

Arizona Trucking Association Candidate Survey 2018

Name: **Steve Weichert**

Office Sought: **Arizona Senate**

District: **17**

Status: **Open Seat**

Party: **Democratic**

Website: **www.weichertforaz.com**

Previous Office(s):

Education: **BS Administration of Criminal Justice; MBA with concentration in Healthcare Management**

Occupation: **Hospital Administrator**

Accepting PAC Contributions: **Yes**

Are you interested in an endorsement: **Yes**

5. If elected, what are your top three priorities for 2019-2020?

Answer: 1) Properly and adequately fund Arizona's public school system by making a sincere and dedicated investment in our schools, educators, and children. 2) Develop and grow state revenues to adequately support the needs of a growing Arizona population. 3) Improve access to quality, affordable healthcare for all Arizonans.

6. 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: Yes

Comments: This is a complex issue. If given the choice, I would have to answer this question with a "Maybe." If an owner-operator is allowed to truly act on his/her own behalf as part of a contractual agreement (i.e., freedom to accept or turn down loads, not required to use a standard uniform or logo, etc.), I would be supportive of maintaining an independent contractor classification. However, if an owner-operator is part of an arrangement where control of his/her business is largely ceded to another entity (and is made to "feel" like an individual employee), I would tend to support the rights of the driver to be given employee status. I would be in favor of strengthening legislation to more clearly delineate independent contractors from employees to clear up any confusion.

7. Do you support the conversion of our existing infrastructure into toll roads?

Answer: No

8. Do you support the use of toll roads for construction of new infrastructure?

Answer: No

9. 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: 10

Comments: Arizona's bridges and highways are in serious need of maintenance in order to handle the demands of increasing traffic. A breakdown of any one of Arizona's main arteries will have a serious effect on business and commerce (as witnessed by the bridge collapse on I-10 a few years back). Arizona's infrastructure needs to be maintained to avoid any interruption in transportation.

10. Currently, alternative fuel vehicles (natural gas and electric) do not pay any taxes or fees for use of the roads. (i.e. a gas tax substitute) Do you believe that these vehicles should pay something for use of the roads, or do you believe that they should continue to get a discount for using alternative fuels?

Answer: I believe alternative fueled vehicles should continue to get a discount for use of the roads.

Comments: I fundamentally believe that as a society, we should be moving towards a larger goal of reducing carbon emissions. This said, as a state, we should incentivize the public to move towards purchasing alternative fuel vehicles, not punish them through added taxation. Alternatively, our Arizona Legislature should refrain from the current practice of sweeping HURF dollars into the general fund and use gasoline tax dollars for the purpose for which they are intended. I also believe that Arizona's gas tax should be increased to address critical infrastructure needs (especially since gas taxes have not been increased since 1992). By raising gas taxes, I believe our transportation policy will align more closely with our larger carbon emission reduction goals.

11. Currently, both the Department of Transportation and the Department of Public Safety have law enforcement officers that specialize in commercial vehicle enforcement. Do you believe Arizona should look at consolidating all truck enforcement activities under the Department of Public Safety?

Answer:

Comments: To be honest, I would need to have more information to adequately respond to this question. At its face, it seems that consolidating truck enforcement under one umbrella would result in more efficiency and a potential cost savings to the

state. At the very least, this is something that should be explored.

12. Given the importance of transportation is to our economic success, how would you propose we solve the revenue shortfall needs for transportation?

Answer: As stated previously, I believe some serious thought should be given to raising our current gasoline tax. I would also recommend legislation that would increase gas taxes gradually with respect to inflation, possibly at inflation plus 1% to stay ahead of the curve.