

# 2022 Voter's Guide for the Iowa Senate's Primary Election

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### IOWA SENATE DISTRICT 43 CANDIDATES

#### Zach Wahls (D)

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**DID NOT RESPOND TO QUESTIONNAIRE**



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### IOWA SENATE DISTRICT 45 CANDIDATES



#### John Raley (D)

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**Volunteer or Community Service:** Iowa City Business Partnership, Iowa City Area Development Group, Holiday Lights at the Lake to benefit the Bird House, Hancher partner, Film Scene donor

**What do you love most about the community?** First, the great diversity of people and the intellectual community. Secondly, all the wonderful opportunities in the arts - from theater to concerts to festivals, there is always something exciting going on. Thirdly, the fantastic array of restaurants!

**According to the 2020 U.S. Census, immigrants comprised 44% of Iowa's population growth from the years 2010-2019. If elected, how will you support policies that encourage and support refugee and immigrant population resettlement to live and work in Iowa?** Immigrants are a vital part of our community and I think Iowa City does a great job welcoming them. I would like to create opportunities to interact with different cultures and learn from one another. I would listen to the concerns of new residents and do my best to address them. We need to invest in their future so they are invested in Iowa.

**With the highest housing prices in the state, Johnson County has seen the availability of affordable housing consistently diminish. What kind of policies or actions do you support for our community to meet the demand for more affordable housing?** Affordable housing is desperately needed in Iowa City. The majority of funding currently comes from federal programs and only supports 2% of our population. I think there are a lot of options we could explore. We could expand the UniverCity program which purchases single family homes near the university, updates them and sells them to families. This strengthens neighborhoods and encourages home ownership. Green State Credit Union just started a first-time home buyers program for those who may not have perfect credit scores, we could encourage other lenders to follow this example. Lastly, we need to update and improve our building regulations to allow for more creative solutions. One example would be to allow granny flats over garages. This would create another living space plus a source of income for the homeowner; win-win.

**Having access to high quality, affordable child care has continued to be an issue that faces our local workforce. How will supporting policies that will grow our child care workforce expand affordable child care in our communities?** The state just passed several child care laws that may or may not help. They increased the number of children per adult and allowed for teenagers to provide care without adult supervision. Neither of these are great ideas but may ease the problem short term. I would like to see incentives for businesses to either provide child care for employees or pay part of the cost for outside care providers. Equally important is paying the care provider a

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living wage. Early childhood educators are professionals not just babysitters. I think a collaborative effort between state-city-workplace to provide safe and affordable child care would be best.

**Local economic development incentives, workforce innovation, and a competitive workforce all help develop Iowa's urban and rural areas. How do you plan to support small businesses in our area?** We need to radically update our infrastructure so that high-speed internet is available to everyone. Rural areas are terribly under-served and that holds people and businesses back. If we did that we could encourage high-tech industries to come to Iowa and employ our young people. This would stem the brain drain while providing good jobs with benefits.

We also need to support existing small businesses and make it easier for them to get help with less red tape. State investment in entrepreneurial programs like the one at the University of Iowa would encourage new business growth.

**What unique perspective or skills do you bring to the Iowa Legislature?** As a small business person, I have 40 years experience working with all kinds of people, many in stressful situations. I am empathetic and I listen. I have proven leadership experience as a past-president of NAIFA, an organization of over 2000 members at the time. We have so much to be proud of here in Iowa and I love this community. I want to bring my skills to Des Moines and work for you, I appreciate your support.

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### IOWA SENATE DISTRICT 45 CANDIDATES



#### Janice Weiner (D)

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**Volunteer or Community Service:** currently president of the board of Congregation Agudas Achim; member, program committee, Iowa City Foreign Relations Council; Member, Johnson County Democrats central committee (1st vice chair for 3.5 years, recently stepped down); volunteer for Free Lunch with JC Dems; previously on the boards of Shelter House and Johnson County United Nations Association. I play with the Community Band and sang with the Hospice Singers.

**What do you love most about the community?** I love that this community is increasingly diverse with multiple languages spoken; that we combine university and city, learning from each other; that we value our schools and education writ large, and that the young people are constantly challenging us to do better, to be better on all levels.

