

**UE Local 150, NC Public Service Workers Union
2026 State Legislature Candidate Questionnaire**

1. Tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations have now removed over a third of annual revenue, totalling \$13 billion annually from our state budget of roughly \$34 billion. Do you support rolling back the tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations that started in 2013? Why or why not?

As both the population of our state and costs increase, we should continually assess whether our tax policies are equitable and effective. Despite warnings from independent economists, lawmakers in Raleigh have continued to reduce revenue and shift the cost of services from the state to our counties. I support a fair tax code that does not disproportionately benefit corporations and the wealthiest North Carolinians. We should provide meaningful economic relief to working families while making sure corporations pay their fair share. Ultimately, our tax revenue must be sufficient to deliver high-quality public services, to plan sufficiently for a rapidly-changing future, and to make sure our state's fiscal health is strong enough to navigate natural disasters or economic crises.

2. Do you support paying state employees a minimum living wage of \$25 per hour, and raising wages for all state employees by at least 20%?

North Carolina's minimum wage has not changed in 16 years, which is unacceptable. North Carolina is considered the worst state for workers, which is also unacceptable. I support significant increases to the minimum wage and state salaries, as all workers deserve a living wage. As part of a small, family-owned business, I know that taking care of workers is ultimately good for business. I also understand that adjusting to significant changes in statute and budgeting can be extra challenging for small businesses, so I would also want to make sure that any significant wage laws also build in structures and resources that empower and support small businesses as they work to comply.

3. Due to staff shortages and workplace safety issues, the governor, with support from the legislature, raised all Department of Public Safety staff to a 7-Year Step Plan in 2022. Would you support the same for DHHS workers?

Absolutely. Our state relies on these employees to provide critical services, and we can expect their workload to increase as our state grows in population amidst federal cuts to funding. We need to make sure we can recruit and retain DHHS workers through fair compensation and incentives to stay.

4. Do you support raising the minimum stipend for UNC System graduate workers to at least \$27,000 for a yearly contract?

Yes, graduate workers should be fairly compensated for their work and able to afford the basic costs of living while pursuing their degrees. We want to continue to attract and retain scholars who are leaders in their fields.

5. Do you support: a) repealing state tax incentives for data centers, b) stopping Duke Energy from raising utility rates to pay for more data centers, and c) passing a statewide ban to stop building new data centers?

I support ending state tax incentives for data centers and protecting ratepayers from paying for their expansion, as well as other regulations outlined in HB 1063, the Ratepayer and Resource Protection Act, for which I served as a primary sponsor. I also voted against SB 266, which granted Duke more freedom to raise rates, eliminated North Carolina's 2030 carbon targets, and shifted fuel costs to residential ratepayers. I do not support a statewide ban at this juncture, as I believe we can and should carefully and responsibly leverage investment from these companies to subsidize the modernization of our grid, protection of our resources, and transition to clean energy. I do support a mechanism that allows counties or municipalities to adopt moratoriums and strict approval processes. Local communities must have a meaningful voice in whether and where these data centers are built; large-scale development should not move forward without clear frameworks and partnership with the communities that will bear the impacts.

6. Currently NC has embedded unprecedented racially gerrymandered maps that disenfranchise African Americans. Election districts are currently stacked to be highly partisan. What will you do to help redraw election maps to not be as partisan, make voting less complicated, and increase transparency to ensure truly free and fair elections?

One of the first bills I cosponsored was HB 20, the Fair Maps Act, which would establish an independent redistricting process and a Citizens Redistricting Commission. I believe voters should choose their representatives, not the other way around.

7. North Carolinians pay more out of pocket for healthcare than workers in any state. Will you support a cap on healthcare reimbursement rates, and join us in demanding US Congress to enact the Medicare for All Act?

Yes. I cosponsored HB 1175, the Affordability in Healthcare Act, because North Carolinians should not have to choose between getting the care they need and being able to afford groceries. I support efforts to lower healthcare costs, increase access to affordable coverage, and reduce the financial burden of healthcare on working families.

8. With state employee vacancies rates being high, what is your plan to retain state employees, especially in DHHS?

We need to retain state employees by paying them fairly and treating them like the professionals they are. Similar to educators, this means competitive salaries, meaningful raises, and the support and resources they need to do their jobs well, especially in DHHS.

9. Recently the UNC Board of Governors voted to eliminate the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion programs. Meanwhile, we have seen increased policing in syllabi policies and suppression of academic freedom supported by SB588. What would you do to protect public and private workers from suppressions of freedom of speech and from all forms of discrimination and unfairness in hiring and workplace practices?

As a former educator, I understand firsthand the importance of protecting freedom in the classroom and workplace as well as the work required to build truly inclusive communities. I have voted against all politically-motivated efforts to “eliminate DEI,” ban books, or restrict the freedom to teach and learn. I will continue to support legislation that protects employees from discrimination and retaliation, safeguards freedom of speech and expression, and ensures fair hiring and workplace practices.

10. Do you support repealing the ban on public sector collective bargaining, GS 95-98? Why or why not?

Yes. I cosponsored HB 256, the Allow Public Employee Collective Bargaining Act, because public employees should have the right to collectively advocate for better pay and working conditions.

11. Would you support ending “Pay to Work” in the UNC System by stopping parking fees for university employees and eliminating student fees for graduate workers?

Yes, because university employees and graduate workers should not have to pay to work.

12. There have been a series of recent efforts to curtail workers and students’ right to protest and exercise their constitutional rights. How would you preserve students’ right to protest freely and openly on campus?

I am deeply troubled by the recent efforts to eliminate protest, a right protected under the First Amendment. Campuses have been and should continue to be spaces where students can learn, practice, and exercise engaged citizenship. As safety is paramount, students should be supported and guided as they exercise their right to protest. I will continue to legislate accordingly.

13. While there has been some modest progress, state OSHA is still unable to fully fill all inspector positions to enforce workplace safety. Do you support full funding for Occupational Safety and Health Administration? Why or why not?

Yes, because fully funding OSHA ensures the state has the staff and resources needed to enforce workplace safety standards and protect workers. I have learned a great deal about gaps in our workplace safety standards and inspections by participating in the North Carolina Leadership Forum and hearing directly from worker advocates.

14. Do you support establishing an enforceable state OSHA excessive summer heat safety rule that includes paid cooling breaks, PPE, hydration and training for local and state government, as well as agricultural workers? Why or why not?

Yes. Just last week, a Charlotte airport worker died while working in extraordinarily hot conditions. Heat-related emergencies and deaths are preventable, and we should adopt reasonable safety rules that protect people's health and lives while working.

15. Do you support job security for municipal employees by passing Civil Service Board protections for city workers?

Generally, I support worker protections, but I would want to review the proposed legislation before taking a position on the specific policy.

16. What plans do you have to alleviate the housing affordability crisis in our state? Would you support a bill to bring rent control to NC? Why or why not?

My office has done extensive research on housing affordability in District 98, so I can speak most directly to the needs of our district. That research has led me to support efforts to increase housing supply, expand missing-middle housing, and address barriers to affordable homeownership and renting. Regarding rent control, I would want to look at the specifics of any policy proposal. I support efforts to eliminate algorithmic pricing, collusion, and other predatory practices.

17. Do you support expanding fully covered dental and vision healthcare plans to all state employees, including the UNC system and its graduate workers? Why or why not?

Yes. Dental and vision care should be considered fundamental healthcare, not a bonus. In 2026, state employees who want dental and vision coverage must pay for it themselves through NCFlex. I would support the state fully covering both benefits for all state employees, including the UNC system and its graduate workers, so that basic dental and vision care isn't an added cost for people who work in public service.