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2016 Candidate Survey Results

Name: Edward Cizek

Office Sought: Arizona House

District: 3

Status: Challenger

Party: Green

Website: trcizek.wix.com/cizekforazhouse

Previous Public Office(s): none

Occupation: Graduate Student

Education: B.S., Economics, University of Tulsa in 2011; M.S., Applied Mathematics, University of Tulsa, 2012; Ph.D., Economics, University of Arizona, expected Dec. 2017

Accepting PAC Contributions: No

Are you interested in an endorsement: No

SURVEY QUESTIONS:

1) If elected, what are your top three priorities for 2017-2018?

Answer: First, break away from our political system of first-past-the-post elections, and work to create a more democratic system which allows additional people and political viewpoints to be represented in government, not just those of entrenched and moneyed interests. Second, work to rebuild our educational system so that the next generation is equipped to deal with the challenges of a 21st century economy increasingly focused on high-tech and informational systems. Thirdly, reform of our healthcare system, with a particular focus on restoring funding for the treatment of mental health concerns; we know that doing so will help us with many other societal concerns, such as crime, substance abuse and drug addiction, violence, and economic stability.

2) Do you support eliminating the HURF transfers to DPS and other non-road construction and maintenance purposes?

Answer: Yes

Comments: This is an example of the short-term thinking common among business executives and government officials. While it is tempting for government officials to seek short-term solutions to our state's budget shortfalls by raiding our educational and highway trust funds, doing so will have horrific long-term consequences for our state's budget and infrastructure. The legislature needs to be prepared to raise the necessary funds by increasing taxes on the wealthiest members of the population to ensure the long-term sustainability of our state's necessary infrastructure. This is just another copout in the vein of Proposition 123 for the government to put short-term profits of their corporate donors and the wealthy ahead of the long-term interests of the state, and I will be working to make sure that we have a budget that provides for sustainable funding of our infrastructure, including roads, bridges, schools, health facilities, and the like.

3) Do you support the continued use of bona fide independent contractors in the trucking industry and oppose

efforts by state and local governments to reclassify owner-operators as employees?

Answer: No

Comments: Comments: No, I believe that independent contractors are, in general, being overused to offload payroll taxes, workers' compensation, and unemployment insurance from businesses onto workers. This gives firms perverse incentives to hire contractors, and gives contractors diminished bargaining power within the marketplace. While there are some legitimate uses of private and independent contractors within this industry, as with others, I generally believe that it is the responsibility of the company(-ies) hiring these individuals to be responsible for payroll taxes and unemployment compensation, and other such responsibilities that employers have toward their employees.

4a) Do you support the conversion of our existing infrastructure into toll roads?

Answer: No

4b) Do you support the use of toll roads for construction of new infrastructure?

Answer: No

Comments: Toll roads and user fees have some merit from an economic perspective, but I do not like them on grounds of distributional equity. I would prefer to address the carbon externality present in fossil fuel directly via a fuel tax, but I believe that taxes in general should be structured to be progressive, rather than regressive as a toll road would be. In the same vein, it is better that the companies and individuals which benefit from having the roads be responsible for paying the associated costs of maintenance, regardless of how much they themselves directly use the roads - businesses that rely on transportation should be required to bear a portion of the costs, even if they contract out to others to actually conduct the transportation.

5) On a scale of one to ten (one being low), how important do you believe transportation infrastructure (roads and highways) is to the success of the Arizona's economy?

Answer: 7

Comments: I do believe that a well-funded and well-maintained highway and road system is important to provide for the transportation of goods and people between different parts of the state and the nation. However, I also believe that we can benefit in the long run from implementing high-speed freight and passenger rail between Tucson and Phoenix, and work with California to expand such a line to the California railway network. Doing so can save the state's economy large amounts of money every year in fuel costs and transport goods and people much faster than possible by standard automotive transportation. There are unique challenges compared with railway systems in Japan and Europe owing to our car-centered culture and geographic dispersion, but I believe that on net, there are real potential benefits underlying such a proposal.

6) Do you support exploring options to increase revenues for transportation funding through either taxes or fees?

Answer: Yes, I think the legislature needs to increase taxes or fees to raise revenue for road infrastructure.

Comments: It is time for a second New Deal modeled on FDR's program of putting millions of people to work rebuilding our infrastructure, including our roads laden with potholes, our buildings in disrepair and in need of efficiency upgrades, and more. By investing in our infrastructure, we can provide people with good-paying jobs in the short run, a critical stimulus needed when our labor force participation

rate is at the lowest point in the last generation, and in the long run, we will reap the benefits of decreased damages to private individuals resulting from poorly maintained roads, bridges, and highways. While I do support an increase in the gasoline tax on grounds of reducing pollution externalities, I would prefer to use that money to lower the state sales tax and bring in additional revenues from a small increase to the state's corporate income tax and property taxes. At the same time, however, I would like to see steps taken to work toward a fully renewable-energy economy, including fuel cell and battery technology for transportation; doing so will help save costs to the trucking industry as well due to the high costs and large quantities of petroleum-based fuel used by the trucking sector.

7) Do you support or oppose the "Regulate Marijuana Like Alcohol" ballot proposition?

Answer: I support the marijuana proposition.

Comments: While it remains the case that marijuana is no miracle drug and does carry the very real risk of potentially harmful side effects, I believe that the negative effects associated with continuing criminal enforcement of marijuana prohibition do not outweigh any benefits that might be gained by continuing current policy of incarcerating and ruining the lives of many people across the country for low level crimes of simple possession. Rather than continuing to spend money jailing residents and saddling them with civil and criminal fines, it is time to create a regulated and taxed industry for marijuana and cannabis products, to bring in much-needed revenues to cover our budgetary shortfalls.

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