

Candidate: Gregg Johnson

Office Sought: Illinois House District 72

Questionnaire Responses:

Why should a business leader vote for you?

Our local businesses are part of the fabric of our community and they rely on a strong community to prosper – and vice versa. When our students get a better education, businesses get better workers – when our families have access to better healthcare, businesses have healthier workers. And when our local businesses are thriving, jobs are created, standards of living go up, and everyday people have a better shot at the American Dream. Creating lasting and sustainable economic development in our region requires long-term thinking and partnerships between business and industry, state and local government, organized labor, higher education, and most importantly the people who live in our communities.



What does a business-friendly tax environment look like for you?

Illinois government can create a more business-friendly tax environment by encouraging investment, innovation, and job creation within the state. A key way to do this is collaboration with stakeholders, business leaders, and economic experts to explore state tax policies that focus on fostering economic development to while providing sufficient revenue for needed programs like education, infrastructure, and public safety. Those are not mutually exclusive – policies that help businesses grow also grow our tax base and increase employment in Illinois and are precisely what we need to pursue as a state. I am particularly sensitive to state tax issues because of our district’s geography – as a border state, differences in tax structure have a particularly pronounced impact when the competing business environment is just across the river.

What is your approach to regulation?

Regulations need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis – a blanket statement about all regulatory efforts is by necessity too broad. I believe that regulation should be used sparingly, and only when there is a pressing public interest, so as not to impede growth unnecessarily. Many environmental and worker safety regulations are vitally important to keep the public safe and serve a vital purpose, while others may not. I plan to work with stakeholders including local business and the QC Chamber to help identify areas where we can cut red tape and encourage growth while providing for the health and safety of workers, consumers, and the environment.

What would you do to support investment in amenities and recreation to support talent attraction and retention?

Establishing grant programs that provide funding for local governments and private organizations to develop parks, recreational facilities, and cultural amenities will pay long-term dividends in terms of economic growth. We must also invest in infrastructure improvements that enhance accessibility to parks, trails, and recreational areas, including public transportation and pedestrian-friendly pathways. In addition, we need to look to our specific advantages as an area – our beautiful riverfront, our acres of state parks, and many existing buildings that could be developed into multi-use spaces that spur local economic growth.

How can you support workforce attraction and retention in the Quad Cities and Illinois?

There are two key opportunities that we can take advantage of to promote workforce attraction and retention in our area. First, we need to emphasize and grow partnerships with educational institutions: by collaborating more closely with community colleges and universities in the Quad Cities, we can create tailored training programs that meet local industry needs. The economic renaissance that Pittsburgh has experienced in recent decades was powered by partnerships between higher education and industry that created booming high-tech growth opportunities there. We share some of the attributes that made that plan possible for Pittsburgh and we need to explore similar methods here. Second, it is vital that we expand apprenticeship programs that allow students and job seekers to gain hands-on experience in high-demand fields like high-tech manufacturing, green energy, healthcare, and other growth sectors. These programs are vital both to the workers that learn, gain experience, and ultimately gain employment as well as for the industries that need skilled workers to grow.

What else should voters know about you?

I believe that the smartest economic investment Illinois can make is in our people and our communities. Ensuring quality public education that teaches skills vital to the 21st century economy, updating and modernizing our transportation infrastructure, and making smart long-term fiscal decisions will grow our economy from the bottom up and the middle out, improving quality of life for everyday people and creating lasting economic growth in our region.

Candidate: Charlie Helmick

Office Sought: Illinois House District 72

Questionnaire Responses:

Why should a business leader vote for you?

My wife and I both own our insurance agency here in Silvis. We have jointly owned 2 other businesses in Rock Island and another in Silvis. We used our own money and renovated 2 condemned building that today are both operating business with employees. We are active in our community and church.



What does a business-friendly tax environment look like for you?

The current levels of taxation on business has got to be reduced. The property taxes on my Silvis office went up over 207% just last year. Lower taxes on business and reduction on costs for worker compinsation are a must.

What is your approach to regulation?

Regulation is a business killer. I believe that representatives must listen to business leaders and take their needs into serious consideration. Free markets without paralyzing regulation have to be the key to successful operations.

What would you do to support investment in amenities and recreation to support talent attraction and retention?

Good talent is a vital part in running a successful business. Incentives and an extensive rewards program certainly help. When a employee feels like a part of a team the retention will grow for sure. I have learned that providing a pleasant and inviting work environment also is a plus. Also a healthy bonus program will increase productivity.

How can you support workforce attraction and retention in the Quad Cities and Illinois?

Holding events that include family such as free concert and movie trips. Spontaneous recreational event such as BBQ lunches and sponsored trips on river attractions.

What else should voters know about you?

I'm active in my community and church. As a disabled United States Marine Corp veteran I campaign constantly for the support of our veterans. The simple fact is there are not enough

elected veterans in Springfield, only about 7 out of 177 seats. My wife and I donate to local EMS, Firefighters and Police organizations thru a program with our insurance agency. I worked for the Department of Homeland Security and was an officer with the state of Florida.

Candidate: Ryan Spain

Office Sought: Illinois House District 73

Questionnaire Responses:

Why should a business leader vote for you?

Since being elected to the Illinois House in 2016, I have championed legislation to address critical issues in economic development and job creation, healthcare modernization, community improvement, government efficiency and accountability, and environmental stewardship. This is an agenda to move the needle on important issues to our future. I am not afraid to address major cost-drivers like pensions, public employee unions, and the regulatory state. Our pension debt stands at hundreds of billions. We need innovative new ideas to tackle these significant cost drivers. That's why I passed important legislation to consolidate Police and Fire pension funds from 700+ to two. The decisions made in Springfield and in Washington will either stifle or allow our communities to flourish- it's really that simple. We need leaders who have the backbone to make tough decisions that will truly change the trajectory our State has been on for the past two decades. These two decades don't have to define 200 years for Illinois.



What does a business-friendly tax environment look like for you?

Low tax rates, fewer hoops to jump through for small business startups, a competitive fee and regulatory climate when compared with other states, and incentive programs to make in-fill developments attractive, along with local, state, and federal government stakeholders fully engaged on growing our tax base through growth of jobs and population.

What is your approach to regulation?

Regulations to protect consumer safety and public safety are critical. But the proliferation of the regulatory state is crushing job growth. Regulation that serves as a roadblock to creating new tax base revenue, by picking winners and losers in the marketplace, is wrong and stifling to sustained economic growth.

What would you do to support investment in amenities and recreation to support talent attraction and retention?

People go where they are valued, and they stay in places they value. This is why both great employers and quality of life amenities are so important to healthy communities. By attracting young families who fall in love with our communities and continuing to invest in amenities to improve their quality of life, we foster two-way investments from residents (our most important stakeholders). I have sponsored and worked to pass legislation to leverage private dollars to enable

post-graduation scholarships for communities who wish to attract top talent to live in their community after their education is complete and they are entering the workforce.

How can you support workforce attraction and retention in the Quad Cities and Illinois?

Lower taxes, less regulation and attention to the issues jobs creators and constituents raise every day. Employers must feel like their elected officials are stakeholders in their success. Beyond having a great voting record of supporting good policy that allows job creators to thrive in our region, elected officials must also do the work to understand opportunities those job creators can seize upon to grow jobs, expand their business, and take advantage of future market opportunities.

What else should voters know about you?

As an Economic Development professional in the healthcare field and serving as State Representative of the 73rd District, I work every day to remove barriers for employees seeking employment and employers seeking the next generation of leaders for their organizations. Together, we can make Illinois a great place for families to grow and thrive.