

COMMITTEE FOR COUNTY PROGRESS  
2008 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE  
MISSOURI ATTORNEY GENERAL

Candidate Name: Chris Koster

Campaign Committee Name: Missourians for Koster

Campaign Address, Website and phone: P.O. Box 1551, Jefferson City, MO 65102  
[www.chriskoster.com](http://www.chriskoster.com)  
573-291-5620

Office Seeking: Attorney General

Campaign Treasurer/Deputy Treasurer: Gary Mallory

Education

BS, University of Missouri-Columbia  
JD, University of Missouri-Columbia  
MBA, Washington University

Current Employment

Missouri State Senate  
Law Firm of Dollar Becker & Burns, Kansas City, MO

Civic and Political Experience

Active over the past 15 years in numerous civic and community organizations

Previous elective office sought

Cass County Prosecutor, elected 1994, 1998, 2002  
Missouri State Senate, elected 2004

Addresses for the last 5 years:

1401 Brompton, Raymore, Missouri

Anticipated Campaign Budget

\$1.7 million primary, \$2 million general

1. What is the Attorney General's role in ensuring all Missourians are covered by health care insurance?

**In 2006, following the Medicaid cuts of 2005, I was appointed chairman of the Senate Select Committee to Investigate Medicaid Provider Fraud. Following a three month investigation, my committee drafted legislation to dramatically increase the prosecution of civil claims against Medicaid providers who commit fraud in our state. A version of this legislation passed the General Assembly and was signed by the Governor in 2007.**

**As Attorney General, one of my top priorities will be the utilization of this law and the aggressive prosecution of claims against Medicaid providers who commit fraud in our state.**

**Civil awards achieved through the prosecution of Medicaid fraud directly assist the pool of funds available for health care in our state.**

2. What health care reforms would you support? Please provide specifics.

**I would support the responsible expansion of Medicaid in Missouri, as well as the responsible expansion of health care coverage for the working uninsured.**

3. Have you ever supported abstinence only sex education in public schools? If yes, please explain.

**In 2007, I sponsored legislation to permanently integrate Missouri's Alternatives to Abortion Program into the state's budget. This program offers a variety of pre-natal, post-natal and job placement services to low income pregnant mothers who choose to give birth rather than seek an abortion.**

**My legislation was transferred to Senator Delbert Scott over my objection, and was added to language he had sponsored related to abstinence only education.**

**I worked diligently with a bi-partisan group of senators, including Senator Justus, to remove the abstinence only language; however, our efforts failed. For me, this failure served as the "straw that broke the camel's back" between me and the Republican Party in Missouri. I voted in favor of my underlying legislation, and began making plans to join the Democratic Party.**

2. What is your position on the use of state resources for the apprehension of undocumented immigrants?

**I support inquiry into lawful citizenship by peace officers of this state at the time a criminal suspect is booked into a county or municipal jail facility.**

3. Would you continue the practice of distributing information from the AG's office in both English and Spanish?

**Yes.**

4. What do you propose to do regarding the growing concern among many about forced labor, domestic servitude and/or exploitation of undocumented immigrants, particularly in the context of human trafficking?

**The exploitation of undocumented immigrants is an increasing crisis in Missouri and nationally. The Attorney General's Office maintains a dual role: First, it must enforce the laws against utilization of undocumented workers by Missouri businesses. Second, it must protect undocumented workers from exploitation by unscrupulous citizens of our own state. My administration will move aggressively on both fronts.**

**My office will do everything in its power to spread the message through immigrant communities of Missouri that information shared regarding the exploitation of fellow immigrants will be kept confidential and will result in the aggressive prosecution of defendants who have broken laws regarding forced labor, domestic servitude and/or the exploitation of undocumented immigrants. Furthermore, I would support legislation that responsibly protects such confidentialities.**

5. There is a well known fear among undocumented immigrants of reporting crimes and predatory practices against their community, lest they face deportation. How do you propose to reach out to those communities to reduce this fear and target those who victimize undocumented immigrants?

**The reporting of crimes and predatory practices by undocumented immigrants should never be used against such persons as part of a subsequent civil action. My administration will implement policies and support legislation in accord with this position.**

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

**My position on campaign finance is well known. I believe there are two competing choices for responsible campaign financing in our state. The first such system is public financing of elections. The second system is open contributions with immediate transparency. Missouri's current finance system includes an array of legislative district committees, political action committees, 527s and independent expenditures which, in practice, has proven to be unworkable policy.**

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

**Yes. The decision by the Missouri Supreme Court in the Independence School District case, and the Republican Party's efforts to undo that decision, were among the primary motivating elements in my decision to join the Democratic Party. As Attorney General, my administration will immediately seek to clarify the extent of the Supreme Court's ruling, our state's meet and confer process, and the rights of teachers to clearly choose their own collective bargaining representatives.**

