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Page 1: Candidate Information

Q1

Office You are Seeking

State House, District 5

Q2

Party

Democrat

Q3

First Name

Jeanné

Q4

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Page 2: COVID-19 Response and Recovery

Q8

What steps do you think our state and/or counties should take to aid this recovery? Some examples could include how you think federal funds should be spent, diversifying the state's economy, etc.

First and foremost, we need to establish a single-payer or all-payer health insurance system for Hawai'i. I grew up in poverty. I know what it's like to lack medical care because treatments are unaffordable. Health insurance is a fundamental right. Funding the Hawai'i Health Authority is a cost-effective way to move our state toward the establishment of a Medicare-for-All style of health insurance coverage at the local level, so that everyone has access to potentially life-saving care, regardless of whether or not we're facing a pandemic.

Additionally, to help workers who are unemployed during emergencies, like the COVID-19 pandemic, I would call for the appropriation of funds to modernize the Hawai'i Department of Labor's unemployment system. Workers cannot afford to wait for weeks to receive unemployment insurance. I would also introduce legislation to increase unemployment benefits overall, so that those who've lost their jobs are better able to meet their financial obligations during their time out of work.

We also need to fully fund our public school and human services systems, which have continued to provide essential services during the pandemic. Despite the closure of public schools, teachers have continued to deliver learning opportunities to students via remote learning, while their schools have served as sites for the delivery of warm meals to vulnerable families. Similarly, DHS's rental, housing, childcare, and nutritional/food assistance programs have received increased demand as a result of the economic downturn. These programs should be fully funded moving forward.

Finally, it is critical that we diversify our economy and end Hawai'i's over-reliance on tourism. We should grow good-paying green jobs by investing heavily in our clean energy and sustainable agriculture sectors, which will uplift the well-being of people and our planet.

Q9

Please share some of the efforts you have led or participated in response to COVID-19.

COVID-19 has hit West Hawai'i hard, especially given that much of the district is economically disadvantaged (well over 60 percent of students in the district's public schools qualify for the DOE's free or reduced lunch program). To help my community, I joined Activate Hawai'i Aid, which delivers keiki care packs to families in need. Each pack contains approximately \$15 worth of items for kids and young teens, including non-perishable foodstuffs and curated coloring sheets, activities, and resources to help children learn about COVID-19, as well as materials to support parents in coping with the stresses of living through this pandemic. To date, I have helped to distribute over 6,000 keiki care packs throughout the Big Island community.

Additionally, I have joined the Kona Lions Club to deliver free meals to working families. We deliver over 2,000 meals each week to people who've been financially harmed by the pandemic and serve as a major source of sustenance for many families who, due to job loss or reduced employment, are struggling to make ends meet.

Finally, at a personal level, I have called members of my community to make sure that they're doing okay during this difficult time and connect them with resources to protect their health and financial well-being. Through these one-on-one connections, I've been able to help hundreds of community members obtain much needed housing assistance, food and nourishment, and unemployment benefits.

Q10

Additional thoughts/comments:

With regard to diversifying Hawai'i's economy, I believe that it is time to cease all funding for the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, which serves the singular purpose of marketing Hawai'i as a brand to the rest of the world. Defunding HTA would free up \$80 million for redistribution to human services, educational, and environmental conservation and restoration initiatives.

Page 3: Tobacco and E-Cigarette Regulations

Q11

What policies do you think the state and/or counties should enact to reduce tobacco and e-cigarette use?

I believe that we need to heavily regulate electronic smoking devices. We need to ban the sale of flavored tobacco products. We also need to increase penalties for predatory e-cigarette companies and use the fines we collect to fund anti-vaping and anti-smoking education programs for our children. We should also increase fees for permits and licenses related to the sale of e-cigarettes, with that money also being spent on public health measures that help to stem the youth vaping epidemic in Hawai'i.

