

COMMITTEE FOR COUNTY PROGRESS
2008 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE
MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Candidate Name: Amy Coffman

Campaign Committee Name: Friends of Amy Coffman

Campaign Address, Website and phone:

8440 Jarboe St.

Kansas City, MO 64114

www.AmyCoffman.com

(816) 255-3461

Office Seeking: State Representative - District 44

Campaign Treasurer/Deputy Treasurer: J. Dale Youngs/ Jay Hardenbrook

Education

Graduated Blue Springs High School 1991

AFS Foreign Exchange Student to Norway 1991-1992

BA Linguistics from University of Alaska Fairbanks 1997

Current Employment

Small business owner - Stretch-n-Grow; a fitness program for preschoolers

Civic and Political Experience

I have been involved in the political arena for a decade, including serving paid and volunteer worker on city council, state level, and a US Senate race. I worked as a legislative aide in the Alaska State Legislature for 6 years, ending as Chief of Staff to the (Democratic) House Minority Leader, Ethan Berkowitz, now a candidate for Congress in Alaska.

Before filing to run for this seat, I worked for AARP Missouri, serving as their Advocacy Program Coordinator, working with volunteers, legislators, and other advocacy groups.

Previous elective office sought

None

Addresses for the last 5 years:

8440 Jarboe St.

Kansas City Missouri

PO Box 70026

Fairbanks, AK 99707

Anticipated Campaign Budget

\$60,000.00

1. **What is your position on Gov. Blunt's Medicare cuts in Missouri and what if anything should be done to address the issue? Please explain.**

The action taken by the General Assembly and the Governor to remove access to health care for Missouri's most needy citizens is a deplorable and unforgivable act. I will work to ensure that those cut off will be placed back on the rolls. When people don't have access to healthcare we all suffer as sick people can make others sick, they are not able to perform at school or work, and often go to the emergency room when a primary care physician is all that is needed. All of these consequences cost taxpayers in a multitude of ways.

2. **How will you work to make sure all Missourians are covered by health care insurance?**

First, reinstate coverage for those cut in 2005.

Second, guarantee that our safety-net facilities have the needed funding to provide services to Missouri's uninsured and underinsured.

Third, work with the General Assembly, local elected officials, advocacy groups, hospitals, nurses, doctors, insurance companies, safety net facilities, and consumers to devise a plan that guarantees insurance to all Missourians which will provide quality, accessible, healthcare that limits personal healthcare expenses to no more than 5% of a families income.

3. **Is additional cost shifting to the private sector necessary?**

No. While managed care does work effectively for children and healthy adults, we have yet to find a more cost efficient way of providing health care to our most vulnerable citizens than Medicaid and Medicare.

4. **What is the government's responsibility to provide health care?**

Health care is not a commodity to be purchased, but a right. The government has the responsibility of ensuring that every citizen has access to quality, affordable health care.

5. **What health care reforms will you support? Please provide specifics.**

The irresponsible cuts in 2005 have cut not only those who can't afford health

insurance, but those who are uninsurable. The first health care reforms should include covering the aged, blind, and disabled. Second, every person under poverty should be given access to Medicaid. Only then, can we begin to focus on improving quality and wellness measures because, due to federal law, the most effect states can have on health care is through their own Medicaid system.

6. Do you support reform of the current campaign finance system? Please explain.

Only if it strengthens current law, allowing for more transparency. I do support public financing of campaigns so that anyone with a passion for public service can run for office.

7. Do you support the right of public employees to collectively bargain?

Yes. Every public employee, regardless of position, should be allowed to organize and collectively bargain.

8. Should prevailing wage laws be enforced for public financed projects?

Yes.

9. Do you support spending tax dollars to support vouchers for private and parochial schools? Why or why not?

No. I am the product of Missouri's public school system and the daughter of a retired Elementary school principal in Raytown. I believe in the constitutional right to a quality free education. No amount of tuition vouchers or scholarships will ever allow all students access to a private education.

10. Do the recent changes in damage limits and venue make it harder for all Missourians to have access to the courts?

Yes - consumers must be protected, able to have their cases go to court and seek compensation for damages.

11. Should the Missouri General Assembly revisit so-called tort reform? What issues should be addressed?

Yes. As tort reform was one of Governor Blunt's "Top Priorities" when he came in to office, he quickly showed his lack of concern for the people he had been elected to protect. I do not support tort reform laws which hinder the public's access to the courts or to receive compensation for damages.

I believe we should address the “Venue” statute and ensure that individuals have the same rights as corporations and be allowed to file a case wherever they choose. I oppose the arbitrary caps put into place, which do not allow for any type of inflationary mechanism as the cost of living will change dramatically over time. Finally, a plaintiff should be able to recoup all damages, regardless of a jury’s finding that the defendant is less than 51% responsible.

12. Do you support continued state funding for Planned Parenthood to provide subsidized family planning services?

Yes. Planned Parenthood has proven that they are uniquely qualified as a contractor with the state to provide pregnancy prevention services. It is laughable that Planned Parenthood is criticized but the so-called “Alternatives to Abortion” plan serves less than 20 women per year, costs millions of dollars and is unable to show any measure of success.

