

**People's Alliance PAC 2008 Questionnaire  
for NC Governor Candidates**

**PLEASE NOTE: After candidate interviews have taken place, these responses will be placed on the People's Alliance website <http://www.durhampa.org/>**

**Candidate's Name**     Bev Perdue    

**1. There is a series of bills adopted by one house or the other, which have "crossed over" to be considered in the upcoming "short session" of the General Assembly. In each case, we would like to know if you would support this bill and reasons for your position.**

**a. Environment/Clean Government: What is your position on the proposed "experimental" beach hardening measures being pushed by the residents of Figure 8 Island?**

Opposed

**b. Collective Bargaining for Government Workers (H 1583) - This bill would repeal NCGS 95-98, which prevents any government agency—state, county, or local—from negotiating with an organized group representing its employees.**

I believe that North Carolina is one of only two states in the nation that has a pre-emptive ban on such a policy decision by a willing local government. I also know that this kind of total pre-emptive ban is under legal attack across the nation as well as internationally on freedom of association and other grounds. This pre-emptive status quo may well not be able to withstand legal attack in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and we will need to consider making changes as part of the larger rethinking about state-local government relations that I want to generate as North Carolina's next Governor. We now have two world-class economic centers in Charlotte and the Triangle as well as numerous other growing metropolitan areas. And we must find ways more in tune with the fast-moving nature of the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy for our cities to flexibly govern themselves without so many mandates on all fronts from Raleigh.

At the state level, I am in favor of regular and wide-ranging workplace discussions between state employee representatives and agency managers. This is the essence of smart and effective management practices in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The leaders of the State Employees Association will confirm that I am the candidate in this race with by far the most progressive record of support for their salary and other concerns.

**c. Establish Paid Sick Days H 1711 – This bill would require employers to allow employees to earn up to 7 sick days a year that may be taken by employees to care for themselves, sick children, spouses, and parents**

I am interested in considering expansions of family leave, especially for state employees. But my top priorities will be such measures to help working families as expansion of the state's Earned Income Tax Credit, an increase in the minimum wage, expanded Medicaid coverage for low-income working parents, and developing more affordable health insurance options for small business employees to which the state as well as employers can financially contribute.

**d. Pesticides Bill H1818 Agricultural Family Protection Act - This bill would require farm operators to maintain more complete records about the application of pesticides. It also prohibits discrimination or retaliation against any employee who issues a complaint or files a claim regarding the application of pesticides and allows for confidential complaints.**

Support.

- 2. Energy: The structure of utility rates can be a powerful force in discouraging waste, encouraging appropriate investment and keeping necessities affordable for everyone. In light of the controversies over Cliffside, what, if any, changes would you like to see in the structure of electric and natural gas rates? What other ways would you use your office to move NC to a more sustainable future?**

Two months ago, I made clear my view that the state should not proceed with licensing the Cliffside plant and as part of my energy plan, I have stated that as Governor I will oppose any further licensing of coal-fired power plants.

One of the single greatest challenges facing our state today is how we are going to provide affordable, clean energy to our residents. As we grow, it is critical that we reduce the output of pollutants and greenhouse gases. We need to press our utilities to be creative, to invest in efficiency, and to find practical cost-efficient ways to help businesses and consumers use less energy. We should look to expand the REPS goal beyond 12.5% for renewable and efficiency. If we set a 50% efficiency expectation on future load growth for our utilities, and manage its implementation properly, we can achieve a fair result that leads to cleaner air, affordable power, and a better quality of life for all in our state.

- 3. Growth and Infrastructure: North Carolina has some huge gaps in funding for the infrastructure: \$65B for transportation, \$30B for water and sewer, and so on. At the same time, we seem to be constantly "stretching a threadbare blanket" to cover services such as mental health. How would your leadership help us get adequate and stable financing for state government?**

By undertaking a comprehensive modernization of our antiquated tax structure, we can have a far more economically efficient and fair system that raises more revenue. At the same time, I am committed to finding innovative ways to shake up the budget process in Raleigh that will root out wasteful loopholes and special-interest spending. Similar to a recent innovation that Senator Obama successfully pushed at the federal level, I am also calling for an electronic open-book approach so that all state contracts and grants are readily accessible on the internet. And as I make clear in my transportation plan, we can significantly reduce our projected transportation cost by transforming the Department of Transportation into a professional 21<sup>st</sup> century organization. But I will not shy away at the end of the day from taking steps if necessary, to assure adequate revenue for a 21<sup>st</sup> century education and resource services for our people.

