

In advance of the 2024 Fall Primary Election on August 13, 2024, the Oneida Nation and its conduit fund, Voices For Oneida, invited candidates on the ballot in certain State Senate and State Assembly Districts to share information about themselves and their campaigns with the enrolled members of the Oneida Nation. Below are the responses that we received for the following races.

State Senate District 2:

Kelly Peterson of DePere - Democrat

Why do you want to be elected to the State Senate?

I'm running for State Senate because we need representatives that will address the issues impacting Wisconsinites and not play political games with people's livelihoods. There are so many important issues on the ballot this year that continue to go unaddressed. Part of the reason for this is that the voting maps had been so heavily gerrymandered that one party was all but ensured victory. A good example of this is that the former maps prevented Oneida, Menominee and Stockbridge reservations from being in the same State Senate Districts even though they're in close proximity. Fortunately, the Wisconsin State Supreme Court has ruled these maps unconstitutional, which gives us a chance to pick up the seats necessary to address these issues.



What are your top priorities?

My priorities for office are addressing the issues that impact us all, both Democrat and Republican. These include ensuring women's reproductive rights are protected, not taken away; our soil and water are tested for PFAS and cleanup is paid for by the polluters, not the taxpayers; that public education is funded, not cut and politicized; and that working families have access to affordable childcare and are not forced to choose between working and caring for their children. These are basic necessities, and they continue to go unaddressed in the state legislature.

The Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau is projecting that the state will end the 2023-25 biennium with a \$3 billion surplus in its general fund. What should be the top priorities for spending these funds?

Cutting funding to critical programs to get a budget surplus exacerbates problems and costs more money in the future. Because of previous cuts, we now have a teacher shortage, a childcare crisis, a housing crisis and a mental health crisis, to name a few. I support eliminating wasteful spending, but I categorically oppose creating a surplus at

the expense of our children, our families and our state economy. The surplus will certainly help us address these issues, but we also have to make sure they continue to be addressed and not let them snowball into crises by cutting critical funding in the future.

What proposals would you support for addressing the state's workforce and housing shortages?

Wisconsin's workforce shortage and lack of affordable housing are interconnected. Not only is affordable housing a basic necessity, but the lack of affordable housing is creating a huge drag on the state's economy because working families can't find housing where the jobs are located. This disconnect has been growing for years and will continue to get worse if it's not addressed.

We have a lot of aging housing that needs updating before it will be suitable for families to live in and commercial property that could be converted to residential. Fully funding Gov. Evers' Workforce Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program in tandem with expanding WHEDA loans would be a good place to start. It would help working families and employers and reduce the drag on the state's economy.

Do you as a candidate for public office in and of the United States acknowledge the Oneida Nation as a sovereign American government?

Absolutely!

What is your position on federally recognized American Indian Tribes purchasing land and placing it into trust status?

Not only do I support this, I believe it is one of many steps necessary to help reverse some of the damage caused by the combination of the Dawes General Allotment Act of 1887 and the Burke Act of 1906.

State Assembly District 4

Jane Benson of Suamico - Democrat

Why do you want to be elected to the State Assembly?

After working with the nonpartisan League of Women Voters and the Fair Maps Coalition for years, we finally have fair voting maps. I want to be part of the state transformation that can take place once the voices of the people are more fairly represented by their elected officials.

What are your top priorities?

Water Quality: As a board member of the Northeast Wisconsin Clean Water Action Council, I will connect with my network of experts to write legislation to protect our invaluable waters and budget well to support the DNR.

Reproductive Healthcare: As an activist and voice for most Wisconsinites who support reproductive rights, I will not rest until we have a constitutional amendment codifying robust reproductive rights. We need to protect choices for pregnant people and their medical experts and caretakers.

Medicaid Expansion: I started my public activism when the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) was threatened and never stopped. Because Wisconsin is one of just 10 states that has not expanded Medicaid, billions of Wisconsin tax dollars go to expansion states, instead of helping our own people.

Public School Funding: We need fairer education funding, so districts are not driven to referendums; to increase special education reimbursement to keep general funds to cover basic services; and to stop vouchers to non-public schools.

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Water Quality: Money is needed to address major threats to our waters, including PFAS “forever chemicals,” waste contamination from CAFOs, nonpoint source runoff of nitrogen and phosphorous from mega farms, and micro-plastics. Many challenges require money from the state to help protect our people and our future.

Public School Funding: We need fairer education funding, so districts are not driven to referendums; to increase special education reimbursement to keep general funds to cover basic services; and to stop vouchers to non-public schools.

