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Q&A INDIANA STATE SENATOR AND REPRESENTATIVES

All state senator and 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 gave a character count limit for each response from candidates to keep them within similar lengths. However, there is variation. To ensure we fully honor their responses, we are sharing each answer as it was submitted.
You can find candidate contact information in the "Snapshot" sections.
Note: Names listed in alphabetical order and by party.

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Q&A INDIANA STATE SENATOR

DISTRICT 25 CANDIDATES

Mike Gaskill (R)- incumbent*

- **This candidate was contacted with the questions multiple ways and did not respond.**

Tamie Dixon-Tatum (D)

- **Q1: What strengths and experiences do you bring to this office?**
  - Legal Oversight- I construct and monitor policies to ensure compliance with federal, state and local laws regarding employment, education, fair housing, disability; Conflict Resolution– I review investigated complaints, negotiate conciliation agreements and mediate disputes; Operational Compliance– I monitor contract compliance and institute procedures for fair competition in the bidding process; Education & Training– I organize training and developing communication programs to inform the public of their rights; Employee Relations– I implement strategies to enhance employee motivation, performance, and workplace dispute reduction. I possess a Master's in Government, a Master's in Legal Studies, a Bachelor's in Telecommunications.
- **Q2: What are the three key messages of your campaign?**
  - I am an Advocate for and Protector of Civil/Human Rights. I am a Listening Voice - meaning I'm going to listen and learn from all of my constituents, and then carry your voices to the General Assembly. I am Ready to Serve/Ready to Lead as we search for and create a win/win/win Socially, Economically and for the Environment.

*__Incumbent:__ This is the person who currently holds an office.

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Q&A INDIANA STATE SENATOR

DISTRICT 25 CANDIDATES

Tamie Dixon-Tatum (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?**
  - Anderson/Madison County is my community and my roots as I was born, raised, and still live in my community. To ensure All voices are heard in White River Township/Northern Jackson Township in Hamilton County, and in Anderson/Madison County, I plan to make myself and my staff available for town halls, virtual town halls, simple phone calls and emails, plus finding other ways to be more accessible/responsive to my constituents. I will advocate for and protect Voting Rights in District #25 and abroad via civil education and by helping to remove barriers to voting and civic participation/active citizenship!

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Q&A INDIANA STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DISTRICT 31 CANDIDATES

Lori J. Gross-Reaves (R)- incumbent*

- **This candidate was contacted with the questions multiple ways and did not respond.**

Katie Robins (D)

- **Q1: What strengths and experiences do you bring to this office?**
  - As an ICU nurse, I've spent my career showing up for patients and families in their hardest moments and that is the same commitment I plan to bring to the statehouse. I've watched family members fight with insurance companies while their loved one is fighting for their life. And like many voters in HD 31, I have experienced how hard it is to simply exist in today's world with the rising cost of living and wages staying stagnant. I bring firsthand experience of the reality people are facing today, the Indiana healthcare system, a caregiver's work ethic and a fighters resolve to put working families over corporate interests.
- **Q2: What are the three key messages of your campaign?**
  - 1) Healthcare that won't bankrupt families. Nobody should go broke or lose their home getting the care they need.
  - 2) Fully fund our public schools. Our kids deserve the resources to thrive, not budget cuts.
  - 3) Community over corporation. Too many politicians vote for their donors and not the people of their district. Every vote I cast will be measured against one question: does this help Hoosiers and their families?

*__Incumbent:__ This is the person who currently holds an office.

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Q&A INDIANA STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DISTRICT 31 CANDIDATES

Katie Robins (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?**
  - I understand why residents feel forgotten- it's easy to feel like your voice doesn't reach the statehouse. As a working single mom raising a child in school and year-round sports, I know what it means to be stretched thin, which is exactly why I make it a priority to be present in my community whenever I can. If elected, I plan to open an office where constituents can bring their concerns directly to me. I also want that office to double as a big mutual aid hub where neighbors can get support they may need any day of the week.
  - I also am completely accessible on all social media platforms!

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Q&A INDIANA STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DISTRICT 35 CANDIDATES

Elizabeth Rowray (R)- incumbent*

- **This candidate was contacted with the questions multiple ways and did not respond.**

Phil Gift (D)

- **Q1: What strengths and experiences do you bring to this office?**
  - My greatest strength is a lifelong commitment to service. As a registered nurse and 17-year veteran of the Department of Veterans Affairs, I understand firsthand the importance of listening to people, solving problems, and treating everyone with dignity and respect. My experience as a triage nurse and Patient Care Manager taught me how to lead under pressure, make thoughtful decisions, and advocate for those who need a voice. Growing up in Fairmount and earning degrees in journalism, administrative management, and nursing have given me a broad perspective and strong communication skills. I bring compassion, practical experience, and a commitment to protecting the rights, freedom, safety, and well-being of every Hoosier.

