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Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Saturday, June 29, 2024 11:57:05 AM
Last Modified: Saturday, June 29, 2024 12:02:41 PM
Time Spent: 00:05:35
IP Address: [REDACTED]

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Q1

Candidate full name as it will appear on ballot:

Samantha Barncastle Salopek

Q2

Political Party Affiliation:

Republican

Q3

District #:

Senate District 38

Q4

How long have you lived in the district you seek to represent?

I have lived here full time since I was 17, and before that I was back and forth between Las Cruces and Roswell, both in southern NM.

Q5

Email address:

sam@samforsenate.us

Q6

Phone number:

(575) 202-2705

Q7

No

Have you, or a business you have been associated with, ever been the subject of a tax lien or a bankruptcy proceeding?

Q8

No

Have you ever been arrested, charged, or convicted of a misdemeanor or felony crime in New Mexico or any other state?

Q9

What will be your #1 priority and what is your plan of action to address it, if elected?

At the top of the list is supporting families and keeping them safe. I'm a mother with a special needs child who has fought through the red tape of New Mexico's medical system. I have seen families concerned about sending their child to school because of the radical political agendas that have been forced into classrooms. And on top of it all, families are just doing what they can to keep their kids safe from the horrific crimes that are happening in our community, many of them due to the illegal drugs and weapons coming across our border. I am a businesswoman and attorney who has experience negotiating through tough issues and I will work toward solutions for better rural healthcare, better education opportunities, and support for law enforcement who defend us every day.

Q10

Recently, New Mexico has enjoyed record budget surpluses in the \$3.5 billion range. What do you feel is the best use of surplus funds? (Please select and explain your top priority for surplus funds.)

Non-recurring investments that are focused on improving specific aspects of our state. (What specifically would you seek to improve?)

Returned to taxpayers.,

Other or comments::

The past few years of surpluses our New Mexico government has wasted away without any oversight or thought. We could be providing major tax relief to citizens or securing our border, but we're stuck scratching our heads wondering what that money was spent on and why we haven't seen any improvements in our state. The budget surpluses are not projected to continue past about 3 years, and after that, our revenue is projected to drop off significantly, and yet we have not been planning for that reality. I would be investing now through one of the many available options for non-recurring investments in our state's future

Q11

Do you support or oppose the use of the Gross Receipts Tax system currently in effect?

Oppose (Please explain.),

Other or comments::

The current tax system makes it impossible for businesses, especially small businesses, to survive in our state because of the double and triple taxation piled on. Our business economy is suffering because no new businesses will settle here and businesses that we do have are either dying or leaving. Not to mention all of these taxes get passed onto the consumer and cost of living inflates to an outrageous amount. We need a different structure.

Q12

Do you support or oppose the current bail system our courts are using?

Oppose (Please explain.),

Other or comments::

We have an incredible amount of reoffenders that should have stayed behind bars because of the weak bail system that is typically referred to as "catch and release." Our DAs need to be held accountable for actually bringing criminals to justice and we need a stronger bail system to stop criminal reoffenders. Our legislature needs to step up and tighten the loopholes they recently created to allow these criminals to continue down the path of violent and destructive crime.

Q13

Crime has reached an all-time high in New Mexico. What do you think the state legislature could do to address crime?

Address mental health treatment.,

Pass legislation, similar to federal laws, with significant mandatory sentencing requirements for certain crimes and repeat offenders.

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Address addictions and other lifestyles that impact criminal behavior.

,

Other or comments::

Addressing crime is not a simple answer. It's going to take a comprehensive strategy to keep drugs off our streets, reoffenders behind bars, and law enforcement officers in jobs. I'd even add that we need to put more manpower at the border to deter drug and human traffickers. I also support properly funding our Judicial System to process the massive caseload they're dealing with, which can often be one of the loopholes criminals are able to get through.

Q14

New Mexico has passed laws that govern employer-employee relations such as increased minimum wage and paid time off among others. There have also been discussions about Paid Family Medical Leave Act (PFMLA), a living wage, and shortened work weeks. If elected, what position will you take on additional regulation of businesses on issues like those mentioned?

I will not support additional government regulations on employer-employee relations.

Other or comments::

Just like any other benefit or program, the money lost has to be recouped somehow. A mandate like PFMLA is a harmful regulation that jacks up taxes and cost of living. Businesses can and do offer paid family or medical leave. They don't need the government telling them it's required.

Q15

New Mexico's state tax revenue is largely funded by oil and gas producers who operate under some of the most stringent environmental regulations in the country. Do you support or oppose continued oil and gas production in NM?

Support.

Other or comments::

There is nothing right now that can replace the amount of revenue oil and gas brings us. Crushing this industry would be detrimental to New Mexico while embracing this industry would bring us prosperity like we haven't seen in decades. I'm not opposed to diversifying energy resources, but I don't believe it should be to the detriment of the most critical industry to our state budget.

Q16

Do you feel that environmental regulations need to be increased or expanded from their current levels regarding New Mexico's land, air, and water?

No; the environmental regulations we currently have in place work well for our state.

Other or comments::

I am in the business of water rights, and I work with farmers and ranchers who feel the impact when regulations are imposed. We can enjoy and protect our natural resources without the mandates and without hurting jobs. I'd even say less regulations are in order.

Q17

What is your position on mandatory requirements for state-funded incentives that include pay-back measures if the requirements are not met?

Other or comments::

In some cases, especially when supporting small businesses, tax refund programs, grants, etc. can be very helpful for economic development and job creation. Corporate handouts and huge tax abatements however may end up landing on taxpayers.

Q18

Do you support or oppose changing the constitution and/or laws to require legislative approval for any emergency declaration/order lasting more than 60 days?

Support.

Q19

What is your position on abiding by the state constitution?

I support abiding to the state Constitution as written.,

Other or comments::

As a practicing attorney, I swore an oath to uphold the Constitution. I support abiding by the Constitution as it is written

Q20

Is there anything else you would like to share about your candidacy or your desire to serve the people of your district?

I started my own law practice in 2014, and I now help farmers, ranchers, and local businesses fight for their water and property rights. My experience with water resources, agriculture law and economic development issues has carved out a niche for my firm to serve the unique issues of the Southern New Mexico community. I also serves as Counsel for the Elephant Butte Irrigation District in the ongoing Supreme Court battle for water in the Rio Grande.
