

Wisconsin State Senate Candidate Questionnaire

Candidates who participated:

5th Senate District: Julie Henszey (D), Dale Kooyenga (R)

33rd Senate District: Chris Kapenga (R)

- 1. Do you believe the state of our free enterprise system is currently flourishing, on the right track, neutral, being threatened or declining?**

5th Senate District:

Julie Henszey (D): Being threatened. Wisconsin can do much better to support entrepreneurs and small businesses, and the FoxConn giveaway is an unfortunate waste of tax dollars that threatens our economic future. After years of being “open for business,” Wisconsin ranks at the bottom for start-up businesses, and that is wholly unacceptable. I’m a small-business owner, and as the next senator from the 5th District, I will bring business & community leaders together around an agenda for economic growth and a stronger Wisconsin.

Dale Kooyenga (R): On the right track. Our state is on the right track. In 2010, Wisconsin’s economy was in decline. Since 2011, it has been an honor to work alongside Governor Walker and other Republicans to move Wisconsin’s economy in a positive direction. The evidence is clear, by every single metric Wisconsin’s economy is stronger today than at any other point in the 21st century. CNBC, Forbes, and a laundry list of other business publications and journals corroborate what Wisconsin entrepreneurs already know: Wisconsin is open for business!

33rd Senate District:

Chris Kapenga (R): On the right track. Our business ranking has improved significantly since 2010 but we have a long way to go in deregulating, as the state still has significant impediments to opening a new business as well as running an existing one.

2. Do you believe that tax increases affect job creation? Why or why not?

5th Senate District:

Julie Henszey (D): Yes, when we waste tax dollars, our entire economy suffers, so as Senator I will do a much better job than the incumbents to invest in real job creation. We can do much better than throwing \$4.5 billion at one bad deal, and we need to make sure that middle-class families in Waukesha County are not footing the bill for these tax giveaways.

Dale Kooyenga (R): Tax increases inhibit job creation and damage the state. Governor Doyle raised taxes, including the creation of a new top income tax bracket, and state revenue declined. In stark contrast, since 2011, Republicans have reduced tax rates and our state's revenue has realized increases exceeding inflation each year. A recent study, *Rich State, Poor State*, lays out an academically sound conclusion based on exhaustive research related to tax increases. It proved that states with lower taxes allow for faster job creation and economic growth when compared to highly taxed states.

33rd Senate District:

Chris Kapenga (R): Yes. The less money I have in my company, the fewer employees and equipment I can invest in.

3. Explain how your background will help you to be a successful elected official, representing a broad range of interests and competing demands.

5th Senate District:

Julie Henszey (D): As a business owner, corporate trainer, & executive coach, my job is to bring people together to navigate difficult challenges. I hope to bring the same skills to the Capitol to find solutions to Wisconsin's challenges involving competing demands. I believe my experience in navigating business dynamics would serve our community well.

Dale Kooyenga (R): I received my M.B.A. from Marquette University and have been a Certified Public Accountant for seventeen years. Those that have followed my career as a legislator in Madison are aware that I have consistently utilized these skills to provide tax relief to families and employers, a UW tuition freeze for our in-state students, and regulatory reforms for our entrepreneurs which resulted in immediate economic growth.

33rd Senate District:

Chris Kapenga (R): Existing State Senator and Business Owner.

4. Why should members of the Waukesha County Business Alliance vote for you?

5th Senate District:

Julie Henszey (D): I care deeply about the prosperity of our community & want to find a better path for Wisconsin. As a small-business owner, I understand the value of hard work & how to create opportunity to make a better life for our families. Government shouldn't stand in the way, and we need to reject leaders who say one thing & do the opposite once in office.

Dale Kooyenga (R): I listen and then deliver results. After hearing the concerns of the Waukesha County Business Alliance, I have lead our efforts in Madison on the creation and expansion of our state's dual enrollment program. We have had great dialogue over the past eight years and I look forward to the collaborative support of the Alliance, which will allow us to remove barriers inhibiting economic growth, attract more businesses to the state, and unleash the full capability of our workforce and private sector.