*__Incumbent:__ This is the person who currently holds an office.

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Q&A INDIANA STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DISTRICT 35 CANDIDATES

Phil Gift (Continued)

- **Q2: What are the three key messages of your campaign?**
  - I will stand up for rural communities by protecting farmland, water resources, and local communities from unchecked data center development and unfair tax incentives. I will fight to strengthen public education so our schools can focus on educating students rather than constantly fighting for funding, while protecting the quality of rural schools. And I will defend rural healthcare by working to keep rural hospitals open, expand access to affordable health insurance, and ensure every Hoosier has access to quality healthcare close to home.
- **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?**
  - I was born and raised in Fairmount and have spent my career serving Hoosiers, including 17 years with the Department of Veterans Affairs. I also spend much of my time in the community supporting my neighbors and attending local council meetings, because I believe being involved means showing up and listening. As your representative, I will bring that same commitment to the Statehouse. I will remain accessible, listen to residents, seek their input, and make sure their concerns are heard. Your vote matters, and I will work every day to earn your trust and ensure your voice is represented.

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Q&A INDIANA STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DISTRICT 36 CANDIDATES

Kyle Pierce (R)- incumbent*

- **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

*__Incumbent:__ This is the person who currently holds an office.

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Q&A INDIANA STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DISTRICT 36 CANDIDATES

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.

Kim Townsend (D)

- **Q1: What strengths and experiences do you bring to this office?**
  - I bring decades of public service, executive leadership and a proven record of turning challenges into results. As CEO of the Anderson Housing Authority, I helped rebuild a troubled agency, secured millions in housing and community development investments and expanded opportunities for families. My experience includes managing budgets, leading teams, working across government, business, labor and nonprofit sectors and navigating complex state and federal policies. Most importantly, I understand the people of Madison County because I have spent my life here, serving, listening, solving problems and investing in this community. I bring practical experience, strong relationships and a commitment to putting people before politics.

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Q&A INDIANA STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DISTRICT 36 CANDIDATES

Kim Townsend (Continued)

- **Q2: What are the three key messages of your campaign?**
  - 1. Proven Leadership That Gets Results – I am an experienced leader focused on solving problems, strengthening communities and delivering measurable results.
  - 2. People Before Partisanship – I have always put the needs of residents and clients before institutions, systems and party loyalty. District 36 will need me to work across the aisle and not be rubber stamp for decisions that will directly impact their lives and community.
  - 3. Opportunities for Every Family – Strong public schools, affordable housing, good-paying jobs, accessible childcare, and thriving neighborhoods are essential to building a stronger Madison County.
- **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?**
  - I am an Anderson native with deep roots throughout Madison County. Receiving 89% of the vote in the primary reinforced for me that people are ready to be heard and represented. I have spent years at tables where decisions are made, but I have never forgotten the importance of bringing community voices to those tables. As State Representative, I will be visible, accessible, and intentional about engaging residents, including those who feel overlooked or disconnected from government. My responsibility will be to carry their concerns to the Statehouse and make sure District 36 is heard.

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Q&A INDIANA STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DISTRICT 88 CANDIDATES

Chris Jeter (R)- incumbent*

- **This candidate was contacted with the questions multiple ways and did not respond.**

Stephanie Yocum (D)

- **Q1: What strengths and experiences do you bring to this office?**
  - For more than 20 years, I have led nonprofit organizations working in education, healthcare, public policy, and community engagement. As a nonprofit executive, I have managed multimillion-dollar budgets, led teams through growth and change, turned around struggling organizations, and built partnerships across political and geographic lines. I know how to move from conversation to action, bringing people together, navigating competing priorities, and solving problems. My career is grounded in a deep commitment to public service. I understand that elected office is not about power or a title, it is an opportunity to serve and a responsibility to show up and deliver for the people you represent.
- **Q2: What are the three key messages of your campaign?**
  - People. Pocketbooks. Public Schools.
    - People: Government should listen to the people it serves. I will show up, protect local control, and make sure communities have a meaningful voice in the decisions that affect them.
    - Pocketbooks: Hoosier families deserve some breathing room. I will fight rising costs, demand accountability for corporate tax breaks and incentives, and make sure economic growth benefits the people who live here.
    - Public Schools: Strong public schools build strong communities. I will fight for the resources our schools and teachers need to serve every child.

