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Q1

Candidate Information

Name	**Blake Carpenter**
Office, District	**81**
Party Affiliation	**Republican**

Q2

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

Preferred Email Address	**blake@carpenterforkansas.com**
Preferred Phone Number	**3167720886**
Campaign Website	**https://www.carpenterforkansas.com/**

Q3

Please list your current occupation.

Kansas Air National Guard, Captain
Nonprofit, Executive Director

Q4

Please briefly describe why you are running for the Legislature.

I am running for the Kansas Legislature because I believe in limited government, fiscal responsibility, and protecting the individual liberties of Kansans. My goal is to make Kansas a better place to live, work, raise a family, and build a future. I want to continue fighting for lower taxes, greater government accountability, and common-sense policies that put Kansas families first. I believe public service is about making a meaningful difference, not maintaining the status quo.

Q5

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

Kansas House of Representatives

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Q6 **Yes**

Do you support the principle of local control?

Q7 **No**

Do you oppose state preemption of local authority?

Q8

What do you believe is the role of local government?

I believe the role of local government is to provide essential services, maintain public infrastructure, protect public safety, and address the needs of the communities they serve. Local governments are closest to the people and should have the flexibility to make decisions that reflect their communities' priorities. However, that authority must be balanced with fiscal responsibility, transparency, accountability to taxpayers, and respect for individual property rights. I believe in strong local communities where government focuses on its core responsibilities while allowing individuals, families, and businesses the freedom to thrive.

Q9

Provide any additional comments you may have:

While I strongly support local control, I also recognize that there are circumstances where statewide uniformity is necessary. A prime example is Kansas law regarding concealed carry. Before state preemption, individuals could unknowingly violate different local ordinances simply by traveling from one jurisdiction to another. Establishing uniform statewide standards helped protect individual rights and provided consistency under the law.

Just as the states created the federal government, municipalities derive their authority from the state. This does not mean the state should routinely interfere with local decisions, but it does mean the Legislature has a responsibility to establish consistent standards when necessary to protect constitutional rights and ensure equal treatment under the law.

I believe local control should be respected whenever possible, but it should not be absolute. There must be a reasonable balance between local decision-making and the state's responsibility to protect the rights of all Kansans.

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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?

One of the biggest challenges facing my district is managing the continued growth of Derby. As our community expands, we need to ensure that state policies support rather than hinder responsible development. One particular challenge involves existing laws governing rural water districts, which can create unnecessary obstacles when growing cities seek to expand their boundaries and provide municipal services. I would like to work toward solutions that respect existing rural water districts while allowing growing communities the flexibility they need to accommodate future development.

The second challenge is ensuring a reliable and sustainable water supply as Derby continues to grow. Our community currently purchases all of its drinking water from Wichita, which creates challenges associated with depending on another municipality for an essential service, including water rates and restrictions. Fortunately, Derby is making significant investments in its own water infrastructure, with a new water treatment facility expected to be completed in 2027. This investment will reduce our dependence on Wichita and provide greater local control over our water supply. I want to ensure state policies support these types of investments and allow communities to plan for their long-term infrastructure needs.

Ultimately, my focus is on ensuring that state government is a partner, rather than an obstacle, to growing communities. We must strike a balance between respecting existing service providers, protecting taxpayers, and giving municipalities the flexibility necessary to accommodate growth and economic development.

Q11

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

I believe decisions about improving the quality of life in our communities are best made by local elected officials who understand the unique needs and priorities of their residents. The role of the state should not be to dictate which projects or initiatives a community pursues, but rather to ensure that state policies do not unnecessarily interfere with local decision-making.

As a state legislator, my role is to be a resource and advocate for the communities I represent. When local governments identify projects that may qualify for state or federal grant funding, I am willing to review those proposals and, when I believe they are justified and represent a responsible use of taxpayer dollars, assist in securing that funding.

Ultimately, local leaders and the residents they represent should determine what investments will best improve their communities, not legislators in Topeka.

Q12

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

I believe local elected officials are best positioned to identify the needs of their communities and determine where improvements may be necessary. Just as I expect local governments to respect the responsibilities of the state, I believe the state should respect the responsibilities of local governments. I am not interested in micromanaging municipalities or telling their elected leaders how to govern their communities. At this time, I have no specific improvements to recommend. My focus is on maintaining a productive relationship with local officials, respecting their authority, and being available to assist when state-level action is necessary. I believe in letting local leaders lead.

