

North Carolina FreeEnterprise Foundation  
2010 Questionnaire  
Candidates for North Carolina General Assembly

Please complete and return  
by March 19 Deadline

**SECTION I. Candidate Personal Profile Information**

Name: Robert W Nickell Office Sought (circle): Senate House District #: 30  
Party (circle): Democrat Republican Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: 1085 Nickell Farm Rd City: Westfield State: NC Zip: 27053  
County of Residence: Stokes Length of Residence in County: 12 1/2 yrs  
Home Phone: 336-351-4702 Work Phone: 336-970-0645 Mobile Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: uzt@surry.net Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gender: male Race/Ethnicity: white Religion: \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of Birth (city/state): Winston-Salem / North Carolina Date of Birth: 6-14-1961  
Marital Status (circle): Married Single Divorced Separated Number of Children: 3  
Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ Employer: Universal Zipline Technology  
Carolina Ziplines Canopy Tour  
Military Service: \_\_\_\_\_ High School: Parkland High School  
Colleges/Universities Attended: \_\_\_\_\_  
Degrees: \_\_\_\_\_  
Previous Elected/Appointed Offices: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION II. Candidate Campaign Information**

Name of Campaign Committee: Robert Nickell for NC Senate  
Campaign Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Campaign Website: \_\_\_\_\_  
Campaign Phone: same as above Campaign Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
Campaign Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Campaign Treasurer: \_\_\_\_\_ Campaign Treasurer Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Political Consultants: \_\_\_\_\_

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Considering your personal and professional associations, how likely are you to receive support from each of the following groups?

|  | Very Likely | Likely | Unknown | Unlikely | Very Unlikely |
|--|-------------|--------|---------|----------|---------------|
| A. North Carolina Advocates for Justice<br>(formerly the Academy of Trial Lawyers) | 1           | 2      | 3       | 4        | 5             |
| B. Medical Groups (ex. Doctors,<br>Hospital Administrators)                        | 1           | 2      | 3       | 4        | 5             |
| C. Banking & Finance Industry  | 1           | 2      | 3       | 4        | 5             |
| D. Utility/Telecommunications Companies  | 1           | 2      | 3       | 4        | 5             |
| E. Real Estate & Construction Industry   | 1           | 2      | 3       | 4        | 5             |
| F. Labor Unions  | 1           | 2      | 3       | 4        | 5             |
| G. Retail/Wholesale Businesses   | 1           | 2      | 3       | 4        | 5             |
| H. State Employees Association of N.C. (SEANC)                                     | 1           | 2      | 3       | 4        | 5             |
| I. Insurance Industry  | 1           | 2      | 3       | 4        | 5             |
| J. N.C. Association of Educators (NCAE)  | 1           | 2      | 3       | 4        | 5             |
| K. Business Professionals (ex. Architects,<br>Accountants, Engineers)              | 1           | 2      | 3       | 4        | 5             |
| L. Transportation Industry   | 1           | 2      | 3       | 4        | 5             |
| M. Agri-business Interests   | 1           | 2      | 3       | 4        | 5             |
| N. Legislative Leadership Committees   | 1           | 2      | 3       | 4        | 5             |

Are there other groups not listed that you would expect to receive a campaign contribution or endorsement from? (Ex. Lillian's List, Anti-Tax Groups)

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**SECTION III. CANDIDATE ISSUE QUESTIONS & STATEMENTS**

**Instructions:** Please respond to the following questions and statements by circling the response that best represents your position or opinion. You are invited to provide additional comments or explanations for your answers on a separate page. Please be sure to identify which question you are commenting on by noting the appropriate question number with your additional comments.

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

1. For every \$100.00 of sales, about how much profit do you believe the average North Carolina business nets? (Circle one response)

Under \$1      \$1-5      \$5-10      \$10-25      \$25-50      Over \$50

2. The current level of taxes paid by North Carolina businesses is too high, too low, or about right? (Circle one response)

Too high      Too low      About right

3. Have you owned or managed a business? (If so, please describe below.)

Yes      No

Nickell Construction Company - 1983 - 2005      American Gymnastics - 2001 - 2009

Universal Zipline Technology - 2007 - Present      Carolina Ziplines Canopy Tour - 2007 - Present

4. Do you believe that environmental laws and regulations in North Carolina are too strict, about right, or too lenient?

Too Strict      About Right      Too Lenient      Undecided

**BUDGET & TAXES**

5. Reducing taxes on businesses in North Carolina will stimulate economic activity resulting in the creation of more jobs and increased tax revenue.

Agree      Disagree      Undecided

6. Reducing taxes on businesses in North Carolina will reduce state revenues and cause substantial harm to critical government programs and services.

Agree      Disagree      Undecided

7. The growth of state spending from year to year should be limited to a specific growth factor such as the rate of inflation.

Agree      Disagree      Undecided

8. Recurring state budget expenditures should only be funded with existing, recurring revenues.

Agree      Disagree      Undecided

9. The state sales tax should be expanded to include personal and professional services such as haircuts, automotive repairs, legal services and medical services.

Agree      Disagree      Undecided

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10. Dedicated sources of revenue (such as the Highway Trust Fund) should not be transferred to the General Fund as a means of balancing the state budget.

Agree      Disagree      Undecided

11. North Carolina's personal income tax should be increased in order to provide more revenue for state programs and services.

Agree      Disagree      Undecided

12. The North Carolina General Assembly should make permanent the one-cent sales tax increase that is set to expire on June 30, 2011, in order to secure those revenues for future needs and planning.

Agree      Disagree      Undecided

**EMPLOYMENT**

13. North Carolina should remain a "Right to Work" state, meaning that a person cannot be required to join a union in order to get or keep a job.