*__Incumbent:__ This is the person who currently holds an office.

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Q&A INDIANA STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DISTRICT 88 CANDIDATES

Stephanie Yocum (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?**
  - I was born and raised in Indiana. My family and I have called this part of the state home for more than a decade. For nearly three years I have knocked on thousands of doors and built relationships across all four counties of this district. Too often, I hear, "My vote doesn't matter," "No one is listening," or "I never heard back." That is not how I work now, and it is not how I will serve at the Statehouse. I welcome feedback and hard conversations. I'm not just asking for your vote; I'm asking for your voice. Representation cannot end on Election Day. I will remain accessible, seek out voices too often missing from the conversation, and be accountable to the people I represent.

STATE RACE SNAPSHOT

INDIANA STATE SENATOR **DISTRICT 25** CANDIDATES

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Mike Gaskill (R) - incumbent*

- **Website:** https://electmikegaskill.com/
- **Facebook:** Elect Mike Gaskill

Tamie Dixon-Tatum (D)

- **Website:** https://www.ctetamiedixontatum.com/
- **Facebook:** TDT for Indiana
- **Instagram:** tdt.forindiana

State Senator's Role: "The Indiana State Senate is the upper chamber of the Indiana General Assembly. Alongside the Indiana House of Representatives, it forms the legislative branch of the Indiana state government and works alongside the governor of Indiana to create laws and establish a state budget. Legislative authority and responsibilities of the Indiana State Senate include passing bills on public policy matters, setting levels for state spending, raising and lowering taxes, and voting to uphold or override gubernatorial vetoes." There are 50 State Senate seats (Ballotpedia).

***Incumbent:** This is the person who currently holds an office.

STATE RACE SNAPSHOT

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INDIANA STATE REPRESENTATIVE **DISTRICT 31** CANDIDATES

Lori Gross-Reaves (R) - incumbent*

- **Facebook:** Lori Goss-Reaves for State Representative

Katie Robins (D)

- **Website:** https://www.katierobinsforindiana.com/
- **Facebook:** Katie Robins for Indiana

INDIANA STATE REPRESENTATIVE **DISTRICT 35** CANDIDATES

Elizabeth Rowray (R) - incumbent*

- **Website:** https://www.indianahouserepublicans.com/members/general/elizabeth-rowray/
- **Facebook:** Elizabeth Rowray

Phil Gift (D)

- **Website:** https://www.phil4house35.com/
- **Facebook:** Phil Gift for Indiana House District 35

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***Incumbent:** This is the person who currently holds an office.

STATE RACE SNAPSHOT

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INDIANA STATE REPRESENTATIVE **DISTRICT 36** CANDIDATES

Kyle Pierce (R) - incumbent*

- **Website:** https://www.pierceforindiana.com/
- **Facebook:** Kyle Pierce, Indiana State Representative
- **Instagram:** pierceforindiana

Kim Townsend (D)

- **Website:** https://votefortownsend.com/
- **Facebook:** Kim Townsend for IN State Representative HD-36

INDIANA STATE REPRESENTATIVE **DISTRICT 53** CANDIDATE

Ethan J. Lawson (R) - incumbent*

- **Website:** https://www.lawsonforindiana.com/
- **Facebook:** Ethan Lawson for Indiana State Representative
- **Instagram:** lawsonforin

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*__Incumbent:__ This is the person who currently holds an office.

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STATE RACE SNAPSHOT

INDIANA STATE REPRESENTATIVE **DISTRICT 88** CANDIDATES

Chris Jeter (R) - incumbent*

- **Website:** https://chrisjeter.com/
- **Facebook:** Chris Jeter for Indiana

Stephanie Jo Yocum (D)

- **Website:** https://www.stephaniejoyocum.com/
- **Facebook:** Stephanie Jo Yocum for Indiana
- **Instagram:** yocumforindiana

State Representative's Role: "The Indiana House of Representatives is the lower chamber of the Indiana General Assembly. Alongside the Indiana State Senate, it forms the legislative branch of the Indiana state government and works alongside the governor of Indiana to create laws and establish a state budget. Legislative authority and responsibilities of the Indiana House of Representatives include passing bills on public policy matters, setting levels for state spending, raising and lowering taxes, and voting to uphold or override gubernatorial vetoes." There are 100 Statehouse representative seats. (Ballotpedia)

***Incumbent:** This is the person who currently holds an office.