do it in Minnesota. Many of our population have chosen to no longer listen or respect others no matter the situation and unfortunately this is beginning to cost loved ones lives. When we live in a country that even at the highest levels of government there is a divide between sides that can insight violence, how can we expect that to not trickle down to a street level feeling? We watch on TV daily as our leaders laugh at the other side and choose to throw mud at each other rather than set an example. We have to begin to elect people who are willing to bring this country together with respect and integrity. We live by example and the examples being portrayed daily are pushing us towards a cliff.

CANDIDATE MARY MURPHY:

There are no easy answers and no policy answers at this time. but certainly there will be many initiatives to consider when the 2017 session begins. Community discussions must begin in every part of the state. People of all walks of life and individual of all ages must join in and voice their thoughts. Values, expectations, training, community standards, are all part of molding solutions and defining the issues that have to be addressed. I welcome your ideas and if you want me to join your neighborhood conversation I am willing to attend and listen. We must not wait until National Night Out next August to begin.

QUESTION 10: CANDIDATE TIM BRANDON:

In your opinion, what are the most important challenges facing our region and how do you propose to address these challenges?

Healthcare Costs: At a business and personal level many are spending an enormous amount to insure themselves and family. The MnSure website was a complete disaster rolling out and cost the taxpayers an incredible amount of money. As a legislator I will do my best to look into the problem and continue to help small business and the citizens to bring healthcare costs down. I will also hold the government accountable.

Tax Climate: We have to create a better tax climate for our citizens and businesses. We are one of only a hand full of states who continue to tax social security. This continues to burden our retirees. The tax climate is poisonous and needs to be looked at and brought to a level that allows the people and businesses the ability to thrive not just survive.

Roads: There is not a person reading this who would probably not complain about the condition of our roads. The government continues to spend money without questioning how it's being spent. This is our money and it is time we begin to ask questions. I think that there is at times better ways to spend the money. I don't see a group of 10 workers and ask if that's too many, I look and think if they split into two groups they can get more done. Nobody loses a job but the city and the state get more accomplished with the same dollar.

CANDIDATE MARY MURPHY:

Finish the work that was left on the table and set priorities for the future. Listen to our constituents and build an economy that works for everyone. Ensure transparency in the process of making laws and restore confidence and openness in government. Establish a legislative calendar with rules that are realistic and allows opportunity for *the people* to be heard.