**According to the 2020 U.S. Census, immigrants comprised 44% of Iowa's population growth from the years 2010-2019. If elected, how will you support policies that encourage and support refugee and immigrant population resettlement to live and work in Iowa?** We need to work both locally and on the state level; with NGOs, businesses and governmental agencies – in other words, it has to be a whole-of-the-state effort. I will work on the state level to build relationships and gain consensus on the importance of welcoming immigrants and refugees – memories are short, much rhetoric has been anti-immigrant, so we need to change the narrative at the legislative and gubernatorial levels and make clear that we as a state benefit and thrive when we open our arms to immigrants and refugees. We also need to help fund refugee agencies, integration program, ESL and job training. We need to make it easier for those who come with skills – whether professional or trade – can get licensed here so their education and talents are tapped. On the local level, I participated in ECICOG's envisioning 2030 project, which included as a goal creating a roadmap and resources for immigrants to help them with integration, jobs and training – this can be template for different regions in the state. At all levels, multi-lingual materials must be made available – an initiative that can start at the top – so the burden does not fall on the children to be the interpreters. On the local level, we should nurture NGOs that support communities, and we need to work to educate at all levels since every society has varied understandings of customs, traditions and laws.

**With the highest housing prices in the state, Johnson County has seen the availability of affordable housing consistently diminish. What kind of policies or actions do you support for our community to meet the demand for more affordable housing?** We have the resources in our community to greatly expand affordable housing (truly affordable housing with lasting affordability). There is a coalition of non-profits, including the Housing Trust Fund of Johnson County, the affordable housing coalition and Habitat for Humanity; the Trust Fund's dollars can be loaned and leveraged to create more possibilities. We can coordinate with ECICOG. LITEC funds are available to be leveraged. City and county funds (some coming from one-time ARPA funds) can be used as multipliers. We have to ensure that, both in cities and in the

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county, our zoning laws encourage a variety of types of housing (such as envisioned in the form-based code for the South District that Iowa City recently approved). We also increase affordability by working on improving the existing housing stock and making it as energy efficient as possible. It has to be an all-of-community effort, including developers and builders. It has to be a priority across the board. And finally, we have to find a way – state, local or both – to maintain the affordability of mobile home parks; the half measures in the bill working its way through the legislature are thin gruel at best. The pandemic's lesson: keeping people housed is the best solution.

**Having access to high quality, affordable child care has continued to be an issue that faces our local workforce. How will supporting policies that will grow our child care workforce expand affordable child care in our communities?** Growing and professionalizing our childcare workforce – including through the recently-launched Kirkwood academy – will create a stable, well-trained workforce that can help expand and stabilize childcare. There are multiple models, including partnerships with businesses and public-private partnerships, but since childcare is personnel-heavy, the main issue is wages and benefits. We can build all the beautiful childcare centers we want, but without quality staff, they are just empty buildings. The current private model depends on parents' ability to pay in order to increase worker wages and provide even meager benefits. This has proven to be unsustainable. Government needs to participate to make this work (as is the case in most European countries, for example) – lowering the age of workers, increasing the number of 3-year-olds one worker can care for or “allowing” parents to supplement childcare assistance – all of which were proposed and died in this year's legislature – are not solutions. Businesses can help, to be sure, with childcare stipends and some on-site daycare centers. To truly professionalize and increase the workforce, the state will need to step up (a heavy lift as the legislature is cutting taxes) to support childcare wages and marry up childcare with universal pre-K. This is not and cannot be a self-sustaining industry but it is both part of the education continuum and the necessary foundation for increasing workforce participation by parents.

