

2018 ELECTION QUESTIONS – GOVERNOR | Tim Walz

Top priority: If elected, what is your top priority for the 2019 Legislature? Why are you running for office?

Peggy and I are running to build One Minnesota. A Minnesota where every child has the opportunity to succeed and hope for the future. A Minnesota with fair wages, fully funded public schools, and affordable healthcare. A Minnesota where we protect our environment, invest in renewable energy and jobs, and maintain our roads, bridges, and transit across the state. We want to bring this vision to the governor's office by bringing everyday people - no matter where they live or what they look like - who are impacted by policy decisions into the decision-making process.

Gridlock: The 2018 Legislature adjourned without addressing key items including a tax conformity bill. End-of-session gridlock is becoming a recurring theme at the Capitol. What specific measures do you support to increase the transparency and reduce the increasing partisan deadlock of the lawmaking process? Do you support reforms that would prohibit consolidating multiple subjects into a single omnibus bill?

I'm a 24-year veteran of the Minnesota National Guard, so I know about service and cooperation. In One Minnesota, we focus on our common values to solve problems. The people of Minnesota are tired of the gridlock, and want us to work together to build One Minnesota where everyone has a chance to get ahead.

One of the most important things we do in government is put together a budget, and I will put together a budget that involves people earlier, so we aren't waiting for the last minute to do the people's work. The Governor's office, the House, and the Senate need to release their budget goals earlier. I'll also work to find common ground across parties, starting our budget from areas of agreement instead of areas of differences.

We need an open legislative process that ensures bills aren't being put together in the final hours of session. Minnesotans are sick of that. We also need to do the work. No more going weeks without legislative hearings or cramming everything into large omnibus bills with little or no public input.

Lastly, we need to keep our doors open to each other. My work with the legislative caucus leaders will begin right after the election. Since 2019 is a budget year, it is imperative we have a clear understanding of each other's priorities and start the funding process on areas we agree on.

Budget: The 2019 Legislature will be tasked with passing a tax bill to update to the federal changes passed in 2017. Should Minnesota just conform to the federal law, or should the Legislature take the opportunity to provide some tax relief?

Minnesota should make sure it has a competitive tax system. Doing nothing will create a more costly and complicated system. That's why I agree that something needs to be done. What I won't do is agree to budget-busting tax breaks for large corporations, which do not help regular taxpayers and which destabilize our state's budget. We can and should respond to the federal tax reform, but we need to do so in ways that actually puts money back into the hands of families across the state.

Education, K-12: Is the K-12 system adequately funded? If not, how would you pay for more funding?

I taught high school classrooms for over 20 years, and I have two kids currently in public school in Mankato. I know firsthand the difference a quality education can make in a child's life. Every single child in Minnesota deserves an education that prepares them to succeed in a 21st century economy.

We will tackle racial opportunity gaps as both a moral and economic imperative. Every child deserves an educational foundation that prepares them to compete in a global economy, and 70% of our workforce will be comprised of people of color in the future.

Peggy and I have put forward a One Minnesota 21st Century Education for Every Child Plan to fully fund our schools and ensure that children can create and fill the jobs of the future. We will work to ensure all children have access to pre-K, recruit quality teachers, and expand technical education to open new career paths.

As part of our plan, we will index the education budget to inflation and stop playing budgetary games with school funding. We will simplify the school funding formula so parents, teachers, and communities can see and understand what the state pays for, and so districts can have greater flexibility to have their funds better meet the needs of their community. Our plan will make school funding fair by increasing levy assistance for low property wealth school districts.

We also have to acknowledge that children do not come in pieces. As a geography teacher, I know that if a student came to my class and was hungry, had a toothache but no insurance, or didn't have a home then they couldn't learn. We need to be holistic in our approach and fund schools to be able to provide counseling, social work, and mental health support to those students that need it.

Education, higher ed: Many employers remain frustrated in their ability to find qualified workers for the available jobs. What role does higher ed play in addressing this problem?

We need to make sure that our businesses and public universities are working closely with each other to ensure that curriculum matches business needs and that students get the skills they need to make an impact in the economy.

