



## Wyoming Republican Candidate Profile Questionnaire

Note to All Wyoming State Republican Party Candidates in the 2018 Primary Election,

Thank you for filing as a candidate to represent our State and your Wyoming Republican Party. You have chosen a very difficult path that many would never consider going down. Your Wyoming State Party leadership recognizes the trials and tribulations each of you will encounter as the fight for your spot on the General Election Ballot. To that end, we are here to help both you and your constituency get to know one another as you blaze your path toward victory.

After the 2016 election cycle, your Wyoming State Central Committee (SCC) took for action numerous issues Republican voters raised ranging from a core desire to vote directly for our Republican Presidential Nominee to wanting more opportunities to meet with, and more information on, candidates at all levels of government as voters want insight into how a candidate may govern if elected for office. Historically, one of the most asked questions during election cycles is “Where can I find reliable information about our candidates?”.

Your Wyoming Republican Party recognizes this as a critical issue that must be addressed to get voters to turn out in support our candidates. We are committed to assisting by asking candidates to provide answers to questions, in their own words, which we can post to our state website, so voters have a reliable place to find relevant candidate information.

As a candidate you will receive dozens of surveys, questionnaires, and requests from the press as well as various watchdog entities to provide answers to questions that are typically geared to their organization’s specific bias. Some a candidate will choose to address all of them while others may not be addressed due time constraints or relevancy.

This questionnaire was initiated as a result of the extraordinary number of questions posed by voters to members of the Wyoming State Central Committee over the past year. And although every question here has not been specifically approved by the full SCC, the concept was endorsed by the full SCC in a unanimous voice vote, as a part of developing external and internal party feedback systems.

These questions were gathered from SCC members across several State Committees, from feedback at various County Party Precinct Caucuses and County Conventions, was compiled by our State Party 2018 Committee to Win, and recently approved by our State Party Executive Committee (18 June 2018) as our primary tool to provide our voters with robust, reliable, and relevant candidate vetted information.

If you have questions regarding this questionnaire, please contact your Wyoming Republican Party Chairman, Mr. Frank Eathorne at [chairman@wyoming.gop](mailto:chairman@wyoming.gop).



The questions here reflect current issues you are likely to face during a coming term in office and ask each candidate to provide, in their own words, their thoughts and opinions regarding a significant number of topics and questions. We appreciate your time and effort in responding to our questionnaire.

*1) How would you describe the proper role of government?*

I believe in limited government that is accountable and closest to the people. That is why I believe in empowering local towns and counties as their representation understands best the needs of those they serve.

The next Governor must work to get government out of the way so you, your family, friends and neighbors can thrive. I'll do this by making tough decisions about spending and investing and making sure Wyoming is living within its means while continuing to grow economically. We need to eliminate obstacles at the state and federal level to strengthen existing Wyoming industries and attract new ones. And we must provide exceptional educational opportunities for our kids and important job training resources for our citizens.

I am a private sector entrepreneur who believes in private enterprise. I also believe Wyoming is ready to grow. Government can help to provide the infrastructure and services that allow businesses to germinate, expand, and grow in good times and bad, but it must not pick winners and losers.

*2) How would you describe your role as a Republican elected official in our constitutionally defined form of government?*

I have already sworn to uphold the Constitutions of Wyoming and the United States several times on a bible given to my late wife and held for me by my current wife. I defended our Wyoming Constitution in front of the Wyoming Supreme Court and won upholding the Treasurer's "approval" authority under Article 3, Section 31 of the Wyoming Constitution. It states, among other things, that all contracts for the repairs of rooms and halls that the legislature uses for meetings "shall be subject to the approval of the Governor and State Treasurer." The Treasurer's approval for contracts concerning the restoration and renovation of the Wyoming State Capitol was never acknowledged nor required under statute. The Wyoming Supreme Court's decision confirming the role of the Treasurer in such matters moving forward is an important check against "a gradual concentration of the several powers in the same department," as James Madison put it in Federalist 51, and a valuable limitation on government spending.

