

Watchmen Voter Guide for Legislative District #4 State Senator

** Click on each candidate's name to see their completed questionnaire **

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| | Tara Malek | Ben Toews |
| 1. What is your name, what office are you running for and why are you running for this position? | Declined to Respond | Ben Toews, State Senate – District 4 I'm running for this position because I believe that we need strong conservatives in the Senate. Too many good bills have been passed by the House and then died in the Senate that would have protected our children, reigned in government overreach and protected election integrity. |
| 2. When do you believe life begins and how does this belief affect the legislation you will support? | Declined to Respond | I believe that life begins at conception which means that I will do whatever I can to save innocent lives by supporting anti-abortion legislation. Innocent life must be protected as a key foundation to a moral society. For too long we have allowed the most vulnerable in our society to be killed in the name of women's rights or freedom of choice. The Idaho I envision believes in fighting for the most vulnerable. |
| 3. What are the top three issues that you feel the legislature needs to address? | Declined to Respond | <p>a. Protecting the most vulnerable and innocent in our society is at the top of my list. This includes the Right to Life of the unborn but also the protection of young children from sexual perversion and radical indoctrination. Two bills failed in the senate that would have protected children from pornography in our schools and libraries and another that would have kept minors from making lifelong, irreversible decisions through genital mutilation. I will fight to protect our children.</p> <p>b. School choice is a great way to deal with the harmful and divisive ideologies being taught in our schools. One way of implementing this would be for students to be funded instead of institutions. Then the parents, who know what is best for their individual children, would be able to vote with their education dollars for the best options. This would, in essence, allow parents to fund educational options that align with their value system while defunding those that do not. In addition, this free-market system will tend to drive quality up and costs down while rewarding and attracting the best teachers who provide the real value in education – not the bureaucracy.</p> <p>c. Fighting against government overreach is another of my top priorities. This includes lowering taxes that reach into the pockets of hardworking citizens and keeping the government out of our medical decisions that ought to be a private matter between you and your doctor. Government's proper role is to protect the rights of citizens not infringe on them! The Biden Administration has continually expanded the reach of the Federal Government into Idaho and I will fight to push back to protect our state sovereignty.</p> |
| 4. What do you consider the biggest health care issue for Idaho, and where do you stand on it? | Declined to Respond | The biggest health care issue in Idaho is a bloated bureaucratic system that often doesn't treat patients like intelligent creations of God. A patient should be allowed to make their own medical decisions without coercion or threats. The current system is run primarily by large insurance/pharmaceutical companies and big government. This combination makes the system less effective and more expensive. I welcome and support alternative medical providers that operate clinics and hospitals outside the system. I am encouraged to see free-market solutions that seek to provide high quality care at market driven prices. |

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| 5. Idaho’s school system has a lot of room for improvement, how would you legislate to improve K-12 education in Idaho? | Declined to Respond | Offering choice in how education dollars are spent is critical in creating quality education in our state. The bottom line is that competition is the best way to accomplish the goal of the most benefit being derived from the money spent. The ability to choose your school, and vote with your dollars, brings much needed accountability to a system that has operated as a monopoly for the vast majority of our children’s education. As is commonly the case, parents will make the best decisions about what is best for their individual children and circumstances, along with making necessary changes if something isn't working. This will ultimately improve the level of competency in the next generation of citizens but will certainly upset the status quo which is too often a mechanism for indoctrination instead of education |
| 6. Do you support or oppose legislation to prohibit gender reassignment treatment/surgery on minors? | Declined to Respond | I support legislation that prohibits our children from making lifelong decisions during the most confusing and formative years of their life. I don’t believe that irreversible, life altering decisions should be made by children. |
| 7. If elected, how will you ensure that you are aligned with your North Idaho constituents’ values and how your voting record will reflect those values? | Declined to Respond | I will consistently communicate and listen to my constituents to make sure their voices are heard. If elected I will hold fast to the principles that I campaigned on and won’t be persuaded to vote otherwise. If my deeply held convictions and values are not held by the majority of my constituents I expect that I will be replaced but until then I will unwaveringly hold to the truths I promised to uphold. |
| 8. What is your definition of marriage? | Declined to Respond | Marriage is the sacred union between one man and one woman. |
| 9. In recent years, sexually explicit materials have invaded public schools and libraries. In your opinion are these materials appropriate for minors under 18 years old? | Declined to Respond | I’ve mentioned this previously as one of my top issues to protect the most vulnerable and innocent in our communities. I don’t believe that there is any place for sexually explicit materials in our schools and libraries. |
| 10. What is your opinion regarding freedom of choice for parents for the education of their children, for example School choice? | Declined to Respond | I am a strong supporter of school choice including parents choosing where/when their children go to school and what they are taught. My wife and I have homeschooled all of our children which has allowed us to tailor to their individual educational needs. |

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| u11. Migration from other states has caused property taxes for current homeowners to substantially increase. What legislation would you recommend to prevent the property tax increases that are causing financial burden and forcing some owners out of their homes? | Declined to Respond | With the current budget surplus, we could have lowered or eliminated property taxes. Unfortunately, our state government chose instead to raise spending for next year by almost 10% which will make it difficult to reign in the taxes that are plaguing Idaho citizens. I would work to lower property taxes. |
| 12. In your opinion, should the House of Representatives and the Senate have their own attorney/legal representation apart from the Attorney General? | Declined to Respond | In the current situation where our Attorney General says that he works for the Governor this would certainly make sense. When the AG plays his proper role, however, he should be working for the people who elected him and this would include advising the Legislature. I think adding more attorneys to the mix would tend to be more confusing and expensive so would consider it only as a last resort. |
| 13. In recent years some groups have advocated for legalizing marijuana in our state, do you support or oppose the legalization of marijuana? Why or why not? | Declined to Respond | I am opposed to legalizing marijuana in Idaho because I see it as an element in society that tends to destroy lives by demotivating and addicting citizens resulting in unhealthy relationships and people. The mental health industry has also connected use of marijuana to violent tendencies. My only exception is that I believe that it may have some medicinal uses that are legitimate and would want to study/consider these preferably in a pill form. |
| 14. What is your background and why do you believe it qualifies you for this position? | Declined to Respond | <p>“We the People” type government was never meant to be an elitist organization staffed by the most “experienced or educated.” President Biden is a classic example of an “experienced” politician. Rather, our Republic was designed to be run by citizens who agree to serve for a time because they love their community and recognize the importance of ensuring that citizens' voices are heard.</p> <p>Productive citizens add real value to society by creating jobs and producing products or services that improve people's lives. I have lived and worked in the Coeur d’Alene community most of my life. My first experience leading was right here at North Idaho College where I served as Senator, Vice President and President in the student government. I represented the students in the Board of Trustees, the College Budget Committee and the College Senate.</p> <p>While successfully launching and growing a business for seventeen years, I learned to work with and lead a wide variety of people from engineers to artists. I know how to listen to, motivate, and serve others, move projects through stages to completion and innovate to solve problems. I’ve negotiated with people all over the world while maintaining good relationships through diplomacy. I served on the Small Business Development Center Advisory board where I represented the voice of small businesses in our community. I’ve also served as Treasurer/Elder Advisor at my local church where I led teams to accomplish multiple projects. All of this has prepared me for a role in the legislature.</p> |