Medicaid Reimbursement: Increase Medicaid reimbursement, so we don't increase further the number of healthcare professionals who refuse to take Medicaid patients because they lose money on those patients.

Care Economy Support: Supporting the “Care Economy” includes care for children, those with special needs and the elderly. We must address childcare deserts, wages of care workers and figure out how to reinforce the businesses that do the work and that connect workers to those who need help.

What proposals would you support for addressing the state's workforce and housing shortages?

Supporting the “Care Economy” could free up workers to work outside their homes, as well as create businesses that employ workers to care for children, those with special needs and the elderly.

Fundamentally, regarding housing, we need to go up, not out, meaning we need more apartment buildings and fewer single-family homes. Re-zoning by municipalities could consider including requirements for developers to build housing at multiple price points to avoid a glut of expensive housing when more moderately priced housing is urgently needed. The re-zoning could also encourage planned neighborhoods with a variety of types of housing.

Do you as a candidate for public office in and of the United States acknowledge the Oneida Nation as a sovereign American government?

Yes.

What is your position on federally recognized American Indian Tribes purchasing land and placing it into trust status?

This is a legal, recognized way for Tribes to add to their land, establishing Tribal jurisdiction and making Tribal sovereignty clear.

Alexia Unertl of Suamico - Democrat

Why do you want to be elected to the State Assembly?

As a working parent, I know the joys and challenges of raising a family in Northeast Wisconsin. Being a rural homeowner reliant on a well, contamination of forever chemicals in our drinking water is a growing concern for my family. I am running for State Assembly because I want there to be safe drinking water in every home. Through collaboration between various government agencies, to incentivize residents and farms to attain the necessary infrastructure upgrades to prevent, detect and mitigate pollution.



What are your top priorities?

Patients at all stages of life deserve to visit a doctor in their own community without worrying if they are in-network or can afford it. I support a public healthcare option that provides a cost-effective alternative to for-profit insurance. Initiatives like lowering the Medicare eligibility age and expanding eligibility to more low-income individuals will improve quality of life long term.

Second, every child deserves a world-class education from pre-k to college. Diverting funds from public schools has exacerbated resource shortages, especially in districts that are already struggling to balance budgets and face potential school closures as a result. We know that improving these outcomes is especially important for students who require accommodations and other support services. I support reforming this funding system to guarantee that resources are consistently available across all schools, regardless of location or socioeconomic status.

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With the current budget surplus, we are in a position to decrease the tax burden on the middle class while also improving the quality of life in our state. I am committed to making smart investments in high-speed internet infrastructure to improve education, business and daily life. A rural address shouldn't exclude anyone from the benefits of modern utilities.

What proposals would you support for addressing the state's workforce and housing shortages?

Access to stable housing is key to economic security for individuals and families. However, high demand for rental properties, along with price fixing, has made rent an unreasonable portion of many people's budgets. Residents deserve reasonable rental and home-buyer assistance and living wages that actually meet, if not exceed, the cost of living.

Do you as a candidate for public office in and of the United States acknowledge the Oneida Nation as a sovereign American government?

I wholeheartedly acknowledge the Oneida Nation as a sovereign nation and recognize its people to be among the First Peoples to inhabit Turtle Island. I consider the culture, language and identity of the Oneida to be integral to Wisconsin's history and future. Morally and constitutionally, Elected representatives at all levels of leadership must respect the relationship between the federal government and sovereign nations, as well as actively acknowledge and correct instances where local and state governments have interfered with tribal affairs. Our goal should be to engage in collaboration that supports the success and well-being of every resident for generations to come.

What is your position on federally recognized American Indian Tribes purchasing land and placing it into trust status?

I support the purchasing of land and placing it into trust status to protect tribal sovereignty and cultural integrity for generations to come. This process is an exercise in self-governance, as intended by federal law, and rightfully allows tribes the autonomy to

manage resources, preserve cultural heritage and maintain economic stability without overreach.

David Steffen of Oconto – Republican (incumbent)

Why do you want to be re-elected to the State Assembly?

I've been able to lead on many impactful initiatives during my nine years in office, including \$15 billion in tax cuts, historic increases in K-12 funding, and co-authoring the largest increase in local funding in state history. My ability to successfully work with my constituents and my colleagues to bring real solutions to big problems motivates me to continue my service to the taxpayers of the 4th Assembly District.



What are your top priorities?

Reducing taxes on residents, especially our senior citizens.

Addressing rising crime.

Enhancing election integrity and voter confidence.

The Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau is projecting that the state will end the 2023-25 biennium with a \$3 billion surplus in its general fund. What should be the top priorities for spending these funds?

Our \$3 billion surplus is almost entirely one-time money. As a result, the state needs to be careful on its use, as it will not be replenished through new revenue. I believe that money is best used for certain very long-term, capital expenses such as roads and building repairs/construction. While there are certainly on-going expenses that require our attention such as K-12 education and criminal justice, these are generally not good places to invest one-time money.

What proposals would you support for addressing the state's workforce and housing shortages?

I have been a leader on workforce issues, including housing and dramatic investments in our trades and related education options. I will continue to make this a priority next session.

Do you as a candidate for public office in and of the United States acknowledge the Oneida Nation as a sovereign American government?

Yes.

What is your position on federally recognized American Indian Tribes purchasing land and placing it into trust status?

Generally, this is a federal issue with a local government component. As such, the state government should have limited roles in these matters.

State Assembly District 5

Joy Goeben of Hobart – Republican (incumbent)

Why do you want to be re-elected to the State Assembly?

While working with people within the communities I serve, I find there are still needs that need to be addressed.

What are your top priorities?

Rising childcare costs are hitting families hard across the state. I am working with childcare providers, parents and other stakeholders to find solutions to open access and reduce cost.



I have a master's degree in education, and I strongly support ensuring kids have the opportunity for a great education. It's important that students, teachers and parents have the tools they need for students to succeed.

We must continue to work to ensure our communities are safe. Law enforcement agencies need to be fully funded, resources for expanded officer training opportunities need to be made available, and continued work to find solutions to increase the recruitment and retainment of officers must be done.

Inflation is impacting every family as they struggle to pay their bills and put food on the table. We need to fight inflation by balancing the budget, stopping reckless government spending and lowering the tax burden on families.

We need to ensure that Wisconsin families have access to affordable healthcare, including those with mental health issues. I will continue to protect those with pre-existing conditions, and I voted for a budget that invests in local hospitals and long-term care facilities. This session, I supported reforms that provide further funding for suicide prevention efforts, expand coverage for certain mental health services, utilize funding for expansion of telehealth services for those suffering from a mental health crisis, as

well as bills designed to help those living with mental and behavioral health issues. These efforts need to continue.

The Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau is projecting that the state will end the 2023-25 biennium with a \$3 billion surplus in its general fund. What should be the top priorities for spending these funds?

I have heard proposals to spend the surplus many times over. The concern I have is that most of these proposals are not one-time spending opportunities, but instead create new programs that would add to the state budget ongoing. We need to be very careful to not add new spending to an already bloated budget which adds tax increases to Wisconsinites that are feeling the pinch of inflation on their pocketbooks. Instead, these funds should be used to combat the effects of inflation and recession. Let's use the surplus to ensure taxes are lowered and not raised.

What proposals would you support for addressing the state's workforce and housing shortages?

Housing costs continue to rise due in large part because of a shortage of workforce housing. I was happy to support a bipartisan workforce housing package that will help reduce prices and increase housing by offering no-interest loans to developers, removing red tape and creating incentives to bring more housing options into the market. This work will continue as I work with organizations like Habitat for Humanity to explore more options to make housing available for those who need it most.

To address the state's workforce shortage, we should continue to help people get back to work and attract new workers to the state by streamlining the state's occupational licensing laws to eliminate barriers that are preventing working professionals from earning a living. Increase investments in the state's vocational technical training to enhance the hands-on skills of the workforce. Incentivize students to pursue education in high-demand fields.

Do you as a candidate for public office in and of the United States acknowledge the Oneida Nation as a sovereign American government?

Yes. It is my understanding that the Oneida Nation is federally recognized.

What is your position on federally recognized American Indian Tribes purchasing land and placing it into trust status?

American Indian Tribes have the right to do it.

State Assembly District 89:

Ryan Spaude of Green Bay – Democrat

Why do you want to be elected to the State Assembly?

I'm running for State Assembly to represent working families. The stock market keeps going up, but there's way too many folks in northeast Wisconsin who are just barely getting by. People are hurting. We need leaders who will take action and who will implement policies to ease the pain. I'm a Democrat who wants to keep more money in your pocket.



What are your top priorities?

Hold the line on taxes for the middle class. Our state has a budget surplus, which means there's absolutely no need to raise taxes on people who are working hard and playing by the rules.

Invest more money in our public schools. They are the backbone of our communities, and it would be foolish not to invest in our future - our kids.