I am a strong defender of the Constitution and believe that elected officials have an obligation to carry out their duties as assigned by it - nothing more, nothing less. As a Republican, I believe in smaller, more accountable government of limited scope. As an elected official it is my duty to serve those who elected me forthrightly, efficiently, and properly within the scope of the duties prescribed.



3) *Describe your core values.*

Growing up on a family ranch in Kaycee, I learned the values of hard-work, integrity and the importance of finishing what you start – values that still guide my life today. Like many in Wyoming, my faith and family are at the very center of my values as a father, husband, businessman and public servant. As a lifelong conservative, I believe in fiscal discipline and the importance of protecting and defending the Constitution.

4) *Where do you place yourself on the political, ideological spectrum?*

I am a lifelong Republican, staunch fiscal conservative and defender of the Constitution. I believe that government that governs least, governs best.

5) *There is a nationwide push that has now come to Wyoming for the creation/expansion of protected classes in the form of additional anti-discrimination laws. Considering that Article 1, Section's 2 and 3 of Wyoming's Constitution respectively state:*

*“In their inherent right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, all members of the human race are equal.” and, “Since equality in the enjoyment of natural and civil rights is only made sure through political equality, the laws of this state affecting the political rights and privileges of its citizens shall be without distinction of race, color, sex, or any circumstance or condition whatsoever other than individual incompetency, or unworthiness duly ascertained by a court of competent jurisdiction.”*

*What, if anything, should Wyoming do in this arena?*

I believe strongly that no one should be discriminated against in the workplace, and I think most people in Wyoming feel the same way. If discrimination is happening here, we need to look at that specifically. I do not see how creating new protected classes is more helpful than Sections 2 and 3 of Article 1 under our Wyoming Constitution. I worry the more we subdivide people, the less we see ourselves as a whole people together, and the more we end up eroding the differences that make us great.

6) *What are your thoughts about funding and cultivating Wyoming's K-12 education?*

Providing exceptional educational opportunities and a solid grounding for our kids is critical. Moreover, I am deeply committed to enhancing the continuing education citizens needs to succeed in the transforming workplace of today and tomorrow. However, we know that Wyoming currently faces a number of challenges in funding education. The boom times over the last decade have resulted in higher spending than Wyoming can sustain for long. The hard truth is, we are going to have to look at how we can improve efficiencies and do more with less to meet our education needs.

I served on a local school board and one of the things we always talked about was the importance of maintaining local control. With that needs to come a level of accountability from school



boards with regards to how funds are being used and a better alignment of incentives inspiring schools to take more initiative. We have to ensure that the cost of administration is not at the expense of the cost of delivery of educational content. Wyoming has many school districts and in some cases these can be streamlined and maybe made more efficient; but not all schools are alike and so any reorganization will need to be done thoughtfully and with an eye towards protecting local accountability and flexibility. This can help us cut costs while maintaining local control and ensuring Wyoming kids get the best education possible.

As Treasurer, I worked hard to change the way our school funds are invested so that they better line up with the needs of education going forward. And the Treasurer's Office has constantly sought to improve both the returns and the safety of the funds transparently so both the public and the legislature can be better informed about the potential earnings of each fund over coming years.

*7) Are you familiar with, and do you generally support or oppose, the Wyoming Education Association's position statements and legislative platform?*

While I do not support all of the WEA's policy statements and platforms, I appreciate the advocacy role they play in highlighting education issues in Wyoming. I strongly support the fundamental right of every child to a complete and equal education. I also support transparent and adequate funding for our state's community colleges.

*8) What is your position on federal management of public lands in Wyoming?*

As a lifelong rancher and sportsman, maintaining and improving public access and multiple-use for Wyoming citizens while protecting private property rights are among my top priorities. I am not in favor of the wholesale transfer of federal lands to the State. The work of overturning irrevocable sections of our Wyoming Constitution would be extraordinary and possibly futile.

