



2024 Tennessee AFL-CIO State Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you for your interest in seeking an endorsement from the Tennessee AFL-CIO Labor Council's Committee on Political Education (COPE). Our organization represents approximately 37 international unions, 273 different local unions and affiliations with a membership of over 60,000 Tennesseans.

The state federation also serves as the voice of working families at the legislature—lobbying for worker-friendly policies to encourage a greater quality of life for all Tennesseans. To have a voice on the job, we believe that working families need to stand together in solidarity.

The following questionnaire will be used by our office and the respective Central Labor Council (Memphis & West Tennessee, Nashville & Middle Tennessee, Chattanooga, Knoxville-Oak Ridge, and Upper East Tennessee) that has regional jurisdiction over the seat that you're seeking. Our Central Labor Councils (CLCs) play an important role in the screening process by interviewing candidates and bringing recommendations to our COPE meeting for a final vote.

Your answers will be kept confidential and will not be shared outside of your respective CLC and our office. Most of the questions simply require “yes” or “no” answers, but you are welcome to elaborate if you would like to do so. At this time, we do **not** plan to make endorsements for the August 1st Primary Election.

Please return a copy of this completed questionnaire to Tennessee AFL-CIO Communications & Political Director Alyssa Hansen (ahansen@tnaflcio.org or 1901 Lindell Avenue, Nashville, TN 37203) **AND** your respective CLC President by **Friday, June 21st**. This gives our CLCs ample time to arrange and conduct interviews ahead of our COPE meeting on **Wednesday, August 21st**. If needed, extensions will be discussed and granted on a case-by-case basis.

If you have additional questions about the questionnaire, please call (615) 279-4005. Once again, we thank you for your interest in seeking our endorsement and look forward to electing more labor-friendly candidates to office.

Contact Information

Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

E-Mail:

State Office You're Seeking:

Additional Campaign Contact (if any):

1. Describe any experience that you've had with organized labor. For example, have you ever been a union member or were you raised in a union family? Or, have you received an endorsement from a labor group in the past? If so, please specify.

2. In 2022, voters chose to enshrine Tennessee's "Right to Work" law in the state constitution. The phrase "Right to Work" may sound like a good idea but in reality, it's the complete opposite. In states that have these laws on the books, it's more difficult for workers to have a voice in negotiating things like fair wages, good benefits and safe workplaces. If elected, will you support workers who want to organize a union and stand up to big business and corporate special interest groups?

3. Throughout the past decade, many Tennessee politicians have inserted themselves and their opinions into union elections (example: former Governor Bill Haslam and former U.S. Senator Bob Corker ahead of the election at Volkswagen in 2014 and Governor Bill Lee ahead of the election at Volkswagen earlier this year). Do you believe that employees who seek to organize a union at their workplace should be free to do so without employer or political interference?

4. Last year, the Tennessee General Assembly voted to ban automatic payroll dues deduction for professional educators' associations (example: the Tennessee Education Association). Lawmakers have had their sights set on doing the same for ALL public employees for years, which would affect a large number of union members. Would you vote against any attempts to ban automatic payroll dues deduction for public employees?

5. Tennessee's minimum wage has not increased in 15 years and still sits at \$7.25. This is the same amount as the federal minimum wage. Attempts by several Tennessee lawmakers to increase the minimum wage in recent years have been unsuccessful. In addition to raising the minimum wage, do you believe that it's time to start talking instead about a **living wage** that's enough to securely raise a family?

6. One of the supermajority's main priorities in recent years has been pre-empting the decisions of local governments. This makes it difficult for individual cities to set their own policies on things like paid leave. Do you oppose preempting the decisions of local governments, and would you work to ensure that cities are able to enact policies without the worry of legislative overreach?

7. Do you support equal pay for equal work, regardless of gender?

8. During his time in office, Governor Bill Lee has heavily pushed the concept of “school choice,” including the use of vouchers for students to use public money to attend private school. In late 2023, he announced plans to expand Tennessee’s voucher program to all 95 counties. This ultimately stalled during the most recent legislative session but could come back next year. Vouchers rob public schools of desperately-needed financial resources. Do you believe that public dollars should go towards public schools?

9. The Tennessee AFL-CIO is a non-partisan organization and will consider supporting any candidate who supports working families. With a legislature that features a supermajority, this means working across the aisle whenever possible. Are you open to collaborating with members of the opposite party to co-sponsor legislation that improves the lives of working families?

10. Is there anything else that you would like for us to know about you, your campaign, and, if elected, your goals while in office?