33rd Senate District:

Chris Kapenga (R): I would encourage members who are interested in my record to visit the WI Legislative website for a list of bills that I have authored and co-sponsored. They will see it is extremely pro-business/free market.

5. What is one thing that you believe government either does well, or has improved upon?

5th Senate District:

Julie Henszey (D): When government has strong leadership, it can lay the groundwork for strong infrastructure that helps business and our economy grow. Our leaders have a responsibility to do the basics. I'm saddened that the incumbent leadership can't fix the roads but uses divisive political tactics to retain power. We can do better. Government can fix the road.

Dale Kooyenga (R): It is a core function of government to protect the public. We need to continuously improve on our public safety and ensure our schools and roads are safe for all citizens.

33rd Senate District:

Chris Kapenga (R): Accountability in government has improved and people should see that government is operating more efficiently and effectively since 2010.

6. Do you support the intent and subsequent results of Act 10, which passed through the legislature in 2011?

5th Senate District:

Julie Henszey (D): No. Increasing class sizes & destroying teacher morale isn't working to help WI compete. When we invest in roads, great public schools & have productive employees who feel fairly treated, we get good results. Rather than dividing Wisconsin, we should've followed Gov. Tommy Thompson's model for growth & success and negotiated a better deal for taxpayers.

Dale Kooyenga (R): Yes. It is important to point out the financial strength and better educational outcomes that have resulted since 2011. Our schools, local governments, and state are more solvent. In 2010, our state's rainy day fund was at \$1.7 million. Today, it sits at \$283 million. That is 168 times higher than it was prior to Act 10. Additionally, educational outcomes have increased particularly for Wisconsin's minority children. The numbers are jaw dropping. In 2010, the black graduation rate was 60.5 percent and today it is 67 percent. Over the same period, the Hispanic graduation rate was at 69 percent and today it is 80.3 percent. We must keep fighting for effective solutions that allow our students to break through barriers.

33rd Senate District:

Chris Kapenga (R): Yes. I voted for it.

WAUKESHA COUNTY BUSINESS ALLIANCE

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7. Wisconsin is facing a major funding shortfall for transportation infrastructure. What are your ideas to address this issue to ensure that Wisconsin's infrastructure is maintained and we can show that the state is "open for business?"

5th Senate District:

Julie Henszey (D): The incumbent leadership has failed Wisconsin in transportation. We used to have the best roads in the Midwest, and now we are at the bottom. The simple answer is that this needs to be our top priority. It's time for a change, and I'll make finishing the Zoo Interchange, fixing potholes, and investing in our infrastructure a top priority.

Dale Kooyenga (R): We published a comprehensive plan that would improve our state's infrastructure and transportation fund, while at the same time substantially lowering Wisconsin's income tax. The "Road to a Flat Tax" proposal can be found here: http://www.thewheelerreport.com/wheeler_docs/files/0504asmgop_01.pdf

33rd Senate District:

Chris Kapenga (R): Not true. Our transportation revenues have been increasing every year. The fix is in how DOT operates and prioritizes. I put a study in the budget last year that is now being done, which has an outside transportation expert coming in and analyzing how our DOT works compared to best practices and other states. The initial findings are already highlighting significant opportunities for improvement.

Example: 94 North South was split into two projects. When we looked into it, the state could have saved tens of millions of dollars by having it be just one project, but DOT split it in an effort to keep the projects local. The state portion was less than \$100 million so the savings as a percentage would have been huge, and the decision was not in the best interest of the taxpayers. It's time to end the monopoly that our road builders have in this state.

8. If elected, what are the top 3 priorities you will have in Madison? Be specific.

5th Senate District:

Julie Henszey (D): My top priorities are: 1. Restoring full funding to public schools so that every child has an opportunity to succeed. This includes re-investing in our world-class public university and technical college systems. 2. Better access to affordable healthcare, reducing costs for business. 3. Investing in infrastructure to help grow the economy.

