


Platform and Priorities

I know many will judge me based solely off my party affiliation. But not only am I seeking to be a new kind of politician, but also a new kind of Democrat. The face of politics needs to change, and my solution-oriented and community-centric platform is here to prove that I am willing to do that. This platform represents the priorities I have identified after speaking to the community in my “Heartbeat of Cabarrus” listening tour.

I will be the first to admit I don’t have all the answers, but I pledge to always be transparent about my views, open to criticism and advice, and *always* accountable to the people of Cabarrus County.

Unlike my opponent, I have identified specific policy points to advocate in Raleigh, all based around the principles of **reducing fixed costs for families, strengthening small businesses, investing in education, ensuring public safety for all citizens, fixing our crumbling infrastructure, and implementing non-partisan government reform.**

The days of not having a senator who works for you ends on November 8th, Cabarrus County.



Keshia Sandidge

Contents:

- I. Focusing on fixed costs for families.
- II. Creating a sustainable business environment.
- III. Investing in our future.
- IV. Public safety through dialogue, not division.
- V. Bringing your money back to Cabarrus.
- VI. Less politics, more policy.

I. Focusing on fixed costs for families.

When I talk to ordinary families, the thing I hear most is how the increase in fixed costs is hurting their family. In times of economic hardship, most families cut back on spending to save money. However, we live in a society increasingly plagued by fixed costs that are out of our budgetary control: rent or mortgage, utility bills, transportation costs (including gasoline and car insurance), medical insurance, loan repayments, and taxes. These bills show up every month (or more), and families can't control their spending because they are essential products at mostly fixed rates. Good public policy can reduce these costs, which saves families money each month and eases the burden of monthly bills.

As your Senator, I will:

1. **Lower taxes for working- and middle-class families** to reduce the share of hard-earned money taken by government.
2. **Ensure that tax dollars are spent effectively and in ways that lower costs and improve services for working families** rather than on frivolous pork barrel projects.
3. **Support the bipartisan expansion of Medicaid to provide health coverage** to over half a million North Carolinians.
4. **Properly fund our schools through the passage of the first school construction bond in 20 years** to reduce the competition for housing in better school districts, eliminate miscellaneous fees for underfunded services like sports and band, and improve the health and safety of buildings used by our kids and teachers.
5. **Lower the cost of gasoline and utility bills by supporting policies which fosters greater energy independence**, including policies which expand our use of natural gas, offshore wind, nuclear, and solar.
6. **Work with my colleagues to lower the cost of public universities**, including support for the NC Promise program and an evaluation of a free community college program, similar to the one offered in Tennessee.
7. **Raise the tipped minimum wage of \$2.13 an hour** to reduce the added cost for consumers and provide stability to restaurant workers, which 34 other states have done.

II. Creating a sustainable business environment.

The heart and soul of Cabarrus County runs through small businesses. Local entrepreneurs help foster a connected, small-town community feel, and they create economic growth for the entire county, which produces prosperity for all. Economic growth and prosperous citizens with high demand also attract big businesses without having to give economic incentives that give corporations an unfair advantage. This model is what makes Cabarrus so great, but our small

businesses are struggling, especially due to high inflation and pandemic recovery. Public policy can make or break small businesses, so it's important that our policies are developed in conjunction with our local entrepreneurs. We must ensure that all policies help, not hurt their efforts to build a thriving business. I am committed to eliminating burdensome policies and expanding those programs and initiatives used by the state to support a more prosperous business environment.

As your Senator, I will:

1. **Offer more tax breaks for small businesses** and simplify the tax code so that expensive lawyers aren't required to understand the system.
2. **Cut red-tape and reduce licensing requirements** to reduce the cost of starting and maintaining a small business.
3. **Collaborate with local chambers of commerce** to provide more local support for emerging businesses and
4. **Review the Small Business Health Care Act** to ensure it is meeting the objective of providing affordable healthcare plans to small businesses, and build on it as needed.
5. **Directly engage small business leaders in the community with frequent town halls and forums** so that my actions in Raleigh are representative of the needs of our entrepreneurs at home.

III. Investing in our future.

As a member of the Cabarrus County Board of Education, I've seen firsthand how dangerous the politicization of our schools has become. In fact, I got into politics because of my own experience being a mother of two kids in Cabarrus County schools, and I'm running for State Senate precisely because I'm sick of politicians in Raleigh bringing politics instead of solutions. I believe education is an investment, and it's one I'm willing to make. Our state funds must strategically target the recruitment and retention of the best teachers; learning resources for all of our students; equitable curriculum that prepares kids to lead holistic lives; and adequate support for teachers, staff, and local leaders so that everyone in our school system can thrive in Cabarrus County.

As your Senator, I will:

1. **Work with my Republican and Democratic colleagues to raise teacher pay across the board** so that teachers aren't forced to relocate out of our community.
2. **Protect parental rights to determine their child's education** by involving parents directly in the policy-making process and ensure that schools meet the expectations of parents.

