

Rep. Nathan Ballentine's Government Reform Questionnaire

1) Earmarks, or funds allocated by legislators for projects they say will benefit the people in their districts, have become a hot topic on both the state and national level. Lawmakers often defend earmarks as important for their constituents, and say it's their job to fight for their district's fair share of government funds. Others, however, describe earmarks as "pork," and say they quickly accumulate and weigh down the budget and are often used by legislators to buy votes back home. As your voice in the House of Representatives, I strive hard to balance the demand for needed services with the right of the hard-working taxpayers to keep as much of their own money as possible. In your opinion, which should lawmakers do?

- A) Always oppose earmarks and "pork" in order to limit government spending;
- B) Continue to request spending for projects they consider important for their home district;
- C) Continue to request state spending for needed local projects, but use restraint; strike the right balance between securing important local projects and the need to rein in state spending

Comments: _____

2) Concerns about the influence of money in politics have caused some to call for a reform of the state's campaign finance laws as a means of renewing public confidence in state government. Should our state overhaul its campaign finance laws?

- A) Yes, the state should reform campaign finance laws in order to limit the influence of money in politics.
- B) No, increasing controls on campaign contributions would undermine the rights of freedom of expression

Comments: _____

3) There are contrasting views on what the proper role of an elected Representative should be. Some feel it is important for lawmakers to stand on their convictions and their own philosophy, and to do what they believe is right regardless of the will of his or her constituents. Others argue that the role of a lawmaker should be to accurately represent the views of their constituents, whether or not they match his or her own views on that particular issue. Which of the following statements matches your view?

- A) Elected Representatives should always represent the views of their constituents, regardless of their own political philosophy;
- B) Elected Representatives should always vote in accordance with their own philosophy, regardless of the will of their constituents;
- C) Elected Representatives must listen to the will of their constituents, and vote accordingly. In some instances, however, a representative must do what he feels is right, regardless of personal interest.

Comments: _____

4) Currently, both the Democrat and Republican caucuses (legislators from each party) are permitted to meet and discuss issues in private with no media or public present. Some have said this practice violates the notion that public business should be done in public and allows legislators to make major decisions behind closed doors, while others say these are political strategy meetings and not meetings of a government body.

- A) All caucus meetings should be open to the public;
- B) Caucus meetings should be allowed to be held privately, but only away from government property;
- C) Caucus meetings should be allowed to be held privately;

Comments: _____

5) In your opinion, what is the most important step that should be taken to reform state government? _____

6) In your opinion, what is the biggest single problem currently facing our state? _____

Other comments or suggestions: _____