That being said, it is imperative for Wyoming's next Governor to advocate for local control and management of our lands and resources and there is a lot we can do there. This includes looking at opportunities to push for the transfer of smaller parcels back to the state; strengthening the Governor's authorities under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act by giving more resources to Counties and helping them exercise their rights over federal agencies within Wyoming; advocating for the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to move their operations out West to improve communications, accountability, and responsiveness; and seeking to have the state collect royalties and then share the appropriate amount with the D.C. rather than the other way around as it is now.

*9) What is your view on the Federal debts/deficits and Wyoming's budget gap between proposed spending and revenue as they impact on our nation and state, and how will you address them as an elected official. What do you think about raising taxes to meet our state's projected budget shortfall?*



I oppose raising taxes. We got used to spending too much in the boom times over the last decade and Wyoming simply cannot keep it up. The biggest job of our next Governor is going to be managing spending levels while shrinking government and improving efficiency and effectiveness. There are essential services the people of Wyoming depend on, but we will have to be creative in better meeting those needs without growing government.

To address Wyoming's deficit, we have to prioritize needs versus wants; make reductions to ensure we are living within our means; and look at ways to improve efficiencies and cut costs. There are some promising beginnings, but I believe we can start with the Constitution as a guide for what government can and should do and build out from there.

As Treasurer, I have worked hard to recommend a spending rate the legislature can count on reliably over many years and a glide path to bringing our expenses in line with our revenues. The legislature did not take all our recommendations last year, so there is more to do, but my office will continue to drive this point through this fall. It can be done and the record of the Treasurer's office demonstrates my ability to do more with less while better safeguarding taxpayer dollars. I've been a fiscal conservative all my life and I have the private and public-sector experience to chart this new course for our state.

*10) Do you support or oppose an income tax for Wyoming? Why?*

I oppose an income tax. As a lifelong fiscal conservative, I believe strongly in keeping taxes low. Wyoming families deserve to keep their hard-earned money, and Wyoming businesses deserve the opportunity to grow their ventures and create more jobs. During this economic downturn, Wyoming needs to prioritize its needs versus wants. We have to rein in spending and ensure we are living within our means. That's the only way to make certain our tax future is low and consistent going forward.

*11) Do you support continued state funding to cities, towns, and counties?*

Yes. However, to ensure we are able to provide funding to our cities, towns and counties moving forward, we must manage spending levels without growing government. That is why I have put so much emphasis on providing more tools to local communities so that they can do more for themselves.

When it comes to providing more flexibility for local governments, I believe that government closest to the people governs best. Communities must have all the tools they need to chart their own future, which is one reason we reworked our investment statutes to provide opportunities for better returns at the local level in the WYO-STAR and private managers spaces. As Governor, I will help ensure Wyoming is better able to leverage outside resources. We are leaving resources on the table that could be utilized by our local towns and counties for important infrastructure if they only had better tools to do so.



*12) When it comes to the state budget, what are your priorities? For example, Transportation, Education, University of Wyoming, Community Colleges, Agriculture, Department of Health, Game & Fish, etc.?*

Ensuring we have a balanced budget and that the state is not spending more than we are taking in is absolutely essential. We must rein in our spending today to ensure fiscal stability tomorrow. My top priority will be ensuring that Wyoming is living within its means while meeting our Constitutional funding requirements. Ensuring funding for towns and counties, critical infrastructure and safety services and education is especially crucial.

*13) In what instance(s) should the federal, state, or local government restrict the right to carry arms?*

I am a life member of the NRA and believe the right to bear arms is fundamental. Growing up on a ranch, using guns is part of our way of life. I hunt, have taught all my kids how to shoot and keep firearms for personal protection. My wife Jennie would not be alive were it not for her use of a gun to defend herself. I will continue to be a staunch defender of the Second Amendment.

