

17 March 2008

People's Alliance PAC 2008 Questionnaire  
For North Carolina State Auditor Candidates

Candidate's Name: Fred Aikens

1. North Carolina continues to suffer from embarrassing political scandals that have been in large part uncovered by the media and interested citizens like Jim Sinsheimer. What do you perceive as the role of State Auditor going forward in quelling corruption among our elected officials?

*Answer: The State Auditor must become much more aggressive in identifying and investigating corruption among all officials, whether elected, appointed, or career government officials. I am a firm believer that as a government official and public servant, our stewardship of taxpayer resources must be above reproach. Anything less is unacceptable. The Office of the State Auditor must be beefed up and provided with additional subpoena powers to assist in this effort.*

2. In your opinion, is the Office of the State Auditor fully equipped and staffed to maintain tabs on non-profits receiving state funding? If not, what would you change?

*Answer: I'm interested in all entities receiving state dollars and whether those funds are being spent efficiently, effectively, and for the purposes our Legislature intended. I'm interested in quelling waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption where ever it occurs. I'm also prepared to ask for and recommend additional resources for the Office of the State Auditor to implement the vision that I set for the Office. My vision will be comprehensive and include all areas under the auspices of the Auditor and some areas that may not now be adequately addressed.*

3. A recent audit highlighted malfeasance in North Carolina Central University's Assistant Provost's Office. Is enough being done to prevent situations like this from occurring in our public universities in the first place?

*Answer: Where ever and whenever it occurs, whether in public universities or regular state government, our efforts are not and have not been sufficient.*

4. Durham recently suffered through a second repaving of the botched I-40 expansion project. This and other mistakes/situations highlight the failure of previous Department of Transportation reforms. What legal changes does the G.A. need to enact to clean up the NC DOT?

*Answer: Let's separate the "botched I-40 project" from the other situations that periodically involve the Department of Transportation. The I-40 project appears to have occurred because of the lack of proper and close supervision/oversight of the construction process by some in the chain-of-command, including those at the very top. This wound up costing the state millions of dollars (I've heard figures as high as \$40M, but believe the actual cost might be lower and in the \$25M range) and is clearly not acceptable. I believe that sufficient enabling legislation, personnel policies, and regulations are in place to address these type situations when we have major mistakes that cost taxpayers so much money. The question is... Will those in positions of significant authority and responsibility hold their subordinates accountable and will the citizens and taxpayers of this state hold our elected officials accountable for being good stewards of our limited tax dollars? The other situations involving DOT might require a total revamping of the policy making process, the role that various groups and individuals have over the road construction process, and the process whereby members are appointed to the Board of Transportation. These are more likely to require close legislative oversight and study to determine the best operating method for our DOT as well as the specific legislative remedies required. However, strong and sound leadership is a requisite for an agency as massive and complex as DOT.*

5. Will you resign any and all employment with any other entity, even part-time, for the duration of your service if elected?

Answer: *Yes.*

6. Will you resign any and all Board positions with any other entity, both to avoid conflicts of interest as well as to free up your time for public service?

Answer: *Yes.*