

People's Alliance PAC 2008 Questionnaire for U. S. Senator Candidates

Candidate's Name: Duskin Lassiter

1. Will you vote to repeal the Bush tax cuts? And in the long term, what is your vision for tax code reform? Should it be simpler and/or fairer, and if so, how would that be accomplished?

Yes, 90% of Bush's tax cuts went to the wealthy. This action had three effects: 1) we went from budget surpluses to huge deficits, 2) the tax cuts sparked inflation, and 3) states had to raise taxes on the middle class to make up for the money they stopped receiving from the federal government.

My long term plan is to shift the tax burden where it belongs; the rich. I believe in progressive and multiple tax brackets. I am completely against any type of flat tax. A poor single mother of three should never pay the same tax rate a millionaire pays. Finally, I am a fiscal conservative. I believe in the pay as you go system. One of the best things Bill Clinton did was to balance the budget. If elected, I will work to do the same.

2. What is your strategy for solving the Iraq War? Does it include a timetable, and if so how long? What role do you envision Iraq's neighbors such as Iran playing?

We must end this fruitless war. The current government in Iraq is corrupt and shows little concern for women's civil rights. Without a timetable for withdrawal of say 12-18 months, maximum, the Iraqi government will not reform itself or come to terms with the Sunnis. Our military is nothing more than a crutch holding up a dysfunctional regime. All future aid and support must be hinged on democratic reforms.

There are two possible roles in Iraq's neighbors, including Iran, can play. One is of interference that could lead to a regional war. The other is Iraq's neighbors can work together towards peace. We need diplomatic skills the Republicans lack. There is a much higher statistical probability for failure if John McCain wins the presidency.

3. What specific policies would you advocate to assist economically depressed rural areas, such as eastern North Carolina? What sorts of industry and investment other than tourism can be drawn there?

This question is one of the biggest reasons why I'm running. In 2006, we ran a 758 billion dollar trade deficit in both goods and services. If we can modify all free trade agreements into balanced trade agreements we can create over \$21 billion in economic development. This one policy change would boost our economy by 5.75%--many long closed factories would be reopened by this action.

Finally the balanced trade deficit would ease inflation pressures. Add that to a balanced budget and you may very well halt inflation all together.

4. Do you support the ideal of universal health insurance, and if so, how would you accomplish it—through lowering costs, mandating coverage, or both?

Yes, universal healthcare is not a privilege; it is a basic human right. Under my plan, you are covered starting at birth. The first day you go to work is the day you start paying. Payments are based on a percentage of personal income; not age, illness, or the number of children in the family.

Non-profits like Blue Cross would be used. Hospitals would also need to revert back to not for profit organizations. Pharmaceutical companies would have to limit their profit margins to cost plus 8-10%.

Everyone would receive a universal healthcare card, and would be covered nationwide. Disease outbreaks will be spotted more quickly plus you don't have any more paperwork. Prescription drug ads would end. This would save 15-20% in advertising. Another cost saver would be the reduced number of people misdiagnosing themselves. 50% of the people who walk into a doctor's office are wrong about what type of medication they need. These folks usually get the wrong meds though because the doctor is there to make money. Or they'll go doctor shopping until they do find one who will write the prescription.

Overall, if we were to adopt a European style healthcare plan, we would increase our overall lifespan and reduce infant mortality. Not only that, but we could save \$700 billion per year. With that cost savings, you could balance the budget plus fund other much needed programs without having a tax increase. Finally, by now, you know this is going to be an inflation tamer. Alan Greenspan would be proud.

5. What role does the federal government have in shaping educational goals and then enforcing them? For instance, how would you reform the No Child Left Behind Act?

The goals of No Child Left Behind are noble and good, but the Bush administration punished low performing schools and has shown favoritism towards private schools. I feel it is unrealistic to expect an IQ of 50 to learn algebra. Not all children learn at the same level, more money needs to be spent in the under-performing inner-city schools that have been neglected for so long. More teachers need to be hired in order to reduce class size. Finally, we must inform kids that 12 years is not enough education. Once they leave high school, they will need at least two more years of vocational school. My goal is to see that those first two years are free. I feel this is in the best interest of the nation. The plan will, in the long run, be a lot cheaper than building more prisons.

6. How would you ensure increased energy independence for the nation? Would it include more domestic oil drilling, incentives for so-called "mountaintop removal" for coal excavation, and an expansion of nuclear energy?

There is a brand new technology out that can take waste carbon dioxide and deposit it into a closed loop photo bioreactor with algae, the world's fastest growing plant, and produce up to 33,000 gallons of bio-diesel per acre, per year. This technology can meet this nation's energy needs using a land space about a tenth of the size of New Mexico.

Not only can you reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 90%, you can also use either fresh, salt, or even waste water. This technology can be used in the desert or city.

The actual test site is in a desert. The only water taken out of the system is locked up in the algae. By far, this program is the best program out there, especially considering the fact that you could plant the entire nation in corn and still not meet our energy needs. This leads to one last point, food inflation. All that corn based ethanol production is driving up the cost of food. My program will stop this. The only issue is money. I propose a \$308 billion dollar program to make this nation energy independent in five years. Of that North Carolina would receive \$9.25 billion. The reason why we need this much money is due to the fact that we are building, in essence, a reversed engineered oil refinery. Oil refineries aren't cheap, these are billion dollar projects and payoffs on these projects are not measured in 3-5 years, but in decades. This is the reason why this country hasn't built one in more than thirty years. This is also a part of the reason why gas is so high. The purpose of this massive plan is to be prepared for the next wave of price hikes that are likely to occur when the cheap oil runs out in 2015. As far as incentives are concerned, I feel that \$100 a barrel is all the incentive the oil companies need. I am against mountaintop removal, it is too environmentally destructive. Nuclear energy is expensive but may be necessary in some areas. Wind should be our first option, solar should be second, geothermal our third and nuclear, our last resort, due to expense.

7. What is your position on the use of domestic surveillance and other expansive counter-terrorism tools under the Patriot Act?

The Bush Administration has exceeded its authority. If the government wants a wire tap, then they need to go before a judge. The Patriot Act does not protect the true rule of law.

8. How should U.S. immigration policy be reformed—through a guest worker program or something else?

We should enforce our current laws. Illegal immigrants should be stopped at the border and employers must verify documentation. In these tough economic times we must ensure Americans remain employed first and foremost. It would be next to impossible for me to support a guest worker program with rising unemployment.

9. What else can Congress do to temper the adverse effects of the home foreclosure crisis—on both individual homeowners and the nation's economy?

Banks must tighten lending standards back to where they used to be. Buying a home and paying off a mortgage is a responsibility that some people cannot manage. The quickest way to get through this crisis is to start renegotiating these adjustable rate mortgages. The quicker we get folks into a fixed rate mortgage, the better. Those individuals who do have an ARM must also start coming in and talking to lenders. 80% of those who are foreclosed on fail to consult a professional. Without reforms, it could take years to straighten out the housing market.