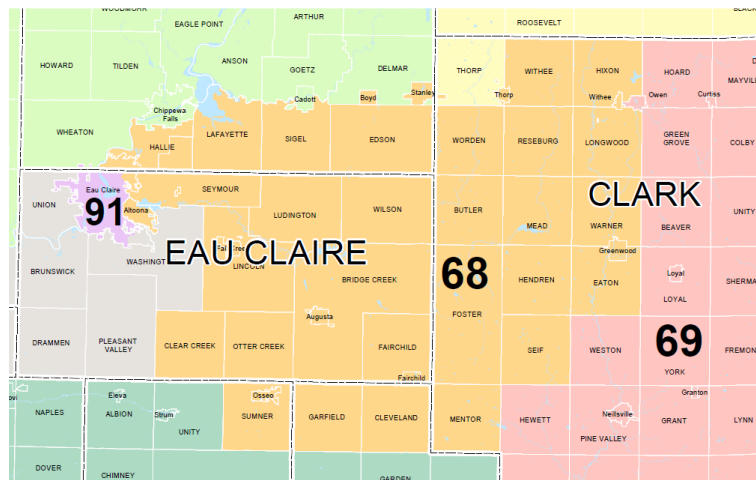




Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce
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Wisconsin 68th Assembly District Legislative Election Questionnaire



When: Tuesday, November 6, 2018; polls open 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Find your location: myvote.wi.gov. All absentee ballots must be requested by November 1st and be turned in to your municipal clerk by November 4th at 5 pm.

What it's about: The Democratic Party and the Republican Party each held individual primary elections last spring. Now, their nominees are running against each other to determine who will represent the 68th Assembly District in the next legislative term.

Who can vote: The election is open to all eligible voters, and you are free to vote for any candidate, regardless of the party to which you belong.

Where you vote and who is on your ballot:

- Go to myvote.wi.gov
- Enter your voting address to learn which races are on your ballot and where you vote.

Why this questionnaire: The Good Government Council (GGC) is a committee of the Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce dedicated to encouraging voter participation and providing members of the business community with non-biased information about candidates' positions on important issues. Although the Chamber is active in policy issues, it is non-partisan and does not endorse political candidates.

Who is running in the 68th Assembly District: In the primaries, the Democratic Party nominated Wendy Sue Johnson and the Republican Party nominated Jesse James.

Q1. Why are you running for this office, and what are the top three priorities you will emphasize if elected to the next session of the legislature?

Wendy Sue Johnson (D):

As a former Civics teacher, high school coach and school board member, I value public service and community engagement. It is everyone's responsibly to give to their community in the way that matches their abilities. As a lawyer, I have developed the thick skin needed to be a candidate and have found my voice to advocate for others.

My first priority is to pass nonpartisan redistricting so that fair maps ensure voters are choosing their representatives instead of representatives choosing their voters. With competitive districts, elections and candidates will be responsive to voters. Fair maps will encourage us to talk to each other again and compromise to find practical solutions to pressing issues like education, affordable health care, infrastructure funding, environmental protections, and all the issues that need attention.

Jesse James (R):

While there are many issues I would like to work on at the state level, I have narrowed it down to three priorities. The first is education. Investing in education is investing in our future, and our children deserve safe and fully funded schools to ensure they succeed. The second is healthcare. In the rural parts of our district, healthcare is hard to come by. Not only do we need to work on providing better access, but also affordable healthcare that doesn't cost an arm or a leg. The third priority is the meth and opioid epidemic that continues to be a problem not only in the Chippewa Valley, but in Wisconsin as a whole. As the Chief of Police in Altoona, I deal with this issue on a daily basis. We need to look at better treatment opportunities that work for all users. While priorities are a good start, these are my passions and they aren't set in stone. As a representative, my job is to speak for the people of my district. I will continue to work with my constituents to find out what YOU believe needs to be addressed.

Q2. The primary sources for transportation revenue, including gas taxes and registration fees, have been growing slower than transportation spending, leading to shortfalls in revenues vs. planned expenditures and increasing levels of debt. What measures would you support to match transportation fund revenues with the state's transportation needs?

Wendy Sue Johnson (D):

Transportation infrastructure is an essential public good that needs to be funded adequately and equitably throughout the state. User fees, in the form of gas taxes and registration fees, should be indexed for inflation. Our income taxes and sales taxes are collected as a percentage so that they go up as incomes and costs of goods go up. It does not make sense to keep gas taxes locked in at a set amount (cents) per gallon unless we create other sources of funding.