*14) For many years now, federal bureaucratic and regulatory actions are often initiated against Wyoming residents for issues related to what have been standard agricultural or energy production practices for decades, but now deemed recently as incompatible with federal policy by administrative edict. How would you as an elected official respond to instances of federal overreach?*

From serving as Wyoming Treasurer to working in the agriculture, tourism, and energy industries, I've fought federal overreach. It is essential Wyoming have a Governor with the experience, skills and commitment to fight for Wyoming from day one across all platforms from legal, to institutional, to regulations, and to the public forum. More and more we see D.C. working to override our state's authorities. That must be stopped, and I am delighted that this administration is thinking about ways to do that.

A study released this spring by the Mercatus Center at George Mason University looked specifically at regulations in Wyoming in 2018. They found that the 2018 Wyoming Administrative Code contains 99,566 restrictions and 5.4 million words. This means it would take an individual seven weeks – nearly two months – to read the entire code. Utilities, chemical manufacturing, oil and gas extraction and mining face more than 17,000 restrictions alone.

The sheer volume and breadth of our current policies is stifling not only our energy and agriculture economies, but manufacturing and many different industries important to our state. I believe that regulations ought to be around incentivizing people to do the right thing, rather than penalizing them for doing them wrong. As Governor, I will work to drive a shift on the state and federal level towards regulations that reward people for a doing a better job – be it through





expedited permitting, faster response times, or other incentives.

Wyoming must use some of the tools already in place to push back against the federal government. This includes reinforcing the Governor’s authorities across all agencies and jurisdictions. We must also insist on local control by vigorously asserting Wyoming’s primacy in enforcing regulations, and cutting back on the unnecessary or overlapping regulations already in place. I will strive to build collaborative relationships with federal natural resource agencies based on full recognition of the critical role of state and local government in management of our natural resources.

*15) Have you reviewed the 2018 Platform and Resolutions developed at convention by the Wyoming Republican Party?*

Yes.

*16) It is the rare Republican who agrees with our Platform 100%. Article 1, Paragraph 3 of the 2018 Bylaws of the Wyoming Republican Party defines the role of the Republican Party as:*

*3. Role*

*1. The role of the Wyoming Republican Party is: to recruit citizens to join the Republican Party; to establish the Platform of the Wyoming Republican Party; to achieve the election of Republican candidates who substantially uphold the platform of the Wyoming Republican Party and to conduct the business of the Wyoming Republican Party.*

*What is your definition of the word “substantially”? Are there planks in the 2018 Platform with which you oppose to a level of non-support in legislation? Will you identify those during your campaign if asked by constituents?*

I strongly support the vast majority of the platforms adopted by the Wyoming Republican Party in 2018. I grew up and have always been a Republican and have participated in multiple conventions. I have seen party platforms develop over time. Where I see issues differently, I aim to work collaboratively with Wyoming citizens and the state and local parties to find conservative solutions that keep government small and accountable locally. This is a timeless Republican truth.

I’ve been proud to support local parties and the state party, both with resources, time and talent, for many decades. Together with my wife Jennie, we have done more to help Wyoming Republicans and conservative causes than any other person in the race for Governor. I was humbled by the support I received from the Wyoming Republican Party State Central Committee in 2012 when I was chosen from a field of qualified candidates to fill the role left vacant by the passing of former Treasurer Joe Meyer, and again when I was able to serve as a delegate to the 2016 National Convention. As Treasurer, I’ve shown my ability to do more with less, rein in spending and stand up for the Constitution. I have said no to excessive spending and I have defended our constitution. I believe in liberty, personal responsibility, respect the hard work of



the Republican party in putting together its platform and resolutions, and I hope I have earned your support again for Governor of Wyoming.

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Candidate: Mark Gordon

Office Running for: Governor of Wyoming

Candidate's Signature: *Mark Gordon*

Date: July 8, 2018

**NOTE:** Your submission via e-mail ([alldta@gmail.com](mailto:alldta@gmail.com)) will serve as a signature, or if you chose to send the hard copy back, please sign and return to:

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