Q12

Please indicate your position on the following policies:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| Apply a tobacco tax to e-cigarettes, such as a percentage of the wholesale cost or taxing e-liquid by volume. | Strongly Support |
| Prohibit the sale of all flavored tobacco products, including menthol cigarettes and flavored e-liquids. | Strongly Support |
| Restrict online sales of e-cigarettes to tobacco retailers only, in order to curb illegal sales to minors. | Strongly Support |
| Increase the tobacco tax on cigarettes to help smokers quit and prevent new users from starting. | Strongly Support |
| Funds from the tobacco settlement and tobacco taxes should fund tobacco prevention and cessation efforts. | Strongly Support |
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Q13

Additional thoughts/comments:

Schools in my district have some of the highest student vaping rates in the state and the outgoing representative of my district was a strong supporter of vaping companies, from whom he took significant campaign contributions. I am excited about changing that legacy and taking on those companies as a representative. They should not be allowed to continue preying on our children with products that are, or that lead to, the ingestion of carcinogens.

Page 4: Healthy Eating + Active Living

Q14

What steps do you think the state and/or counties should take to ensure food security for all of Hawaii's people, and to significantly increase food self-sufficiency for our state?

To begin, I believe that we should invest heavily in sustainable agriculture as a way of diversifying our economy. We should also strengthen our state's agricultural workforce pipeline, so that we're growing new farmers who are ready to take on the challenges of improving food security for our islands and decreasing our dependence on food imports. Finally, I was privileged to be working as the committee clerk for Rep. Amy Perruso when the Double Up Food Bucks pilot program was established in 2019. This program is vital because it reduces food insecurity, improves nutrition for low-income families (sadly, healthy fruits and vegetables are often only affordable to more affluent residents of our state), and boosts our state's economy. At the time the program was being vetted by legislators in 2019, research demonstrated that a \$1 million investment would generate nearly \$3.6 million in economic activity for the state. I would like to see this program made permanent and expanded to cover as many working families as possible.

Q15

In 2019, Hawai'i made a commitment to adopt Vision Zero, an initiative to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all. What policies and infrastructure changes should the state and/or counties make to achieve this goal?

My district is approximately 100 miles long and includes many remote and high-poverty areas. Sadly, these areas often lack basic infrastructure, including sidewalks and bike paths. I believe that we need to commit to "smart growth," in which traffic mitigation is incorporated into community planning. Additionally, we should fund infrastructure upgrades for high-needs communities, like those in West Hawai'i on the Big Island, so that pedestrians have safe alternatives to cars.

Q16

Please indicate your position on the following policies:

We must significantly increase public investment in food systems workforce development, including programs such as farm to school, agriculture and food systems education (PreK-12 and higher education), and farmer training programs. **Strongly Support**

The state should continue to invest in a Double Up Food Bucks program, which doubles the value of SNAP benefits when buying fresh, locally grown produce at participating retailers. **Strongly Support**

Enact a one-cent per-ounce fee on sugar-sweetened beverages. **Strongly Support**

Use revenue from a sugar-sweetened beverage fee for obesity prevention programs. **Strongly Support**

Make health and physical education (PE) courses a curriculum requirement, rather than an option, for middle school students. PE is currently a requirement for elementary and high school students. **Strongly Support**

Implement a red light camera program to deter red-light running and help curb traffic fatalities and injuries. **Strongly Support**

Q17 **Respondent skipped this question**

Additional thoughts/comments:

Page 5: Oral Health

Q18

Please indicate your position on the following policies:

Reinstate coverage of preventative dental benefits for Adult Medicaid participants. **Strongly Support**

Fluoridation of community water supplies is an effective way to prevent tooth decay. **Strongly Support**

Q19

Respondent skipped this question

Additional thoughts/comments:

Page 6: Alcohol Regulations

Q20

Please indicate your position on the following policies:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| Increase in alcohol taxes. | Strongly Support |
| Repeal of the alcohol takeout laws that allow people to buy and take home liquor-based mixed drinks from restaurants. | Strongly Support |
| Repeal of alcohol delivery laws that allow restaurants to deliver beer and liquor-based mixed drinks to people's homes. | Strongly Support |
| Increase in enforcement that helps ensure that youth do not access alcohol through existing laws allowing for alcohol takeout and delivery. | Strongly Support |
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Q21

Respondent skipped this question

Additional thoughts/comments:

