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Q1

Candidate Information

Name	**Susan Ruiz**
Office, District	**23**
Party Affiliation	**Democrat**

Q2

Please provide preferred contact information. This information will be made available to cities in your district.

Preferred Email Address	**susanruizforkansas@gmail.com**
Preferred Phone Number	**913-221-7687**
Campaign Website	**susanruizks.com**

Q3

Please list your current occupation.

Social Worker

Q4

Please briefly describe why you are running for the Legislature.

I was first elected in 2018 because I made commitment to my constituents that I would be their voice in the legislature. I did not like how Trump was speaking about immigrants and people of color in general. I felt like he was dividing our country. My father (an immigrant) always said, "if you don't like what they are doing, vote them out." I felt that I could make a difference and bring a very different perspective to the legislature.

Q5

If you have held any elected public office previously, what position(s) did you hold?

I have represented District 23 since 2018. I do not have an opponent this year. This will be my 5th term.

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Q6 **Yes**

Do you support the principle of local control?

Q7 **Yes**

Do you oppose state preemption of local authority?

Q8

What do you believe is the role of local government?

The role of local government is to oversee and provide public works, infrastructure, and basic utilities. They also set and enforce planning and zoning, support parks and recreation, set local budgets, collect revenue and provide for public safety.

Q9

Provide any additional comments you may have:

Public health clinics are also under some local control. Local government connects and supports community programs, schools, hospitals and local business.

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Q10

What are the two biggest challenges facing the district you will represent and how would you like to address them?

I would like to first hear from local officials about what they are facing regarding their priorities. However, fully funding public schools; access to basic medical care and affordable housing are the challenges facing the district. When I meet with local city officials, I get to share my concerns. Most of the time we are in agreement. I count on them to share with me their priorities all throughout the legislative session.

Q11

What ideas do you have for improving quality of life for residents in your district?

Affordable housing rises to the top. I would like to see the state provide more grant funding for housing that cities could utilize for construction. Many people aren't aware that there are funds to help first time homeowners with deposits. The state should work in coordination with local communities to secure housing funding.

Q12

What areas of improvement would you like to see from local governments in your district?

I represent parts of Lenexa, Overland Park and Shawnee. There are many, many rental properties within the district. I believe that it is only natural for cities to focus on new developments going further west or south. I don't want them to forget the older parts of those cities. There are a lot of small business owners that contribute daily to the economic growth and revenue of all three cities.

Q13

What do you believe will be the three most important issues of the 2027 Legislative session?

Issue #1	**KC Chiefs stadium and budget**
Issue #2	**Data Centers and local control**
Issue #3	**Public schools and special education funding**

Q14

Will there be any specific legislation you plan to introduce during the 2027 Legislative session?

I will wait until after the elections to make decisions regarding the introduction of legislation.

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Q15

Do you believe the state and cities should work together to craft effective property tax policies?

Yes

Q16

Do you believe when the state passes tax laws it requires local governments to follow, that the same laws should apply to the State?

Yes

Q17

What strategies do you propose to help lower property taxes for residents, while ensuring the continued funding of essential city services such as roads and public safety?

There is an interim committee working on public school funding. If the state fully funds public schools AND special education, it would seem to me that the mil levy could be reduced. I don't know how much could be reduced to make an impact on our property taxes or if this is a viable idea.

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Q18

Do you support placing sunsets on sales tax exemptions so they can be reviewed in future years?

Yes

Q19

Do you support a review of all current sales tax exemptions?

Yes

Page 6

Q20

Do you believe businesses should not pay property taxes if they consider a city program comparable to its operations?

No

Q21

If a for-profit business no longer pays property taxes because of comparable programs offered by a city, should that business remain eligible to receive other taxpayer incentives and tax breaks?

No

Q22

Please provide suggestions for what criteria you believe should be used to determine if a business and city are providing comparable services.

This "providing comparable services" came out of the pandemic. Million dollar franchise gyms don't seem to me to be the same as a non-profit community center that has gym equipment. I guess a non-profit and for profit status is a criteria.

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Q23

Do you believe city and state governments should collaborate in developing policies?

Yes

Q24

Do you believe collaboration between city and state governments can lead to more efficient use of resources?

Yes

Q25

Do you support state policies that create unfunded mandates for local governments?

No

Q26

Are you open to ensuring you hear feedback from cities in your district before you vote on legislation that directly impacts those cities?

Yes

Q27

Explain your answer and/or provide any additional comments:

I have made it known to all three cities in the district that I need to hear from them. They have my personal cell phone number and they know that they can call and/or text me with questions and concerns.

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Q28

Please use this final space to provide any comments you would like to add to this questionnaire or add any information you want the cities of Kansas to know about you.

I would like the cities of KS to know that I am open to speaking with any city official within or outside of my district. I have helped people from many different parts of the state. KS is still 85% rural, so it is imperative that all legislators respond to calls and emails from other cities in KS.