Raise the minimum wage. Wisconsin has one of the lowest minimum wages in the country, and it's high time we actually pay workers a fair wage.

Fully fund the Child Care Counts Program. It's extremely hard for many parents to work if their kids don't have someplace to go, and we must ensure that every family has access to quality, affordable childcare.

Finally expand Medicaid. If we accept the federal money that's sitting on the table, we can provide healthcare coverage to tens of thousands of Wisconsinites.

The Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau is projecting that the state will end the 2023-25 biennium with a \$3 billion surplus in its general fund. What should be the top priorities for spending these funds?

Many of the things I talked about in question #2 apply here. We should be investing the money into our public schools and expanding access to childcare. In addition, our roads and highways need a lot of work. By prioritizing these important issues, we can improve our quality of life without the need to raise taxes on the middle class.

What proposals would you support for addressing the state's workforce and housing shortages?

There isn't a single answer for either of these problems. When it comes to the state's workforce, we absolutely need to raise the minimum wage and allow for paid family leave. We can also create incentives for recent graduates to stay in Wisconsin, which will prevent "brain drain" from happening in our communities. When it comes to housing, we need to recognize that local governments are in the driver's seat. The state legislature should make it easier, not harder, for local governments to create affordable housing. We should take a hard look at state preemption laws on zoning, and we can encourage the use of state tax credits for better maintenance (not just construction) of buildings.

Do you as a candidate for public office in and of the United States acknowledge the Oneida Nation as a sovereign American government?

Yes, I do.

What is your position on federally recognized American Indian Tribes purchasing land and placing it into trust status?

I support this. When a tribe reacquires land, I know it's spending an incredible amount of money to do so. When the land is then placed into trust status, it should no longer be automatically taxed by a municipal government. The U.S. has broken many promises, but this one can & should be kept. I believe the process is constitutional, and it promotes tribal self-governance. It also allows tribes and municipalities to enter into revenue sharing agreements if they still wish to do that.

Patrick Buckley of Green Bay – Republican

Why do you want to be elected to the State Assembly?

I am running for State Assembly because I care about our community and want to help make Wisconsin a better place to live, work and raise a family. As your representative, I will be a strong voice for the people of our district, fighting for the issues that matter most to us. I believe my experience, skill set and values make me well-suited to effectively serve our community in the State Assembly.



What are your top priorities?

My top priorities are strengthening our economy and creating good-paying jobs, supporting quality education for all our children, expanding access to affordable healthcare, investing in our infrastructure and keeping our communities safe. I will work

hard to enact common-sense policies that move our state forward and improve people's lives.

The Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau is projecting that the state will end the 2023-25 biennium with a \$3 billion surplus in its general fund. What should be the top priorities for spending these funds?

I believe we should prioritize using the surplus funds to provide targeted tax relief for working families, increase funding for local schools, expand access to affordable childcare, eldercare, repair our roads and bridges and shore up our rainy-day fund. I would also support services to address the concern of drug abuse utilizing a two-pronged approach of enforcement and programming (family assistance, counseling, etc.). It is not just the addict it is also the family. We have a responsibility to spend taxpayer dollars wisely in ways that benefit our communities.

What proposals would you support for addressing the state's workforce and housing shortages?

To address workforce shortages, I support increasing funding for job training programs, apprenticeships and technical colleges. We should also reform occupational licensing to reduce barriers to employment. To alleviate housing shortages, I would support providing incentives for affordable housing development, expanding down payment assistance programs for first-time homebuyers and increasing aid to local governments to improve housing infrastructure. A comprehensive approach is needed.

Do you as a candidate for public office in and of the United States acknowledge the Oneida Nation as a sovereign American government?

Yes, I fully acknowledge the Oneida Nation as a sovereign American Indian government, as recognized by federal treaties and laws. I respect the Oneida Nation's inherent right to self-governance and self-determination. If elected, I will strive to maintain a government-to-government relationship with the Oneida Nation based on mutual respect and consultation.

What is your position on federally recognized American Indian Tribes purchasing land and placing it into trust status?

I support the right of federally recognized tribes, including the Oneida Nation, to purchase land and petition to have it placed into trust status as provided for under federal law. Placing land into trust enables tribes to exercise sovereignty over their lands and is important for tribal self-determination, economic development, and cultural preservation.

As the Brown County Board Chair, I have worked with Brown County and the Oneida Nation on concerns and issues impact our communities. This working relationship with the Oneida Nation has also included the City of Green Bay Neighbor Associations. This

once-strained relationship has developed into a positive collaboration and cultivated a united community with events such as “Movie in the Park.”