

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

Representative Julie von Haefen
Julie@juliefornc.com

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?

I believe we ought to be taxing corporations and the wealthy at higher rates than the working and middle class. The burden of funding our state should fall on those who benefit the most, not the vulnerable in our communities. The tax cuts that the NCGA passed in 2013 disproportionately benefited the wealthy and corporations while significantly placing the burden on middle and low income taxpayers.

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%?

Yes, we have a lot of work to do to get there, but I've started the push to increase minimum wage by cosponsoring HB1059 which would raise minimum wage to \$15 per hour.

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?

Yes, I would support the same for DHHS workers.

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

Yes, I support raising the minimum stipend for UNC System graduate workers to at least \$27,000 per semester.

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?

Yes, we should not be incentivizing data centers to come to our state. I believe that companies taking part in constructing new data centers are seeking to exploit inadequate and outdated regulations with no regard for their long term viability or for how to reduce negative community impacts. I have consistently voted against legislation that broadened Duke's influence over their own regulation and expanded opportunities for Duke Energy to exploit their unique status as a utility for profit. Unfortunately, that is precisely what's happening.

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?

I support the creation of an independent redistricting commission for North Carolina because voters should be able to choose their politicians, not the other way around. Political and racial gerrymandering is extremely harmful to democracy and voting rights because voters are unable to elect

candidates who truly represent them. Taking the power to draw districts out of the hands of politicians benefits everyone. An independent commission allows for fairness and impartiality.

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?

I support Medicare for All but do not support the inclusion of work requirements or annual premiums. Work requirements and annual premiums are detrimental to the most vulnerable of our community members.

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

In order to increase state employee recruitment and retention, we must increase wages, guarantee benefits including healthcare and retirement, and ensure that state employees are working under safe conditions.

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?

I believe that we should be doing more as legislators to ensure equity in hiring practices. As a former public defender, I saw how formerly incarcerated individuals have a difficult time reentering society and obtaining gainful employment. “Ban the Box” legislation gives them the opportunity to return to the workplace in a fair and equitable manner. We should also be doing everything we can to ensure that workers have their first amendment rights protected in the workplace. The elimination of DEI programs has only made educator’s jobs more difficult.

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

Yes, I support repealing the ban on public employee collective bargaining. Strikes and collective bargaining are one of the most important market-balancing tools for workers to negotiate the value of their labor, and the government should not be artificially depressing labor’s market value by impinging on the basic right to self-expression and self-advocacy.

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, I would support ending “Pay to Work” in the UNC system. Employees should not have to pay parking fees to work, and graduate workers should be exempt from student fees considering that they are already paying tuition.

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?

Yes, I will oppose efforts to restrict constitutional rights, especially our first amendment rights. Protesting is a way for communities and advocates to come together for an organized effort, enact change, and make their voices heard.

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 I support fully funding OSHA. We should always be ensuring there are proper safety protocols and training in place, first to ensure the well-being and security of employees, but also to increase employee recruitment and retention. No one wants to work for a company that does not value their rights or the fact that they are human and deserve to work in a safe environment. I am a cosponsor of HB403, the Workers Rights Act, which appropriates additional money to the Department of Labor to conduct safety programs and inspections.

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, I support establishing enforceable state OSHA excessive summer heat safety rules. As a former workers' compensation attorney who represented injured workers, I have seen firsthand the devastation that workplace injuries can cause to livelihoods and families, and establishing further OSHA protections could reduce the risk of workplace injuries and increase productivity.

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

Because I am in the State Legislature, and not a municipal official, I don't have enough information and background to make an informed opinion on municipal boards. Generally, I do support protections for city workers.

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?

Everyone deserves to have a roof over their head. This year, I sponsored HB 467 which provides low-income housing tax credits. Last year, I co-sponsored the NC Housing Choice Incentive (HB 294). This legislation would appropriate \$30 million dollars to the North Carolina Housing Choice Grant program which awards grant funds annually to certain counties and municipalities within a specified criteria. I will continue to advocate for policies that support the availability of affordable housing for low-and moderate income residents within our community. During my first term, I also supported HB 31, which would allow the Durham School Boards of Education to enter into contracts to construct, provide, or maintain affordable rental housing for Durham Public School teachers and employees on Durham Public Schools property. I am in support of rent control in North Carolina. Rent control is a way to keep landlords from extorting their tenants and maintains housing options for all economic classes.

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, I support expanding fully covered dental and vision healthcare plans to all state employees. Healthcare is a right that everyone should have access to, and dental and vision coverage should already be included in that.