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United Way IA Candidate Survey: District 94 Incumbent Rep. Gary Mohr (R-Bettendorf)

United Way recently asked legislative candidates in Iowa and Illinois to complete a candidate survey so that we could share their stands on issues related to our priorities: education, income, health and equity.

While United Way does not participate in partisan or political activity, we are pleased to offer this information so that voters can assess each candidate's alignment with issues important to United Way as they prepare to cast their ballots.

All answers below are posted in their entirety, as submitted by the candidate. To see the full list of responses to candidate surveys ahead of the 2020 General Election, visit www.unitedwayqc.org/candidate-surveys.

1. What specific actions can the State of Iowa take to address the disparities in school achievement and graduation rates between African American students and their white peers?

The school funding formula could be altered to provide additional resources to districts with higher percentage of enrollments of African American students.

2. Would you support changes to the school-aid formula to provide additional support to districts with high rates of poverty, minority populations and English language learners to help stem the decline in academic success among these populations?

Yes

3. What role could the State of Iowa play in ensuring all K-12 students have access to broadband and technology to enable virtual learning?

As House Appropriations Chair, broadband expansion is a priority of mine throughout the state. I would consider a specific State funding source to fund school districts to equip the schools and students with enhanced broadband and technology capabilities. Perhaps this could be funded through our RIIF (Reinvest in Iowa Infrastructure Fund).

4. A network of quality, affordable childcare services – including wrap-around care for school-age children – is critical to parents remaining in the workforce and businesses retaining staff. Do you support additional state investment in childcare services and, if so, what ideas do you have for strengthening the childcare system in Iowa during the COVID crisis and post COVID?

Yes I support increasing our state commitment to childcare. I support providing funds for new brick and mortar childcare facilities, renovation of existing childcare facilities, increasing on employment site childcare facilities, eliminating the “cliff” effect of childcare eligibility. To provide an ongoing workforce, these resources should be available and transcend COVID-19 pandemic timelines. Essentially when the pandemic is over, we should continue to fund these resources as the need will still exist.

5. Do you support state investment in the 211 system used for health and human service information and referral and disaster recovery? Why or why not?

Yes I support it. It clearly identifies a special phone number for specific needs.

6. Do you support a state sales tax exemption for food banks and pantries to address food insecurity? Why or why not?

Yes. Food banks and pantries should not be paying sales taxes when they are trying to provide a basic level of food security.

7. Scott County has a high rate of poverty which dramatically impacts the health and stability of families and the community. What could the State of Iowa do to provide more opportunities for Iowans to achieve economic independence?

One thought I’ve had, having worked in a higher education background, is to provide something like a college “placement office” for people in poverty who may need assistance in applying for jobs. We help college students learn how to write resumes, apply for internships, take coaching classes etc. With a shortage of workers, it seems essential that we provide people in poverty with the same type of services to help them get jobs. In addition, provide them assistance in how to package the various programs to help them with childcare, transportation, educational opportunities etc. to help with all the related issues to finding and working a job.

8. Describe what you’d like to see the State of Iowa do – perhaps in partnership with city and county governments – to address systemic racism.

Racism is a systemic problem in society that cannot be solved with one class or short term training program. It has existed in this country for over 400 years. I do not think it can be solved with a few simple answers. I cannot list here, answers from one individual that will solve it. I think, however, and would be willing to participate in long term discussions on how we might address this in our community. To solve this it must include a discussion about the family, schools, police, the business community just to name a few. I would be willing to participate.

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About United Way of the Quad Cities

United Way is a community-based social change organization that puts opportunity in the hands of all Quad Citizens. Working with our determined partners, volunteers, advocates and donors, we lead the charge to improve education, income and health – the building blocks of opportunity. The result is a mobilized community where every Quad Citizen is living their best possible life. unitedwayqc.org