Page 7: Marijuana Regulations

Q22

Please indicate your position on the following policies:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| Do you support legalizing recreational marijuana sales in Hawai'i? | Strongly Support |
| If recreational marijuana is formally proposed by the state, how strongly would you support that marijuana be regulated by the Department of Health? | Strongly Support |
| If recreational marijuana is formally proposed by the state, how strongly would you support that the price of marijuana be regulated? | Strongly Support |
| If recreational marijuana is formally proposed by the state, how strongly would you support that the promotion and advertisement of marijuana sales be regulated? | Strongly Support |
| If recreational marijuana is formally proposed by the state, how strongly would you support that marijuana potency be regulated? | Strongly Support |
| If recreational marijuana is formally proposed by the state, how strongly would you support that the number and placement of marijuana outlets be regulated? | Strongly Support |
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Q23

Respondent skipped this question

Additional thoughts/comments:

Page 8: Economic Justice

Q24

What are your immediate plans to help make Hawai'i more affordable for its residents?

We absolutely must increase the minimum wage to at least \$17 per hour and pegging future increases to the Consumer Price Index, so that low-wage workers' well-being is not subject to political whim.

A living wage is a human right. According to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, in 2020, a single minimum wage worker must earn at least \$17.63 to survive on our shores. At our current rate of \$10.10 per hour, however, full-time minimum-wage employees earn only \$21,008 annually, \$15,000 less than what they need to survive.

Furthermore, COVID-19 is not an excuse for failing to uplift the financial well-being of working families. If anything, the virus has revealed the urgency of ensuring that low-wage workers—many of whom, like grocery store employees, are on the frontlines of the pandemic—are able to meet their basic needs, in good times and bad.

We should also invest in tax fairness measures to help working families. We need to raise our state's low-income renters' credit, which is in dire need of adjustment. In 1981, the LIHRC was set at \$50. Later, in 1989, the income eligibility cutoff was established at \$30,000, just above the median household income of the time. Yet, neither of these amounts have changed since the 1980s, leaving the amount of the credit lagging far behind inflation. We must update the renters' credit to at least \$250—and preferably much higher—to recover ground lost to inflation and link it to the consumer price index to ensure that it keeps pace with our state's soaring cost of living.

Additionally, we need to increase our food/excise tax credit and earned income tax credit to account for inflation and link these tax benefits, as well, to the consumer price index. We should also make the earned income tax credit refundable, which will effectively double its impact. Notably, the federal EITC and 23 out of 28 other state EITCs are refundable.

Currently, our most economically disadvantaged populations pay roughly 50 percent more in excise taxes than richer residents as a percentage of their total income, with low-income families paying more in excise taxes on an annual basis than they do in income taxes. Creating a refundable EITC provides a direct tax benefit to low-wage families, who are otherwise left lagging far behind their more affluent neighbors in terms of tax fairness.

Q25

What is the role of government in addressing housing affordability issues and what would you do to encourage the production of more affordable homes for Hawai'i residents?

I believe we should take several actions to address the affordable housing shortage for Hawai'i's working families. First, we should make sure that "affordable" is defined as housing that is developed for those earning no more than 60 percent of area median income, not families who can afford \$868,000 homes on state land that only serve to line developers' wallets, as was proposed in this year's joint majority caucus package. Second, we should increase funding for nonprofit housing developers, which are not beholden to shareholders or profit motives that increase the cost of developments. Third, we should increase the conveyance tax rate for the transfer of luxury properties and lift the cap on the amount of conveyance taxes distributed to the state's rental housing trust fund.

Fourth, we should amend the State Constitution to allow lawmakers to establish a statewide property tax on residential investment properties valued at \$1 million or greater, which will cut down on real estate speculation that drives up housing costs. Fifth and finally, we should incentivize the counties to establish vacancy taxes on homes that are left unoccupied by investors who are more concerned with profits than the economic plight of working families.

Q26

Please indicate your position on the following policies:

Increase the state's minimum wage in a series of annual steps to a living wage of \$17 per hour. **Strongly Support**

Create a statewide Paid Family Leave Program, which would allow up to 12 weeks for employees to provide care for a newborn, bond with a new child, or care for a family member with a serious health condition. **Strongly Support**

Q27

Respondent skipped this question

Additional thoughts/comments:
