

# Q&A

## INDIANA STATE REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 36 CANDIDATES

All state representative candidates were asked the same questions by the creators of this guide. The answers that follow are in their own words.

### Questions asked:

- 1. What strengths and experiences do you bring to this office?**
- 2. What are the three key messages of your campaign?**
- 3. Many residents believe their vote doesn't count; what roots do you already have in your community, and how will you ensure their voices are heard?**

We recognize that response lengths vary among candidates. To ensure we fully honor their perspectives, we are sharing each answer in its entirety. You can find their contact information in the "Snapshot" sections.

Note: Names listed in alphabetical order and by party.

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### **Kyle Pierce (R)**

- **Q1: What strengths and experiences do you bring to this office?**
  - During my two terms as state representative; I've been presented with a STAR award by the Indiana Parkinson's Disease community for promoting awareness of the disease; named a "20 under 40" Awardee by the Madison County Chamber of Commerce and awarded the "Outstanding Hoosier Legislator" award by the Indiana Credit Union League. I have passed five bipartisan pieces of legislation; from genetic testing protections to investment protections for Hoosier workers and retirees. Outside of office, my experience includes serving as finance director for a child welfare association, formerly Director of Development for the Ball State University College of Health, and Deputy Executive Director at the Indiana Medical Device Manufacturers Council.
- **Q2: What are the three key messages of your campaign?**
  - I have and will continue to: Fight to protect Hoosier taxpayers. I've helped deliver more than \$1.2 billion in taxpayer savings for Hoosiers in the last four years. Promote policies that make it easier to live, work and raise a family in Indiana. From targeting social media companies targeting our kids to demanding transparency in healthcare. Streamline state government to make it more efficient in serving you. In 2023, I co-authored HEA 1623 to find ways to streamline outdated regulations. In 2026; I co-authored HEA 1003, that merged state boards and commissions to ensure more efficient services for Hoosiers.

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### **Kyle Pierce (Continued)**

- **Q3: Many residents believe their vote doesn't count; what roots do you already have in your community, and how will you ensure their voices are heard?**
  - First; in 2022 & 2023; we had primary elections decided by less than three votes in our county. Your vote matters. Beyond that, your voice matters more. That's why I've taken part in more than 15 town halls in my two terms as well as gone on local radio 60+ times (4 times per month while in session on WHBU) answering questions & discussing policies. I've answered 1,000+ constituent emails and talked with countless folks over the phone. Lastly, I always want to hear your thoughts or questions, just call or text my cell phone at 317-443-1791. If I can ever be helpful working out a problem you're having with a state agency, just call/text as well. If I do not answer, please leave a voicemail.

### **Nouhad Melki II (D)**

- **Q1: What strengths and experiences do you bring to this office?**
  - After living in Anderson for nine years, I have witnessed and experienced the struggles facing many hurting people in our community. My background in after-school tutoring, for instance, exposed me to the heartbreak of so many under-supported kids being raised by single moms and widowed grandmothers. Despite my own affordability struggles, I was fortunate to study at Anderson University – where I majored in political science, national security, and minored in history. In 2018, I interned in Washington, where I worked on SNAP policy and the passage of the 2018 Farm Bill. Also in DC, I completed my scholarship of presidential leadership at the Reagan Institute – where I pursued courses in government, economics, journalism, and ethics.

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### Nouhad Melki II (Continued)

- **Q2: What are the three key messages of your campaign?**
  - Compassion. Competence. Courage. Compassion to comprehend how people in our communities are struggling; competence to devise solutions that relieve those struggles; and courage to make those solutions a reality. For instance, the Statehouse reduced Medicaid/Medicare in order to afford contracting private immigration detention facilities and other irrelevant projects. We require compassion to restore hope for Hoosiers' healthcare access; courage to stand up to the injustice of excessive immigration enforcement; and competence to reallocate misused funds for restoring Medicaid/Medicare. After all, healthcare affordability is vital to help Hoosiers struggling to afford the care they need.
- **Q3: Many residents believe their vote doesn't count; what roots do you already have in your community, and how will you ensure their voices are heard?**
  - While at Anderson University – where I followed AU's mission “to prepare for a life of service in the church and society” – I began tutoring for church-based after-school programs. I have since volunteered as a church camp counselor and youth ministry leader. In my work with kids, I met many struggling families. And seeing firsthand how our kids are being left behind by a broken education system, I am determined to lift up our communities and be their voice at the Statehouse. Doing so will require immense devotion, in earning the support of every neighbor across Madison County. It is a challenge I am up for, with the help of all who believe in a more hopeful Indiana future.

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### Kim Townsend (D)

- **Q1: What strengths and experiences do you bring to this office?**
  - Anderson native with more than 30 years of public service in Anderson and Madison County. Extensive experience in local government, federal housing programs and initiatives, community development, community organizing, nonprofit leadership, board service, and grant administration. Currently serving as Chief Executive Officer of the Anderson Housing Authority, with a focus on strengthening housing programs and expanding opportunities for residents. Known for building strong working relationships with community stakeholders, elected officials, and organizational leaders across sectors, and for improving programs and initiatives to move them from non-compliance to successful, effective outcomes.
- **Q2: What are the three key messages of your campaign?**
  - Housing & Neighborhood Revitalization: Support access to safe, affordable & attainable housing. Work cooperatively with government and non-profits to strengthen neighborhoods and find tangible solutions & funding for the unhoused. Economic & Workforce Development: Encourage, support and seek funding for job & workforce training, partnerships among employers, schools, and community organizations to expand economic opportunity and county-wide growth. Community Collaboration & Growth Development: Promote collaboration among state agencies, local governments, and nonprofits to improve access to grants, services and community programs with funding to support the movement

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### Kim Townsend (Continued)

- **Q3: Many residents believe their vote doesn't count; what roots do you already have in your community, and how will you ensure their voices are heard?**
  - My greatest strength has always been people. Throughout my life, I have been a voice for those who feel unheard and an advocate for citizens, clients, businesses, and community stakeholders. Politics may be the vehicle to serve, but the real work is built on truth, honesty, and showing up. Every vote matters in building a stronger Madison County today and for future generations. It is important that people see and hear from their elected officials and know their concerns are taken seriously. I am someone the community can depend on because this is home for me and it will always be my top priority.