Dale Kooyenga (R): First, lower Wisconsin's tax burden and move toward a flat tax. Second, eliminate the Minimum Mark-Up law. Third, expand the state's Dual Enrollment program.

33rd Senate District:

Chris Kapenga (R): 1. Welfare Reform 2.0 – I met with the Trump Administration this spring and they said they are willing to sign work requirement waivers in both food stamps and Medicaid as long as we have a solid plan to execute. That has already been laid out and I will be pushing that legislation next session. 2. Dot revamp based on study being performed. 3. MPS – its time to gut the system and make education about kids again instead of high pay for those in the administrative offices.

9. What will you do, specifically, to encourage and support economic development in this district and around the state?

5th Senate District:

Julie Henszey (D): I believe we need to invest in our schools and infrastructure. These investments lead to a stronger workforce, which in turn leads to a stronger economy. This will help encourage business to come to Wisconsin and foster economic development in every part of our state. We should not accept the status quo on roads and class sizes.

33rd Senate District:

Chris Kapenga (R): See #8

10. Knowing that many out-of-state residents who receive higher education in Wisconsin leave, what can the state do better to keep, and employ, those individuals after graduation?

5 Senate District:

Julie Henszey (D): We need to create a state where young people want to live, work, and raise a family. The best way to do that is invest in our small businesses, provide a better education system for their children, and protect our natural resources for everyone to enjoy. Wisconsin has a lot to offer and I believe our community is a great example of that.

33rd Senate District:

Chris Kapenga (R): We need to allow more in-state students into the UW system, as right now a significant number are being blocked because of 1) their race and 2) the state they live in (WI). WI students are much more likely to stay here than out of state students, and their families have been paying taxes to support the \$1billion+ we have been sending them each budget cycle. Racial profiling should be completely eliminated and the UW system should refocus on educational excellent vs. being a research organization. Also, with the large number of jobs that are open, and emerging technologies entering the state, it will naturally provide more opportunity for all students. I do not support “incentives” to try to keep students here. They have proven to not work and are a waste of taxpayer money.

11. What policies would you pursue, if any, to ensure that our education institutions continue to meet the needs of our state?

5th Senate District:

Julie Henszey (D): Our education institutions should be the best in the world and we need to have a state budget that makes education the top priority. We should make investments in K-12, technical college, and universities across the state. In addition, we must ensure our teachers have the resources they need to meet the needs of our students.

33rd Senate District:

Chris Kapenga (R): I do not support increased funding, as we need to gut the bureaucracy through consolidation and reorganization. School funding is also broken and needs to be based on regional standards of living, bussing needs and special ed costs. Special education also needs to be changed back to the old system that has specialized schools that can focus on the needs of these children. The current system is too costly, improperly equipped and a distraction for non-special ed students.

12. What specifically would you do to increase the labor participation rate among able-bodied adults in the state?

5th Senate District:

Julie Henszey (D): We have to make sure people have the job training they need to be successful. Wisconsin must invest in job training programs so that anyone who wants to work is able to gain the experience they need. Business will also benefit from employees who are trained to succeed in a global economy.

33rd Senate District:

Chris Kapenga (R): See #8

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13. What is your opinion on the performance of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and do you support economic incentives such as tax credits to assist business expansion within the state?

5th Senate District:

Julie Henszey (D): I feel strongly that it was a huge mistake to significantly overpay subsidies for Foxconn. There are thousands of small businesses that collectively could've taken a fraction of \$4.5 billion in subsidies and created more sustainable jobs without needing special treatment in courts or on environmental issues. Wisconsin entrepreneurs deserve better.

33rd Senate District:

Chris Kapenga (R): I support broad based tax reduction for all businesses vs. picking winners and losers. My business is subsidizing all those businesses that have received special treatment. That is not appropriate nor healthy in a free market economy – see Milton Freedman.