

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BROWN COUNTY

Questionnaire for State Senate Candidates

Name: Linda Kay Henderson **Please return no later than September 14, 2016**

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Please type/print your responses.

1. Please describe the occupations, training and experience that qualify you for this office.

I have an extensive background working with communities to address issues that matter to families. With a strong focus on workforce development, youth and family issues and community and economic development strategies. Currently I am the Community Relations Specialist with the IU School of Public Health and an adjunct instructor at Ivy Tech Community College. Previously worked at Indiana Youth Institute, Purdue University and Indiana Prevention Resource Center. Also have a background working with Persons with Disabilities.

I have served on a number of boards, including the Girl Scouts, Fair Board, Lawrence County Public Defender board, and Families Forever.

2. What are your top three priorities for the State government?

1. **Working together** – willing to work across the aisle to address issues facing families. I will be a legislator that will focus on issues that matter to families in Indiana: Good Jobs, Good Education and Good Roads.
2. **Education must be a top priority** – it is the ground floor to economic development. We need strong public schools and teachers need to be supported and celebrated. This includes supporting funding of Preschool as well as working to expand workforce training programs. We must look at education and training as a lifelong endeavor.

3. **Drug Epidemic** – the Heroin/Meth epidemic must be addressed aggressively. This epidemic requires a multifaceted approach if we are to make a real impact. Focusing on Prevention and Intervention. Recent studies have indicated that the increase in Heroin use among 12-17 year olds has increased by 80%. We must focus on reaching kids long before they get to 12 years old to make an impact. Also mental health and treatment services must be addressed.

3. The state study committee on redistricting will report back in December. What is your position on non-partisan redistricting?

I support non-partisan redistricting. The “super majority” situation in Indiana is a strong argument to take this responsibility away from “political operatives”. The current partisan system is a hindrance to electing persons who are more aligned with the average Hoosier.

4. Indiana has one of the largest school voucher programs in the U.S. What is your position on the continued expansion of the school voucher program? How do you balance public funding for private education against maintaining a viable public school system?

I support Glenda Ritz’ position recommending a halt to expansion of the voucher system and assess the impact of the voucher system. I do not like taking dollars away from public education to support private endeavors. We have a responsibility to our public schools and teachers – to see that they are adequately funded and supported.

My interpretation of Article 8 in the Indiana constitution - the legislature is responsible for providing and supporting Public Education. The voucher system which takes money away from public schools – may be a direct violation of our state constitution.

5. Earlier this year the General Assembly passed a stop gap road funding bill. How should roads and other key infrastructure be funded long term?

I support John Gregg’s plan to establish a long-term dedicated funding source to improve state and local roads and bridges. This plan includes: 1) Creating the Hoosier State Infrastructure Bank; 2) Long-term funding for state and local projects; 3) Create an Infrastructure roundtable and 4) Create an open, searchable infrastructure database for accountability and transparency...

A plan needs be implemented so we do not find ourselves in an infrastructure “crisis” again. I like this proposed plan because it looking at needs long-term.

6. In Brown County, our economic well-being is linked to the beauty and availability of public lands, many managed by DNR. State policy has been to cut DNR funding, encouraging the agency to self-fund through more aggressive harvesting of timber and also resulting in deteriorating park infrastructure including in Brown County. Where do you stand on funding DNR and our park system?

The legislature needs to look at alternative funding strategies for DNR – possibly returning to funding through the budget and/or seeking federal grant dollars to assist. DNR has experienced about a 20% drop in their budget over the last 12 years and currently there are approximately 15% staff vacancies. I do not support relying on aggressive harvesting of timber to fund DNR. This is particularly detrimental to Brown County.