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

**Yes. My record on prevailing wage enforcement in Cass County during my tenure as prosecuting attorney is well-known and has received statewide acclaim from organized labor across Missouri. As Attorney General, I will immediately restructure the Attorney General's Division of Labor and take all steps necessary to aggressively end prevailing wage abuses in Missouri.**

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

**I do not support vouchers for private and parochial schools. Vouchers are both unconstitutional in Missouri and contradict the state's mandate to provide public education for our children.**

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

**Missouri does not currently fund any services through Planned Parenthood. At one time, Missouri did provide funding for breast and cervical cancer screenings through Planned Parenthood, and I would support such appropriations again in the future.**

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

**Yes.**

12. Do you support a woman's lawful right to choose to terminate a pregnancy?

**I support the Supreme Court's decision in Roe v. Wade, and I support common sense approaches to reducing unwanted pregnancies and protecting parental involvement in the lives of children.**

13. Do you or have you ever supported placing limits on a woman's right to choose? If yes, please explain.

**I consider myself a centrist on this issue. I support the Supreme Court's decision in Roe v. Wade, and I also support common sense approaches to reducing unwanted pregnancies and protecting parental involvement in the lives of children. In the Senate, I am currently filibustering this year's anti-choice bill, along with Senator Joan Bray of St. Louis, and I intend to continue that filibuster throughout the remainder of the 2008 session.**

**Ultimately, I joined the Democratic Party, in great part, over disagreements I have with those who wish to overreach in the areas of personal choice and scientific research.**

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

**Yes. In 2005, I filibustered Senator Bartle's attempt to criminalize embryonic stem cell research in Missouri. I was the first senator to recommend to the research community that they pursue a constitutional amendment to protect such life-saving research. In 2006, I was the only member of the majority caucus in the senate to publically support and work toward the passage of Amendment 2. My decision in 2007 to join the Democratic Party was in great measure the result of these political battles.**

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

The Democratic Party is now 8 years into minority status in our state's legislature, and the need to turn the table is now at a critical juncture. Failure to set upon a message that reaches the majority of Missourians will be catastrophic for a broad cross-section of issues, including stem cell research, K-12 education, higher education and health care policy.

The most challenging issue facing Democrats in Missouri is recruiting candidates and crafting a progressive, yet centrist, message that reaches beyond the urban centers and draws in Missourians from outstate regions. My hope is that my ten years of law enforcement experience in rural Missouri and my relationships across this state can help bridge this divide.

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

Democratic candidates should, unquestionably, campaign and govern in a manner that is respectful of the deep faith that is felt by the majority of citizens in our state.

17. What is the role of faith for elected officials?

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

Democrats will succeed in stemming the erosion of labor support in suburban and rural communities by emphasizes the core issues that made organized labor strong in the 1940's and 50's: wages, hours and conditions. Adherence to these three elements continues to persuade voters across every part of this state. Additionally, Democrats should work to craft a message that reaches beyond our state's urban areas and appeals to outstate voters on issues regarding economic development, higher education, faith, agriculture and the right to bear arms.

19. Do you or have you ever supported school vouchers or any system which allows for school choice or open enrollment? If yes, please explain.

No.

20. Do you currently accept or have you ever accepted contributions from PACS or individuals who advocate for school vouchers, school choice or open enrollment? If yes, please identify those individuals.

The views of my contributors do not mirror my own views on every issue. As stated above, I do not support vouchers. If persons contributing to my efforts to become Attorney General hold different views on the issue, than I respectfully disagree with their position.

21. Do you or have you ever supported cutting benefits from Missouri citizens on Medicaid? If yes, please explain.

In 2005, Missouri's general revenue budget was \$600 million in the red and the state's overall budget was \$1 billion underwater. Higher education and other governmental services had already been slashed in fiscal years 2002 – 2004. Higher education, alone, had been cut nearly 40% in inflation-adjusted terms during this period.

I voted to cut Medicaid funding in 2005 in the belief that services would be restored when the funding crisis dissipated. The cuts of 2005 went too deep, and my participation was a mistake I would not make again.

In my attempt to remedy my actions of 2005, I spearheaded the effort to crack down on the estimated \$500 million in Medicaid provider fraud occurring each year in our state. In 2006, I chaired a Senate Select Committee to Investigate Medicaid Provider Fraud in Missouri. My legislation to toughen penalties against those who steal from the Medicaid system was ultimately passed in 2007. Implementation and prosecution of that legislation will be a hallmark of my administration as Attorney General.

Going forward, I look forward to responsibly restoring health care benefits to Missourians who lost benefits in 2005.

22. Do you or have you ever supported the sale of MOHELA assets? If yes, please explain.

Yes. Our state spent fewer dollars on higher education in 2008 than it spent in 2001. In inflation-adjusted terms, higher education today is approximately 40% behind where it stood financially in 2001. The injection of \$350 million in capital expenditures through the Lewis & Clark Initiative was a needed infusion of money into a system that is quickly being sucked dry. The measure was supported by Central Missouri University, as well as by the University of Missouri system.

