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Q1

About Candidates

Candidate Name	Zack Hawkins
District	NC House District 31
Party Affiliation	Democrat
Campaign Website	https://zackhawkinsnc.com

Q2

Q1. Please tell us about your personal experiences with nonprofits. These may include experiences with any organizations that have served you and/or fellow residents of your community, or specific nonprofits for which you've served as a board member, staff person, volunteer, or donor. How do these experiences shape your policy positions? (Limit: 300 words)

Zack has served as a teacher in Durham Public Schools (Southern High School) and works every day to help remove financial barriers for those that need it most. His time as an educator impressed on him the critical importance of education to individual and community development and opportunity, and he continued to serve Durham's students as a member of the Board of Directors for the Durham Public Schools Foundation. The DPS Foundation is a nonprofit that unites the DPS communities, public- and private-sector resources, and community leaders around strategies to strengthen Durham Public Schools for all students. As a member of this nonprofit, Zack has worked tirelessly to help fulfill the promise of public education in Durham.

As a development and advancement professional in nonprofits such as United Way and higher education institutions like East Carolina University, Duke University and UNC, few causes are closer to his heart than creating and advancing opportunity for all. At United Way of the Greater Triangle, Zack worked to support students and help families access the housing, nutrition, health, and safety support needed to stabilize and overcome poverty. Zack's focus has always been on creating opportunity, and his past work both within and alongside nonprofits has left him with a strong appreciation of the role they play in the community.

Q3

Q2. If elected, what would be your top three policy priorities? (Limit: 250 words)

Zack's top 3 policy priorities are expanding Medicaid access in North Carolina, securing better funding and support for education, and building an economy that works for everyone.

Zack believes that everyone should be able to see a doctor when they need one, and Medicaid expansion is a necessary step to building a healthy, equitable society. Medicaid expansion would take advantage of available federal funding to improve healthcare access and outcomes for North Carolinians; it is unconscionable that the federal government is offering North Carolina money to help people afford to see a doctor and this state is turning it down.

Zack also believes strongly that education is the key to strengthening communities, creating new jobs, and helping people to live better lives. This starts with public education. As a former public school teacher and advocate at higher education institutions like ECU, Duke, and UNC, Zack understands what students need to succeed. He has continually fought to adopt the court-ordered Leandro Plan, which ensures that every student in North Carolina receives equitable educational opportunity. Additionally, Zack has continually secured funding for 2-year, 4-year, and trade colleges in his district. Ultimately, Zack believes in building a strong and reliable pipeline from K-12 to higher education to job creation.

Zack also envisions a thriving Durham, with jobs that pay a living wage for all citizens, affordable housing and food security, and quality affordable childcare to support working families.

Q4

The Center advocates on public policy issues that affect North Carolina's nonprofit sector and works with the NC General Assembly and North Carolina's members of Congress to develop laws and policies that save nonprofits time and money, help nonprofits operate more effectively, and preserve the public's trust in North Carolina's nonprofit sector. Our policy agenda includes:

- Ensuring that all 501(c)(3) nonprofits are fully exempt from federal, state, and local taxes.
- Promoting new and expanded tax deductions and credits that encourage individuals and businesses to give generously to support their communities through the work of charitable nonprofits.
- Supporting policy solutions that will address the nonprofit workforce shortage, including increased funding to support jobs in the nonprofit sector and investment in accessible and affordable child care.
- Seeking solutions to long-standing challenges that nonprofits face when they provide public services through government grants and contracts, including late contracts, late payments, overly complicated application and reporting requirements, and underpayment for indirect costs.
- Promoting laws that will help nonprofits and businesses alike to provide affordable and high-quality health care and other benefits to their employees.

Q3. If elected, which of these policy goals would you support most enthusiastically, and why? (Limit: 250 words)

Zack will continue to support tax deductions and credits that encourage individuals and businesses to give to and support nonprofits working to support their communities. He has previously introduced legislation to simplify the merger process and simplify North Carolina code, making it easier for nonprofits to operate in the state. He helped push this policy through the House, which passed it in 2019. He also cosponsored legislation creating sales tax exemptions in North Carolina for certain nonprofits. Zack has a demonstrated commitment to supporting nonprofits and the role they play in the community.

Zack will also continue to support policies that increase funding and jobs in the nonprofit sector, as well as policies that provide accessible and affordable childcare. This year, he introduced legislation that would allow the City of Durham to make grants available to nonprofits that serve the public interest and wellbeing of the community. He also introduced policy in 2019 to enhance the early childhood workforce and ensure child care met the needs of children across the state. Additionally, he sponsored a separate bill to ensure that the needs of child care providers were met during the Covid-19 pandemic and to ensure that child care professionals were compensated for continued services during the height of the pandemic. These policies demonstrate his commitment to ensuring quality child care services exist to support the workforce.

Zack has a proven history of supporting nonprofits as a legislator and will continue to enthusiastically support these policy priorities.