Agree      Disagree      Undecided

14. The North Carolina General Assembly should raise the state's minimum wage above the current level of \$7.25 per hour.

Agree      Disagree      Undecided

15. The North Carolina General Assembly should mandate what specific health benefits coverage private-sector employers provide to their employees, even if it raises the cost of premiums.

Agree      Disagree      Undecided

16. The North Carolina General Assembly should expand workers' compensation disability payments to workers who suffer from non-physical ailments such as stress and depression, even if it raises the cost of premiums.

Agree      Disagree      Undecided

17. Associations representing state and local employees and teachers should be allowed to engage in collective bargaining for wages, benefits and working conditions.

Agree      Disagree      Undecided

18. The North Carolina General Assembly should repeal the ability of state employees and teachers to authorize the payroll deduction of association dues (dues check-off).

Agree      Disagree      Undecided

19. Employers in North Carolina should be required to provide paid sick leave to all employees.

Agree      Disagree      Undecided

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

20. State tax dollars should be used as incentives to entice large companies to locate in North Carolina.

Agree      Disagree      Undecided

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21. The focus of North Carolina's economic development efforts should be on reducing the corporate income tax rate and improving the overall business climate of the state, rather than providing tax incentives to a limited number of large corporations.

Agree       Disagree       Undecided

**ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE**

22. North Carolina's environmental regulations should be no stricter than applicable federal requirements.

Agree       Disagree       Undecided

23. Toll roads are a necessary part of meeting North Carolina's growing transportation needs.

Agree       Disagree       Undecided

**CIVIL JUSTICE**

24. It is important for a jury in a civil lawsuit to be informed of health insurance and disability insurance payments already received by a plaintiff before deciding on an award in the case.

Agree       Disagree       Undecided

25. If there are multiple defendants in a negligence case and one or more of the defendants is unable to pay their share of the damages, the defendant or defendants who can pay should have to pay for 100 percent of the damages awarded.

Agree       Disagree       Undecided

26. The North Carolina General Assembly should repeal the state's "contributory negligence" law (which prohibits an injured person from collecting damages if the person contributed to his or her own injury) and replace it with "comparative fault" (which allows an injured person the potential to collect damages, depending upon the percentage of fault that is attributable to the person).

Agree       Disagree       Undecided

**GOVERNANCE**

27. The state legislature should expand the authority of cities and counties to impose a broader range of taxes and fees at the local level.

Agree       Disagree       Undecided

If you agree, which of the following taxes or fees would you favor? (Circle all of those that apply)

local sales tax      local income tax      development impact fees      real estate transfer tax      prepared meals tax

Other taxes or fees (please list): residency tax for those who rent therefore are using the infrastructure but do not pay property tax

28. North Carolina should continue to operate under Dillon's Rule, a legal doctrine providing that municipalities and counties possess only those powers and authorities expressly granted to them by the North Carolina Constitution or the State Legislature.

Agree       Disagree       Undecided

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29. The North Carolina Constitution should be amended to allow voters the ability to add referenda to the statewide ballot after collecting a required minimum number of signatures (i.e., initiative and referendum).

Agree      Disagree      Undecided

30. A nonpartisan redistricting commission should be established to draw North Carolina's congressional and state legislative district maps following the 2010 Census.

Agree       Disagree      Undecided

31. The North Carolina Constitution should be amended to establish specific limitations on the length of legislative sessions in North Carolina (session limits).

Agree      Disagree      Undecided

32. State legislative leaders (the President Pro Tempore of the N.C. Senate and the Speaker of the N.C. House) should be limited to serving no more than two consecutive terms at a time.

Agree      Disagree      Undecided

33. Judges in North Carolina should be appointed by the Governor instead of elected by the people.

Agree       Disagree      Undecided

#### EDUCATION

34. State lawmakers should increase taxes in North Carolina in order to raise teacher pay to the national average.

Agree       Disagree      Undecided

35. The N.C. General Assembly should grant local school boards independent taxing authority.

Agree       Disagree      Undecided

36. The North Carolina General Assembly should repeal the law requiring public schools to start the school year no earlier than August 25 and instead allow classes to begin in early August even if such a change would negatively impact the state's tourism industry.

Agree       Disagree      Undecided

#### BANKING & FINANCE

37. The government should take a greater role in establishing rates and prices for financial products and services.

Agree      Disagree      Undecided

38. It is necessary for the North Carolina General Assembly to increase regulations on the financial services industry in order to protect the interests of consumers.

Agree      Disagree      Undecided

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**SECTION IV. OPEN-ENDED QUESTION**

Statewide surveys indicate the top issue on the minds of voters in North Carolina is the economy and jobs. With that in mind, please explain your vision for economic growth and job creation.

I believe that North Carolina in itself is a wonderful state to work, live, raise kids and retire. NC also has the natural beauty that most tourists desire. By keeping NC clean & beautiful we can continue it's beauty. However as long as we allow so much clear cutting we are quickly reducing NC's beauty. We need to increase our educational opportunities and requirements so that NC can continue to offer a well educated work force. We need to stop offering \$ incentives to large companies to move to NC and start selling them what we have and what we are. A state that has great resources, good infrastructure and a strong work force. What better selling point is there?

Now, we can take the incentive money given to large companies and offer it to our small businesses in NC. To help them grow, train employees and develop new products or technology. NC is full of wonderful small businesses that employ lots of great North Carolinians. Shouldn't they be the ones rewarded?

I would like to see an increase in NC's Tourism Development. Tourism is one of the best ways to increase revenue. Folks come in, they spend their money enjoying NC and then they go home. Let's send them home knowing that North Carolina is a GREAT state!

Candidate Signature:  
(signature required)

Date: 3-18-2010