13. Do you support using public money to help pay for birth control measures for women who go to county health clinics?

Yes. Unfortunately, many women don’t have a choice in having sex, but the state should make sure that every woman has the choice of whether or not to become pregnant.

14. Do you support a woman’s lawful right to choose to terminate a pregnancy?

Yes, abortion is a decision to be made between a woman and her doctor. The General Assembly has been attacking access to abortion services in recent years. Most recently, the House’s overwhelming support of legislation that could have the effect of criminalizing doctors who provide abortions to victims of rape. Missouri has gone way to far in restricting access to abortions.

15. Do you support the Missouri Plan for judicial appointments?

Completely. Having established a plan copied by other states and supported by such a broad range of organizations should indicate success.

16. Is there an issue of legislative parity between Kansas City and St. Louis and if so, how will you work to address it?

Yes, but in the House, I am encouraged by the camaraderie of sitting Kansas City legislators and the leadership positions legislators from the area now hold. By working together on the Budget Committee and on the floor, I believe we can bring more of projects to the Kansas City Area.

17. Do you support a constitutional amendment to secure the right of early stem cell research?

Yes, the illogical attacks on modern medicine are completely unfounded.

18. What is the most challenging issue facing Democrats today?

Combating poverty. It leads to families without healthcare, interaction in their children's education, poor diet, criminal activity, low productivity when one can do better on welfare than by being gainfully employed, an overall sense of desperation, and yes, sometimes even death. We can and must do better for Missouri's citizens.

19. Should Democratic candidates and officeholders address issues of faith?

Yes. My Christian faith has a balancing effect on my life. Democrats should embrace the values included not just in Christianity but in many religions that teach caring for the poor and acceptance of our differences as some of the greatest goods.

20. What can Democrats do to stem the erosion of support from labor unions? From suburban and rural communities?

Our support problems stem from elitism, real or perceived, within the party. We are a big tent party and we need to start acting like one. We must respect where we disagree with other members of our party and focus on the ideals on which we agree - fair wages, civil rights, and access to quality public services.

21. What is your position on school vouchers that allow for school choice or open enrollment? Please explain. Have you ever accepted contributions from PACS or individuals who advocate for school vouchers, school choice or open enrollment? If yes, please identify the individuals.

I do not support school vouchers in any case. Vouchers would only provide a benefit to families who can already afford private school and would cut needed funding from our public schools. I am not aware of any of my supporters who advocate for school vouchers.

22. Please explain your position on the sale of MOHELA assets.

The sale of MOHELA assets was irresponsible. It has destabilized the fund and this short-sighted sale will cost students in Missouri for years to come.

23. Do you or have you ever supported the elimination of contribution limits to political campaigns? If yes, please explain.

No.

24. Have you ever endorsed a Republican for office? Yes or No. If yes, please designate which candidate(s).

No.

25. Do you or have you ever supported right to work laws? Yes or No. If yes, please explain.

No.

26. Do you support the right of public employees to collectively bargain? Please explain.

Yes. Every public employee, regardless of position, should be allowed to organize and collectively bargain.

27. What is your position on additional limitations on stem cell research beyond those placed in the Constitution in 2006? Please explain

I support no further limitations on stem cell research.

28. What changes to the Missouri Plan for selecting judges would you support? Please explain

I believe that we can increase transparency in the process of retaining judges without damaging the current system. More voters should have access to reviews of judicial appointments.

29. Do you support limiting the right to trial by jury, including placing caps on damages? Please explain.

No. The jury system works well for our nation. I refuse to believe that artificial caps put in place by the General Assembly should be able to overrule a decision by a jury.

30. Prior to running for office, please identify the progressive interest groups in which you have been involved and what legislation or policy issues the group(s) advocated.

AARP - I was employed with AARP before resigning to run for office. As their Advocacy Program Coordinator I worked in Jefferson City on a variety of issues

that pertains not only to the aging population, but also consumer protection (utilities - warm weather rule, cablevision, no call list, etc); healthcare for all, voter photo ID, and tax legislation, such as TABOR (Tax Payer Bill of Rights).

American Association of University Women - Advocating on behalf of women's rights and equality issues.

Amnesty International: Human Rights organization - worked at local, state, regional, and national level on a variety of campaigns, i.e., torture, women's rights, environmental activist and issues, as well as on selected individual cases. I am also a staunch opponent to the death penalty.

Greater Kansas City Women's Political Caucus - Women's rights issues, helping women to get elected.

31. Prior to this campaign, please identify the Democratic campaigns in which you have been involved and describe your role.

Jan Marcuson - City Council: volunteer
Alvin Brooks - KC MO mayor: volunteer
Tony Knowles for US Senate (Alaska): Regional Director
Tonya Brown - Alaska State House: Campaign Manager

Please list and explain your three priorities if elected:

1. Making quality, affordable healthcare accessible to all Missourians
2. Allowing people to age in their homes and communities in the least restrictive environment.health care
3. Ensuring that economic growth is spread across the economic classes.