3. **Expand the Teaching Fellows scholarship** for STEM, special education, and any other area of education with a deficit in eligible teachers.
4. **Halt the budget cuts and reinvest in sports and arts programs in schools**, which are critical to child development, socialization, and education.
5. **Support legislation that provides more counselors, psychologists, and social workers for schools** to strengthen the mental and emotional development of students.
6. **Create a focus group for school board members, system staff, teachers, and parents with regularly scheduled meetings** to hold me accountable to my constituency and bring community concerns to Raleigh.

IV. Public safety through dialogue, not division.

As a mother of two kids, I *know* the issues of public safety in our community because I *live* with concerns about it every day. I have something in common with every parent in Cabarrus County, which is a deep concern for the safety and wellbeing of my children. I have talked with numerous police officers and first responders on my Heartbeat of Cabarrus listening tour, and I will continue to do so as your Senator in Raleigh. But I will also talk to anyone who has concerns about our public services and who is open to dialogue to solve the problem. There are real issues that need to be addressed, but I believe the solution is for dialogue, not division, and for more funding, not less.

As your Senator, I will:

1. **Support the development of a co-responder model for cases of mental health** by collaborating with local leaders, securing critical funds, and bringing vital resources to each police department and the sheriff's office.
2. **Develop a statewide program that incorporates law enforcement education in kindergarten through 2nd grade** to provide kids with more exposure to officers at a central stage of development.
3. **Ensure funding for expansion of career and technical education (CTE)** programs in school systems across the state to streamline the recruitment of law enforcement and first responders and provide a pathway to employment for aspiring students.
4. **Reinforce school and community programs designed to strengthen community policing** so that police forces look more like the communities they serve.
5. **Raise officer pay and increase funding for resources** to build the best law enforcement services in the country.

V. Bringing your money back to Cabarrus.

When I talk to ordinary people in Cabarrus County, I hear how much they love this community and their life in North Carolina. The pride of Cabarrus, from Concord to Kannapolis and from Harrisburg to Mount Pleasant, is our common-sense and balanced development planning – development that enhances the quality of life for our citizens while also maintaining the small town, tight-knit community feel that is so important to people who call Cabarrus home. When I ask about hardships and frustration, folks don't usually bring up the flashy and controversial political issues that dominate national politics. Instead, they tell me about how frustrating it is for them to pay so much in taxes yet still have to put up with the big pothole on Dale Earnhardt Blvd. They tell me they're tired of giving the government so much of the money *they've earned* while congestion on I-85 and Highway 49 is getting worse and worse. If elected, I will bring this local- and solution-oriented approach to infrastructure to Raleigh to pass meaningful legislation that lowers taxes and creates tangible results in our community.

As your Senator, I will:

1. **Make responsible budgeting a top priority** to reduce unnecessary spending, reprioritize community development projects, lower taxes for working people, and close loopholes for corporations who dodge their tax responsibility.
2. **Bring local issues to the floor of the Senate** by talking about the congestion on our highways, the damage to our bridges and roads, and the need for responsible development that meets the needs of all in our communities.
3. **Support statewide infrastructure legislation** that creates jobs and brings taxpayer money back into Cabarrus County to directly fix the problems of our roads, bridges, and sewer systems.
4. **Work with any state and local leader committed to universal broadband** to support our rural businesses and schools, propel underserved communities into modern-economy jobs, and lower the costs of ratepayers across the state.

VI. Less politics, more policy.

As a candidate for public office, I have committed to running a clean and transparent campaign with accountability to one group – the citizens of Cabarrus County. I'm running as a Democrat because the two-party system has been entrenched in our politics by elites. But the blue I wear is not for loyalty to any party, but in honor of the blue-collar families that, like mine, have been ignored by the lawyers, corporate executives, and career politicians that have far too much influence in Raleigh. If elected, my focus will be bringing the “perfectly imperfect” decency of Cabarrus County to Raleigh as a representative with integrity and purpose.

As your Senator, I will:

1. **Make myself accessible to all citizens of Cabarrus County.** When you call, you will not be forced to speak to an assistant whose job is to placate you. Rather, you will have my ear, and my actions will deliver for you and your family.

2. **Be present in the community**, including conducting regular town halls, attending community events, and developing a system for any individual or group to request a meeting with me.
3. Contribute to the efforts of some bold legislators in Raleigh who **support the creation of a non-partisan, independent redistricting commission** to end this absurd partisan and judicial battle over our districts.
4. **Support legislation to reduce the cost of campaigning for public office**, including the gradual introduction of a public financing option, so that more working-class people can run for office, and so that politicians spend more time listening than asking for money.
5. **Champion the voting rights of all our citizens** regardless of race, class, or political persuasion.
6. **Support legislation to end the partisanship of our judicial elections** to ensure that judges are elected by merit, integrity, and commitment to the law instead of political party machines.
7. **Fix state services, such as the DMV, to restore efficiency, customer service, and product excellence.**