

People's Alliance PAC 2008 Questionnaire for NC Lt. 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: Hampton Dellinger

- 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?

I strongly oppose the bill to allow the proposed hardening measures pushed by the residents of Figure 8 Island. The Coastal Resource Commission banned hard structures more than 20 years ago, and for good reason. The proposed groin would do nothing for the beach as a whole. Instead, it would simply catch sand that otherwise be disbursed downstream, and the rate of erosion downstream would accelerate, just as it did following the construction of the groin at the Oregon Inlet. While in the Attorney General's Office I fought sandbagging and hardened structures sought to protect a condominium development at Wrightsville Beach, and I will do the same as Lieutenant Governor.

This bill – which one of my opponents, Walter Dalton, backed in the Senate – essentially offers a bailout for a few private individuals, and it does so at the expense of our public beaches. Government favoritism for those with the money to make their voices heard is wrong, and it lowers our citizens' trust in government, making good legislation more difficult to pass. That's why I recently released a detailed a comprehensive [government reform plan](#) to reduce the influence of special interests and to make sure that our leaders are responsive to the needs of all citizens, not just big donors.

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 support the repeal of the ban on collective bargaining by government employees. Providing a forum for public employees and employers to negotiate solutions to problems will increase job satisfaction, leading to increased efficiency and lower turnover, benefiting the employees, the employers, and the citizens they both serve. I am proud to support the rights of government employees and I am proud that the NC AFL-CIO has [endorsed my candidacy](#).

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 support H 1711. Over 40% of North Carolina's workers receive no paid sick leave, and many put themselves at risk of losing their jobs if they stay home. This is wrong from a common decency perspective – workers should be able to care for their loved ones in a time of need – and it is also wrong from a public policy perspective, as many of those workers are in service jobs where they are likely to

spread germs and disease if they are forced to work when sick. In addition, the N.C. Justice Center estimates that the bill would actually be good for business, finding that the increased productivity and decreased turnover would actually save businesses \$120 per worker over the course of the year.

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.

I support H 1818. The AgMart situation – in which an Administrative Law Judge recommended throwing out much of the punishment against the company despite finding numerous violations – showed the urgent need to overhaul our pesticide laws. Farmworkers should be encouraged to come forward when they suspect wrongdoing, not put in fear of doing so, and farm operators should be required to keep better records so that possible violations and dangers of pesticide use can be more thoroughly investigated.

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?

The Lieutenant Governor is uniquely positioned to take a long-term view and seek to ensure that present actions benefit rather than burden succeeding generations. Having served in the Governor's office, I know the daily demands on a Governor's time. The Lieutenant Governor has an opportunity to think not just about the next meeting but about the next year, the next decade, the next generation.

It is clear that investment in developing clean energy today will pay great dividends down the road. By leading the way in attracting businesses that develop clean energy, we can decrease pollution and combat climate change while reaping economic benefits as well -- the Tellus Institute estimates that those businesses can create more than 20,000 jobs while providing benefits in the form of sustainable energy.

The Governor's promise of funding for a new Advanced Transportation Energy Center to work with energy companies to improve lithium ion batteries was a good start in making North Carolina a leader in the development and use of clean energy. There are a number of other steps we need to take, beginning with changing the incentives we've given our energy companies. Right now, utilities make a profit on every kilowatt-hour of electricity used and can earn a profit on any new power plant, so there's no incentive to conserve energy -- in fact, we've given the energy companies economic reason to oppose any efforts by the state to become more efficient. That needs to change.

One of the great resources we can offer to clean energy businesses is our college and university system and the talented graduates they produce. We should make North Carolina's colleges and universities world leaders in preparing students to work in clean energy industries.

There are also steps we should take to help North Carolina become more energy efficient with the technology we already have. In 2003, North Carolina was 46th in efficiency spending per capita. We could spend ten times as much and still be below the national average, and much of what we could spend would pay for itself. For example, effective education as to the benefits of compact florescent light bulbs will save our citizens money while removing the equivalent of hundreds of thousands of cars in terms of pollution. I support a PBF, as recommended by the North Carolina Utilities Commission. We should offer tax incentives to businesses and individuals for the use of hybrid vehicles. We also need to

invest in mass transit options that are cheap and convenient, and to build bike paths and make other investments in order for non-motorized transportation to be a safe and attractive option.

We should also give consumers the tools to monitor their energy use more easily. The Pacific Northwest National Laboratory of the Energy Department has found that giving consumers more information about and control over their energy usage can result in up to 15-percent lower usage over the course of a year.