One way we can do this is to create apprenticeship programs in STEM-related fields, and help young people enter technology firms directly from high school or college. Developed in partnership with tech companies in Minnesota, these apprenticeships can provide much-needed exposure for our graduates.

We also need invest in career and technical schools. Not everyone wants a 2 or 4-year degree. These schools can provide skills in the trades that meet business needs and provide a pathway to the middle class.

Health care: Should a fee be assessed against pharmaceutical companies to help combat the opioid epidemic?

It is critical that we get this right. The Star Tribune found that the state had 402 opioid-related deaths in 2017, compared to 344 in 2015. The impact of opioid addiction is felt especially hard in indigenous and communities of color. I support a “penny-a-pill” increase on opioid manufacturers. Such legislation can generate \$21 million for substance abuse prevention and treatment services and has seen bipartisan support in the Legislature.

Workplace regulations: The 2018 Legislature considered but did not pass new legal standards for workplace harassment. Should the 2019 Legislature take action?

Yes. Recent coverage of workplace harassment underscore a pervasive culture that has existed for decades. We need legislation that can hold those that would harass or abuse their coworkers accountable.

Transportation: What is your preference for raising additional money for roads and bridges: Dedicating transportation-related money from the general fund, such as the sales tax on auto parts, or raising the gas tax? Or is current funding sufficient?

Our state's transportation is crucial to helping connect our state economically. Minnesotans need reliable roads and bridges be able to get to work or transport good and services across the state. I

have been transparent throughout this campaign that I believe raising the gas tax can help meet the transportation demands of our state. But I am also open to having discussions to determine innovative approaches to improve our infrastructure and transportation.

Energy: Should Minnesota increase its renewable energy mandates on utilities, or is current law sufficient?

We can pursue policies that protect our environment and strengthen our economy. I will expand the Renewable Energy Standard to end our dependence on fossil fuels. Minnesota already gets 21% of its energy from renewable sources. And thousands of Minnesotans from all over the state now work in the clean energy economy. To continue to grow this sector, I will support increasing our renewable energy standard to ensure that by 2030, at least 50% of our energy comes from renewables. We also must reduce carbon emissions in all sectors to fight climate change. I support reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050.

Public notices: Some local government bodies continue to push for eliminating public notices from newspapers and moving them to government websites, even though independent research continues to show that far more people see the notices when they're published in newspapers and on newspaper websites, and that removing them from newspapers would in fact save very little money. What's your view on permitting important public notices to be disseminated only by local government bodies by means of their own websites?

It is important for government to be as open and accessible as possible, which is why I'm glad that more and more citizens are accessing their state, county, and local governments (and public notices specifically) online. But it is hard to overstate how important newspapers are in disseminating critical information about government, and other public notices and proceedings, to the public. I believe we should preserve the role of newspapers in disseminating public notices, so that every Minnesotan can continue to look to newspapers for that purpose.

Elections: Do you support moving the primary election from August to June in an effort to increase voter turnout?

Voting is one of the most patriotic things we can do. It is a right and we have to do everything we can to protect that right. Minnesota has led the way in making it easier for people to vote, with early voting, and to register, with the ability to do same-day registration. However, we have huge disparities when it comes to who registers and who votes. I will strongly consider any proposal that can increase voter registration and turnout.

Other issues: Are there other issues you want to address?

We have an opportunity this election to create One Minnesota. I am running to make sure everyone has access to a world-class education, affordable education. I am running to create an economy that gives workers the skills they need to compete in the 21st Century. Minnesotans are sick and tired of partisan bickering and want government to get things done. Peggy and I believe we are the best ticket to build coalitions to ensure all Minnesotans have the opportunity to live full and prosperous lives.

Briefly summarize your personal background and qualifications.

I am a teacher, coach, 24 year National Guard veteran, and a Congressman. I have a proven track record of working across the aisle to get things done. In fact, I have been rated a leader in bipartisan lawmaking by the Lugar Center, an independent Washington-based research group. I want take my experiences and create One Minnesota, where we all have a seat at the table and work to improve the lives of all Minnesotans.