



United Professions AFT Vermont, AFL-CIO

PO Box 948, Burlington, VT 05402 • 308 Pine Street, Burlington, VT 05401

(802) 658-3113 • www.upvaft.org

GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

CANDIDATE NAME: Peter Shumlin

PARTY AFFILIATION: Democrat

EMAIL: peter@shumlinforgovernor.com

TELEPHONE: 1-802-272-0443

WILL YOU ALLOW VIDEO TO BE RECORDED FOR OUR MEMBERS? YES

Please return questionnaire to United Professions AFT Vermont by May 28th. You may fax it to 802-658-7673 or email it to bonniem@upvaft.org. Thank you!



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- 1) The fact that healthcare facilities continue to require nurses and other health professionals to work long, unexpected hours of overtime is one of the reasons behind the current shortage of nurses and other health workers. The practice also takes its toll on the quality of patient care.

A 2004 study revealed that nurses generally worked longer than scheduled and that approximately 40 percent of the work shifts they logged exceeded 12 hours. The risk of making an error significantly increased when work shifts were longer than 12 hours, when nurses worked overtime, or when they worked more than 40 hours per week.

We support legislation banning mandatory overtime for nurses.

Do you support the ban on mandatory overtime?

YES

Comments

I am a big supporter of banning mandatory overtime for our health care professionals. I worked together with the nurses and members of the House to try and get the bills out of both the House and Senate Health and Welfare. As Governor, I will work to ensure this legislation is passed.

- 2) State support for Higher Education has withered over the last 20 years. As a consequence, our system of public higher education is among the most expensive systems in the country. At the same time, many of the lawmakers who perpetuate and even worsen the situation in each budget cycle condemn our systems for being tuition-driven. The path we are on is unsustainable and will result in the dismantling of public higher education in Vermont if it is not corrected. We believe that higher education should be funded "all or in substantial part" by state appropriation as the law requires.

Will you commit to increasing the state appropriation to the VSC and UVM by 10% in each year of your first term? NO

COMMENTS

One reason that the American public is turned off by politicians of both parties is that they tell people what they want to hear and are then fail to deliver on their promises. In light of Vermont's budget crisis, I can not promise a 10% increase in any line item in our budget. Obviously, I support the goal but such a promise would be irresponsible.

I have always supported increasing the state appropriation for higher ed whenever and wherever possible and I am an ardent supporter of funding VSAC.

- 3) UP has endorsed the Healthcare is a Human Right campaign and supports S.88 and these principles:
- A. Every person is entitled to comprehensive, quality healthcare.
 - B. Systemic barriers must not prevent people from accessing necessary healthcare.
 - C. The cost of financing the healthcare system must be shared equitably.
 - D. The healthcare system must be transparent in design, efficient in operation and accountable to the people it serves.

E. As a human right, the healthcare system that satisfies these principles is the responsibility of the government to ensure.



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Do you support S.88?
COMMENTS

YES

I have been a sponsor of the original S. 88 every single year that I have been in the Senate. This year, I worked to strengthen S. 88 to ensure that the legislation doesn't just produce another useless study but lays the groundwork for real progress next year. S. 88 took many twists and turns during the legislative session. Unfortunately, the bill does not implement universal health care. That process will have to wait until Vermont has new leadership in the Governor's office. However, fleshing out all the details in the design of a health care system is important work that needs to begin as soon as possible. Thus, the three studies ordered by S. 88 are the cornerstone of this legislation.

As the measure made its way through the legislative process, I saw several places in the bill that needed strengthening. I worked to ensure that the consultant hired to conduct the studies was someone with a track record in actually designing successful universal health care systems. I again worked with like-minded members of the Senate to ensure that S. 88 would not implement unproven innovations, such as the insurance payment schemes, until after the studies were complete. That way any fundamental shifts in how we pay for health care, or deliver it to patients, would be based on sound evidence and would be subject to debate in the public arena before implementation.

Many Vermonters have expressed to me their frustration at how little ever gets accomplished in the push for universal health care. I agree. It is wrong that tens of thousands of Vermonters have no health insurance, and that tens of thousands more are underinsured, and that health care debt is one of the leading causes of personal bankruptcy. And so the fact that the legislature will now study universal health care, rather than implement it, may seem disappointing to some people.

However, I believe that what we did in the legislature was lay the groundwork for real progress next year. We now need to elect a governor who has the courage to lead on health care reform. There have been momentous debates in the past—same sex marriage and Vermont Yankee come to mind—but health care will take an even greater effort. To make real change, we will need a leader who can stand up to the powerful special interests and unite business, the medical community, and people from every corner of the state around the need for publicly financed universal health care. If elected Governor, health care reform will be one of my top priorities.

Do you support the goal of universal healthcare for all Vermonters?
COMMENTS

YES

Absolutely. It's a travesty that this nation has not had a health policy that ensures that we all have access to high quality care. Sadly, even after all of the sound and fury in Washington, it's clear that the cost of health care will continue to increase at seriously frightening rates, and people will still be deprived of quality, affordable care – unless we, in the states, do something about it.

Vermont is a small state with hardworking, intelligent citizens, and a history of leading the way. As Governor, I will work to create a system of public financing of health care that would provide all Vermonters with quality, affordable health care and eliminate the administrative waste of the current system that goes into paperwork and profits, not health care. Vermont can and should be a leader again. By doing so we would unleash the largest economic development program in our state's history. Tens of thousands of jobs would be created as a result of businesses being freed from the yoke of rising health care costs, giving them an enormous incentive to set up shop in a state that is truly and uniquely business-friendly.

Governor Douglas and Lieutenant Governor Dubie have shown no interest in universal health care reform. Even within my own party, there is often great hesitation and fear when it comes to proposing bold new measures. Change isn't easy. But we can no longer watch while health care costs contribute to more and more bankruptcies. Piecemeal reform, while well-intentioned, has not solved and will not solve the greater problem that we face.

It is my hope that S.88, combined with a groundswell of popular opinion and new leadership in the governor's office, will propel us toward universal health care.

Do you support a single-payer healthcare system for all Vermonters? YES

Comments

I was one of the sponsors of the original S.88, which would have committed the state to a single payer system and set up a process for designing and implementing it. A single payer system is the most fiscally responsible and conservative way to create universal access to health care in Vermont. By eliminating the profits and paperwork of insurance companies and pooling our funds, we can support a health care infrastructure that is accessible and available to everyone, and that is rational and controls costs.

- 4) There are 10,000 women across Vermont paid by the state to educate our youngest children. They have no say over crucial issues such as continuing education, work rules and the subsidy rate. Right now they are organizing a union so they can have a voice.

Will you sign legislation enabling Early Childhood Educators to form a union? YES

COMMENTS

As a kid who was raised by schoolteachers, I firmly believe that unions strengthen our state. Unions play a critical role in lifting the economic status of our hard working people at a time when our state and federal government all too often take care of our wealthiest citizens at the expense of the struggling middle class. That is the philosophy that will guide my relationship with unions as Governor. I believe my record in the House and Senate supports the sincerity of these guiding principles.

In addition, the 10,000 women working across Vermont to educate our youngest children are some of the most hardworking Vermonters out there and should absolutely have a

role in crucial issues concerning Vermont's education system. Study after study proves that early education is critical to a child's future success. As Governor, I would work with educators and business leaders to make Vermont a leader in early education. We should strive to make Vermont the first state in the nation that treats early education as an equal partner.