Q13

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

Issue #1	**Budget Deficit**
Issue #2	**Property Taxes**

Q14

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

Yes. I plan to introduce an updated version of my Freedom From Taxes Fund proposal during the 2027 Legislative Session. This legislation would establish a constitutionally protected investment fund designed to gradually replace existing taxes with investment earnings, providing a long-term path toward reducing the tax burden on Kansans, including property taxes that fund local governments.

I appreciated the League of Kansas Municipalities taking a neutral position on this proposal during the past legislative session. My goal is to develop a sustainable approach to tax relief that benefits Kansas taxpayers while recognizing the financial needs of our cities and communities.

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Q15

Yes

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

Q16

Yes

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

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?

I believe the Freedom From Taxes Fund offers the best long-term solution to reducing property taxes while protecting essential local government services. Rather than simply cutting taxes and forcing cities to reduce services, my proposal would establish a constitutionally protected investment fund that uses investment earnings to gradually replace existing tax revenues.

This concept is not new or untested. More than 20 states have established permanent investment funds, and approximately 90 countries around the world operate similar funds, commonly referred to as sovereign wealth funds. My proposal seeks to adapt this established approach to address the tax burden facing Kansans.

An important component of my proposal is reforming the billions of dollars in tax exemptions granted by the state each year. As the League correctly points out in its subsequent questions, Kansas has more than $9 billion in annual sales tax exemptions, some of which also affect local government revenues. My legislation would establish a process to review these exemptions, place sunset provisions on them, and gradually eliminate those that can no longer be justified. The state would capture the additional state tax revenues returning to its tax rolls and invest those dollars in the Freedom From Taxes Fund. Likewise, municipalities would retain the additional local sales tax revenues returning to their tax rolls, providing communities with additional resources to fund essential services, local priorities, or property tax cuts. This approach allows both state and local governments to benefit directly from reforming existing exemptions.

I recognize that this is not an overnight solution. Building a fund capable of replacing significant tax revenues will take time, discipline, and a long-term commitment. However, I believe this approach addresses two challenges simultaneously: reforming our outdated tax exemption system and providing meaningful, permanent property tax relief without sacrificing essential city services.

My goal is not to shift the financial burden onto municipalities, but to fundamentally change how we fund government over time. I believe this is a sustainable path toward protecting taxpayers, maintaining essential services, and eventually reducing our reliance on traditional taxation altogether.

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Q18

Yes

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

Q19

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

Yes

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Q20

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

Respondent skipped this question

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?

Respondent skipped this question

Q22

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

The fundamental question should not be whether a city and a private business provide comparable services, but whether government should be providing that service in the first place.

Our nation was founded on the principle that government exists to protect the rights, liberty, and property of its citizens. John Locke's philosophy of limited government helped establish this understanding. Government was never intended to be everything to everyone, nor should it attempt to be.

Local governments have essential responsibilities, including public safety, roads, infrastructure, and other services necessary to protect the public and maintain our communities. Those responsibilities should remain their primary focus.

However, when government moves beyond those core responsibilities and begins operating businesses that compete directly with private citizens, we should seriously question whether it has exceeded its proper role. I fundamentally disagree with the idea that government should collect taxes from a private business and then use those same tax dollars to subsidize a government-operated competitor.

The criteria should be straightforward: Is this an essential government function? Can the private sector reasonably provide the service? Is the government using taxpayer resources to compete with private businesses? And would the service exist without taxpayer subsidies or other advantages unavailable to private competitors?

Government exists to serve and protect its citizens, not to compete against them. That principle should guide how we evaluate these situations.

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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?

Respondent skipped this question

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 strongly believe in collaboration between state and local governments and regularly welcome input from the municipal leaders I represent. While we may not always agree on every issue, maintaining open lines of communication allows us to better understand the practical consequences of legislation before it becomes law.

Regarding unfunded mandates, I generally oppose policies that unnecessarily shift financial burdens from the state onto local governments. However, I also recognize that nearly every policy decision carries some cost, and there will be circumstances where a legitimate statewide interest requires action, even when implementation creates a modest financial impact.

As I mentioned in an earlier response, the state has a responsibility to establish uniform standards when necessary, particularly when protecting constitutional rights and ensuring consistent application of the law. I would not want to create an absolute prohibition that prevents the Legislature from fulfilling those responsibilities simply because a policy carries an incidental cost.

My approach is to evaluate legislation on its merits, consider the financial impact on municipalities, seek input from affected local officials, and avoid imposing unnecessary financial burdens whenever possible. Collaboration does not require agreement on every issue, but it does require mutual respect and a willingness to listen.

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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.

Respondent skipped this question