

District 28 Senate candidates Q&A

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By Zane Wilson - For The Sun News
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Bill McKown

1. What is the most important issue facing your district and how will you address it?

The economy, diversifying our economy, attracting new and better jobs and reforming state government to stop the outrageous wasteful spending by our legislature. Senate District 28 includes areas with highest unemployment in South Carolina. We have empty industrial sites in Loris, Aynor, Marion, and Dillon that should be thriving. Part of the problem is that Senator Elliott, with 26 years in office, has not worked to develop the transportation network that industries need to locate here. We need I-73 and I-74 to be completed now, so we can bring industry and tourists to the coast. I will also be active in pushing legislation to provide job tax credits for large and small businesses and reduce the industrial property tax rate by nearly half to 6 percent.

2. Assuming the coming state budget year will require more cuts from existing programs, what are you willing to cut and why?

First, we need to put an end to the Competitive Grants program on which the state has wasted public funds in excess of \$40,000,000. Second, we need to focus on the foundations of efficient, streamlined government. Third, everything is on the table except public safety expenses and education the first job of government. Fourth, we should demand that agency and department heads trim their budgets annually for the next few years, and they can begin by not replacing those leaving through normal attrition.

3. School funding formulas are expected to be a major issue in the coming two years, with high-growth areas such as Horry and Georgetown counties being eyed as donor counties. How will you protect these counties in the reshuffling of school funding formulas?

Our school funding formulas are outdated and need to be fixed to where the funding follows the child into the classroom. Horry County should not be penalized for being a high growth county by seeing its state funding reduced. Dillon, Marion, and Marlboro Counties have high poverty rates and antiquated facilities. I am amazed that some people refuse to acknowledge that we have a serious education problem they would be wise to watch 20/20's Corridor of Shame broadcast by John Stossel just two years ago. We must enhance the funding these counties receive especially for nonrecurring expenses like education infrastructure, such as school buildings and other educational facilities.

Dick Elliot

1. What is the most important issue facing your district and how will you address it?

New jobs, better jobs, we've got to get our people back to work.

2. Assuming the coming state budget year will require more cuts from existing programs, what are you willing to cut and why?

I want to first fund education and health care, but there are huge savings we could make by combining the health and human service agencies into one cabinet agency. The savings could be used for the services the agencies provide.

3. School funding formulas are expected to be a major issue in the coming two years, with high-growth areas such as Horry and Georgetown counties being eyed as donor counties. How will you protect these counties in the reshuffling of school funding formulas?

Being on the Finance Committee will give me a knife to help cut the share of the state pie.