The move to a more energy efficient state should start with our children. My [education plan](#) included a number of steps to reduce energy consumption and to instill the value and importance of conservation in our children. I have called for expanding drivers' education to transit education in which students would learn not only the rules of the road but also the options for and benefits of mass transit and non-motorized options, as well as a collaborative state and local program that would allow North Carolinians to carry a single card that licenses the individual to operate a motor vehicle and allows for payment when using local- and state-operated mass transit systems. I also called for North Carolina to build LEED-certified schools, retrofit our school buses so as to cut tailpipe emissions by 85%, eventually move to a fleet of hybrid school buses to cut fuel consumption by 70%, encourage parents to turn off their cars while waiting to pick up their children, and install waterless urinals -- currently in use at Statesville's Third Creek Elementary -- that can save more than three gallons of water per use.

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?

We need to be smarter about how we spend our money. As part of my [government reform plan](#), I propose that we stop paying for-profit consultants for services that government can perform more efficiently, stop assuming risks better left to the private sector, and direct public spending toward long-term infrastructure instead of offering company-specific incentives that won't entice any businesses if the infrastructure is not there to support them. I have also [said](#) we need to stop allowing our schools to charge in-state tuition for out-of-state student-athletes, which results in a transfer of millions of dollars from our schools' general fund to athletic booster clubs. And while working in the private sector, I was able to identify \$11 million in taxpayer money being wasted on office supplies and law enforcement equipment in just six months.

The new leadership in Raleigh is going to have to make tough choices to make sure that essential government services remain funded. Just last year, Mr. Dalton oversaw and voted for a proposed state budget that, according to NC Policy Watch, would lead to: "Lower taxes on millionaires, higher taxes on thousands of working families, fewer services to help children, the mentally ill, and kids at risk of dropping out of school." My opponent has backed proposals -- from putting governments at risk of owing millions of dollars to billboard sign owners to a major new tax giveaway for homebuilders to a tax cut for the richest North Carolinians -- that would seriously reduce local and state governments' financial resources.

I disagree with my opponent's position on these issues. I support a progressive tax system in which everyone pays his or her fair share. I will always oppose cuts to education funding and other vital social services, just as I did earlier this decade. I was part of the Governor's team that in 2001 stood up to Mr. Dalton, and others who were willing to accept hundreds of millions of dollars in cuts to the state's education budget, to balance the budget so that North Carolina's public schools and teachers were protected, not sacrificed. As Lieutenant Governor, I will be prepared to fight similar battles -- including asking the most fortunate to do more when necessary -- to ensure that crucial state programs and infrastructure receive sufficient funding.

I also believe that *all* counties should have the same broad array of financing options, including impact fees, to meet their needs at the local level. Given the extraordinary range of demands they face, every local government needs equal access to every tool in the local public financing toolbox, so that they can come up with creative, equitable, and effective solutions. Charlotte's recent mass transit tax referendum could be a good model for future transit and growth initiatives across the state. Subject to voter approval, counties should also be able to embrace progressive approach that asks those who are most fortunate to bear a larger share of the burden. We must give counties and voters a broad menu of financing options and make sure that new development is an additional benefit not an unfunded burden to communities.

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?

With nearly 50,000 mortgage foreclosures in North Carolina last year and an estimated 60,000 this year, we need to continue taking action to protect families currently on the brink of losing their homes and to ensure that borrowers in the future have the information and resources they need to make informed decisions in order to avoid putting themselves in risky situations. I agree with several suggestions made at a recent presentation by the House Select Committee on Rising Mortgage Foreclosures chaired by former House Speaker Dan Blue and Walter Church, including requiring judicial supervision of foreclosures when certain kinds of loans are involved, making housing counselors more available both before the signing of a mortgage and if a mortgage needs to be refinanced, and cracking down on con artists preying on those at risk for losing their homes.

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

I support an appropriation of at least \$50 million every year to the Housing Trust Fund. Over 700,000 households in North Carolina lack safe, affordable housing, a situation that often hits some of our most vulnerable – children, seniors, and people with disabilities – the hardest. Families are forced to make decisions between paying the rent or foregoing other necessities like health insurance or paying educational expenses, choices no family should be forced to make. In addition to giving some of these individuals and families the help they deserve, an investment in the Housing Trust Fund can create jobs, build tax bases, and make our communities stronger.

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?

As Lt. Governor, my focus will be on ending discrimination in state government employment, including discrimination based on sexual orientation. I do not support a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage; I do support civil unions and partnership benefits.

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

Yes. As with family planning generally, no woman should be denied the constitutional rights guaranteed by *Roe* as a result of her economic circumstances.