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

Yes. My position on campaign finance is well known. I believe there are two competing choices for responsible campaign financing in our state. The first such system is public financing of elections. The second system is open contributions with immediate transparency. Missouri's current finance system includes an array of legislative district committees, political action committees, 527s and independent expenditures which, in practice, has proven to be unworkable policy.

24. Do you or have you ever supported the elimination of funding for the UMKC Pharmacy School following Sen. Justus' filibuster of the sale of MOHELA assets? If yes, please explain.

Yes. I voted in favor HB 16 in 2007 which contained the list of Lewis & Clark projects that did not include the UMKC Pharmacy School project. In January 2008, I voted in favor of HB 2019 which added the Pharmacy School to the list of recommended Lewis & Clark projects and transferred \$15 million to the University of Missouri – Kansas City.

25. Have you ever endorsed a Republican for office? If yes, please designate which candidate(s).

I was a public official elected on the Republican ticket from 1994 – 2007. During that time I was an active in the political process and supported numerous Republicans. I asked to join the Democratic Party in 2007 based on an increasing number of serious policy disputes with the

**Republican Party, and because of my belief that a progressive, yet common sense, Democratic Party promised the best future for Missouri.**

26. Do you or have you ever supported right to work laws? If yes, please explain.

**No.**

27. Do you or have you ever supported the right of public employees to collectively bargain? If no, please explain.

**I support the right of public employees to collectively bargain. The Supreme Court's decision in the Independence School Board case was one of the primary reasons for my decision to join the Democratic Party in Missouri. As Attorney General, I will immediately work to clarify and effectuate the Court's instructions in that case.**

28. Do you or have you ever supported placing limitations on stem cell research beyond those placed in the Constitution in 2006? If yes, please explain.

**No.**

29. Do you or have you ever supported making changes to the Missouri Plan for selecting judges? If yes, please explain.

**No.**

30. Do you or have you ever supported eliminating the power of local governments to regulate the placement of confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs)? If yes, please explain.

**Yes. Under current law, agriculture in our state (not just CAFO, but all of agriculture) can be regulated under 114 different regulatory structures, one for each county in Missouri. This is dramatically over-burdensome.**

**At the same time, it is clear that the environmental oversight provided by the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture has been unacceptable, which has led to the current rise in local health ordinances.**

**My attempt in 2007 was to bring compromise to the two sides. Specifically, I worked to aggressively increase environmental restrictions and oversight of animal husbandry while at the same time bringing uniformity to our regulatory structure. Essentially, the goal was to apply one health ordinance across the whole of the state. The legislation contained more than 20 new environmental restrictions, including local control for all CAFO variances, increased setbacks from bodies of water, increased setbacks for CAFO's from neighboring properties, increased oversight of small CAFO, and the elimination of any new 1A CAFO in Missouri, to name but a few. Importantly, these and other changes would have been made in approximately 100 counties without health ordinances, thereby increasing environmental protections across our state.**

**Regarding the bill, Dick Burke, Executive Director of the Missouri Association of Counties, stated "The Missouri Association of Counties supports the principles of agreement between**

**our organization and the Coalition for Missouri Farm and Food Preservation which are now contained in SS/SB 364...We believe that great strides have been made to date in an attempt to find middle ground on what has been an extremely divisive issue for our state.”**

31. Do you or have you ever supported limiting an individual’s right to a trial by jury, including placing artificial caps on the damages? If yes, please explain.

**In 2005, I was integral to the negotiation of a settlement of the longstanding tort reform war in Missouri. I worked alongside Senator Bartle, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, to negotiate and draft a solution that did not decimate Missouri’s civil justice system.**

**Without my work on the issue, Missouri’s law would be far worse than it currently stands. My efforts saved the concept of joint and several liability, stopped the caps from being lower than the current law provides, preserved the concept of pre-judgment and post-judgment interest at current levels, and saved many other provisions of current law.**

**As a result of my work, I was given both the Missouri Association of Trial Attorney’s Legislator of the Year Award and the Missouri Bar Association’s Legislator of the Year Award for 2005. The Missouri Bar Association awarded me the same honor again in 2006 and 2007. Missouri Lawyers Weekly named me one of the 10 Most Influential Lawyers of 2005.**

32. 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.

**Board member of Hope Haven Women’s Shelter, Cass County Missouri**

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

**Since my joining the Democratic Party last year, my effort for Attorney General has contributed approximately \$20,000 to nearly 50 Democratic political organizations across Missouri. This money will be used (I hope) to elect Jay Nixon and other Democratic candidates this November. I believe no other Democratic campaign has contributed so much money to Democratic committees across Missouri over a similar period of time.**

Please list and explain your top three priorities if elected:

- 1. Enforcement of Missouri’s criminal laws**
- 2. Protection of working family rights in Missouri**
- 3. Prosecution of medicaid fraud and corporate corruption**