Jesse James (R):

I don't believe there is one single answer to our transportation problems. When I talk to people in the district, some are in favor of a bump in the gas tax and others are completely against it. As for tolling, I don't think it resonates as much in our area, but could be better utilized on our state borders. In regards to an increase in registration fees, I would like to see that used as a last case resort. It is apparent that some of our roads need repair, but I am also aware of the fact that you work hard for your money and want to keep as much of it as possible. I think we need to bring every option to the table in order to find a sustainable solution that doesn't shift too much of the burden on to the taxpayers.

Q3. Given recent trends in the financing of all levels of public education in Wisconsin, how should education funding be structured in the next budget to assure appropriate financing for every level of public education?

Wendy Sue Johnson (D):

Education should be our first funding priority. Each and every Wisconsin student deserves an excellent education, regardless of their zip code. When adjusted for inflation, we are still not spending as much on education as we were eight years ago. That is unacceptable. Most of our communities have chosen to raise our own property taxes, through referendums, to make up for that loss of state funding. This demonstrates how strongly Wisconsin citizens value local schools. The state should work toward the 2/3 funding of public education that was promised under Governor Thompson. We could start by considering State Superintendent Tony Evers' plan, Fair Funding for our Future. Since the state cannot

afford two systems, we should phase out the voucher program which has not provided better outcomes than public schools.

Jesse James (R):

Fully funding education is a top priority for me. Investing in our students is investing in our future, and every student deserves the right to learn and succeed in a safe environment. In the last budget the state increased per pupil funding by \$600 million, which goes directly into our classrooms. I would be in favor of another increase, but would like to see more information before putting a number to it. The state has also increased funding for low revenue and sparse districts. These increases help low revenue districts stay competitive and help sparse districts with transportation costs. I truly believe Wisconsin is moving in the right direction when it comes to education, and I look forward to continuing that trend in Madison.

Q4. Our region faces several significant workforce challenges, including a “skills gap” between employer labor demands and the available workforce, as well as demographic issues related to the size of the workforce and the ability to recruit and retain employees to the area. What should be the state’s role in solving these issues?

Wendy Sue Johnson (D):

The state’s primary role is to fund a robust public education system which provides each student with the skills (critical thinking, communication, problem-solving) to succeed in jobs that exist now and those we have yet to imagine. The state can encourage collaboration between local educational institutions and businesses to connect potential workers to specific available jobs. However, as the owner of two small businesses in a market economy, I know it is my responsibility to attract and retain employees by paying and treating them well. State and local governments need to protect the quality of life in our communities to attract and maintain employers and employees. Finally, in areas of the state not benefitting from the strong economy, the state can provide resources to encourage entrepreneurs and small-business growth. Such resources could include both money (start-up grants and loans) and knowledge (business-plans, finance, mentoring, etc.).

Jesse James (R):

The state’s main role in workforce development is to provide an environment that makes employers and employees want to stay here. For employers, it's cutting burdensome red tape and allowing them to reach their full potential here, in Wisconsin. For employees, it's providing programs that help them better succeed. Workforce training programs allow employees the opportunity to learn high-valued trades, while healthcare forgiveness programs help pay off loans in exchange for taking a position in a shortage area. I believe that the programs are available. Some might need to be revised, but the majority of the issue is making sure our constituents know what is out there to help them. If there are areas that can be improved upon, I would be more than happy to take a look. All in all, we want Wisconsin to be the number one place to live, work, and raise a family.

Q5. The UW Board of Regents recently approved a budget proposal containing funds to build a new UW- Eau Claire science building. What is your view on this project, and what level of priority should it take among the Chippewa Valley legislative delegation?

Wendy Sue Johnson (D):

The UW system has determined the UWEC science building is a critical need because Phillips Hall is severely outdated. Our students need adequate facilities in which to prepare for their future, so our local legislators should advocate for those adequate facilities. We should not pass up the opportunity to benefit from the partnership with Mayo Health and the research that they will bring to the Eau Claire area.

Jesse James (R):

From what I understand, there is a lot riding on the UWEC science building. When you look back in history, it's incredible to think about all the advancements we've made in science. With that being said, I have to imagine that continuing to advance is not easy in an out of date building that is falling down around you. For that reason alone, this should be a top priority. On top of that, we have an incredible opportunity to invest in a public-private partnership between the university and some of the healthcare companies in our area. I've heard many great plans for the future that are contingent on a new science building at UWEC. I look forward to supporting this project and the students that will surely benefit from it.