Beyond direct budgetary and revenue reform, we must also diversify our economy and make it more entrepreneurial to help spur greater revenue growth. That is why I have led development of the state's new Green Business Fund, advocating a Main Street Solutions initiative to stimulate

the economies of our small towns and rural areas, and pushing for targeted assistance to our existing small businesses and start-up ventures.

**4. Foreclosure Crisis: In 2007, the NC General Assembly passed a number of consumer-protection bills related to borrowing. What additional measures in this area, if any, would you take as a leader in NC?**

I strongly support the legislative actions taken during this past General Assembly session to curb new predatory home-mortgage practices that are fueling the foreclosure crisis. I was also a supporter of the landmark 1999 legislation that became a national model for combating more general predatory lending practices. Self-Help Credit Union and The Center for Responsible Lending in Durham, the Justice Center in Raleigh, as well as a number of other advocacy organizations have provided impressive leadership on this issue front, and I will continue to look to them for policy guidance.

Recent foreclosure activity in North Carolina has been outpacing the national average. As the News and Observer has pointed out, the foreclosure crisis has hit Durham especially hard. Thus further action at the state as well as federal level is clearly merited. I understand necessary next steps include the following:

- *Initiating state funding so that the Housing Counselors Network can add more counselors throughout the state.* Such counselors perform an invaluable service in advising homeowners who may be facing foreclosure and advocating on their behalf with lenders.
- *State support of Legal Aid of North Carolina and other regional services to provide formal legal representation.* Too many homeowners already in foreclosure proceedings are suffering further abuse due to their inability to pay an attorney.
- *Strengthening the Housing Trust Fund.* The greater availability of affordable rental housing options will be crucial for those who have already suffered foreclosure and trying to regain their economic footing. As already discussed, I favor an immediate doubling of state support for the Housing Trust Fund.
- *Expansion of the Home Protection Pilot Program.* This initiative provides crucial "bridge" financial assistance targeted to workers dislocated by international trade and in danger of losing their homes.
- *Pro-Homeowner Changes in Our State's Foreclosure Process.* Our state's foreclosure process is so inflexible that it does not even allow a homeowner to raise the defense that the terms of the home mortgage are illegal. A homeowner must take separate action and even post a bond although most homeowners facing foreclosure lack the financial means to do that.

**5. North Carolina Housing Trust: what is your position on increased funding of the NC Housing Trust Fund to \$50 million?**

I voted for the establishment of the state's Housing Trust Fund in 1987 during my first year in the legislature, and I have continued to be a strong supporter over the last two decades. Since its creation, the state has appropriated over \$100 million to the Trust Fund. All this money goes directly into "bricks and mortar" for the building of affordable homes and rental housing across the state.

The long-range goal of Trust Fund advocates is to push annual state support for the Trust Fund up to \$50 million annually. As North Carolina's next Governor, I am committed to working toward this goal and will take the immediate step of doubling annual state funding.

**6. The State of North Carolina has already passed a Defense of Marriage Act. What is your position on DOMA? Do you support addition legislation (e.g. constitutional amendment) in support of/or opposed to same-sex marriage? Would you support legislative support of civil union protections for citizens in same-sex relationships?**

I do not support a constitutional marriage amendment because North Carolina law is clear. As Lieutenant Governor, I have a formal policy in my office prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. As Governor, I would ensure that this policy is administered throughout state government. I do not believe that such discrimination has any justification in the workplace. And I believe that civil contracts between adults regarding property and other personal matters should be honored. People who are involved in a committed relationship should not be barred from making health care decisions and visiting loved ones in the hospital.

**7. Do you support continued funding of the state abortion fund?**

I had a mixed record earlier in my career on the state's special abortion fund for non-Medicaid eligible women. But as I have grown in my personal life and as an elected official, I have come to an unequivocal position in favor of Roe v. Wade and women's reproductive rights. I am proud that I have earned the endorsement of Emily's List, the premier national pro-choice political organization. I have made clear that I will veto any legislation inconsistent with Roe v. Wade, and I am proud to be the one candidate in either party who has been speaking out against the Supreme Court's ongoing assault against Roe. I will support strengthening the fund and push with other Governors to loosen the severe "Hyde Amendment" restrictions on Medicaid eligibility at the federal level.