**Local economic development incentives, workforce innovation, and a competitive workforce all help develop Iowa's urban and rural areas. How do you plan to support small businesses in our area?** At the local level, incubators and grants from various levels of government are useful tools. Cooperatives also allow businesses to get their feet on the ground in a small space that is affordable so they can grow and eventually move into their own spaces. Mentorship programs can help, and the business school and Kirkwood can assist with business plans. SSMIDs are also useful tools in ensuring that small businesses thrive. Cooperatives that assist with accounting and taxes can help new businesses get off the ground; and the community itself is crucial in supporting home grown businesses. Apprenticeship programs and paid internships teach the next generation and bring them under the wing of existing entrepreneurs. Workforce innovation may include remote work, childcare allowances and worker schedules on which they can depend. A competitive workforce needs training, so offerings both online and that are convenient – at a venue such as Merge – are helpful. Capitalizing on the existing Kirkwood academies that teach high school students real world skills – recruiting there and participating in those programs to identify new talent is another way to build the workforce. People need mentoring, real skills, a living wage and, wherever possible, benefits – so they see they are valued as workers.

**What unique perspective or skills do you bring to the Iowa Legislature?** I bring a capacity to build relationships across the political spectrum; to approach issues from different angles and see the bigger picture. I search for different ways to get things done, bearing in mind that I am a public servant. I speak truth to power. Having lived and worked many places in the U.S. and abroad, I have a kaleidoscope of models in my head, and see the world through various lenses – through the eyes of my granddaughter; the eyes of those dealing with addiction and mental health issues; of those dealing with elder care, childcare and many other challenges.

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### IOWA SENATE DISTRICT 46 CANDIDATES

#### **Dawn Driscoll (R)**

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**DID NOT RESPOND TO QUESTIONNAIRE**



## 2022 Voter's Guide for the Iowa Senate's Primary Election

### IOWA SENATE DISTRICT 46 CANDIDATES



#### **Kevin Kinney (D)**

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**Volunteer or Community Service:** Iowa Farm Bureau, Johnson County Cattlemen, Knights of Columbus

**What do you love most about the community?** I like that everyone is looking out for everyone else. Our communities are close knit where everyone helps everyone in their times of need.

**According to the 2020 U.S. Census, immigrants comprised 44% of Iowa's population growth from the years 2010-2019. If elected, how will you support policies that encourage and support refugee and immigrant population resettlement to live and work in Iowa?** Several factors – including the slow growth in Iowa's population – have created a workforce crisis that is bad for employers, bad for employees, and bad for the Iowa economy. I hear every day from business owners that they are still having trouble finding qualified candidates for openings.

I support bipartisan efforts to ensure that refugees and immigrants populations have the support from state and local governments, as well as business leaders, to live and work in Iowa.

**With the highest housing prices in the state, Johnson County has seen the availability of affordable housing consistently diminish. What kind of policies or actions do you support for our community to meet the demand for more affordable housing?** The Governor and Legislature must work together with communities; support partnerships with communities, state and federal governments, and private businesses; and support regional efforts to expand the availability of affordable housing in Washington, Iowa and Johnson counties.

**Having access to high quality, affordable child care has continued to be an issue that faces our local workforce. How will supporting policies that will grow our child care workforce expand affordable child care in our communities?** One of the keys to solving the state's workforce crisis is to ensure that all parents have access to affordable child care and preschool programs. We must take steps to get more parents back into the workforce by making child care affordable throughout Iowa and guaranteeing access to free, universal Pre-K programs.

I support:

- Expanding tax credits for child care expenses.
- Expanding preschool eligibility for kids that missed preschool during the pandemic or are just not ready at 4 years old, can go when they are five and not miss out on this important educational milestone.

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- Preschool Expansion Incentives to get to all day programming to help parents go and stay at work.
- Paying childcare providers more and making more parents eligible for child care assistance.

**Local economic development incentives, workforce innovation, and a competitive workforce all help develop Iowa's urban and rural areas. How do you plan to support small businesses in our area?** Honest work by Iowans deserves fair pay and it deserves our respect. We need to invest in working families and their employers.

That's why we need an "all-of-the-above" approach to solving the state's workforce crisis and supporting small businesses in our area. That's why I support:

- Returning to Iowa's deep rooted history and fully funding strong public education.
- Responsible tax cuts for small businesses.
- Expanding opportunities for high school students to get real-work experience.
- Boosting funding for skilled worker training and apprenticeships at Kirkwood Community College and other training locations.
- Boosting support for affordable, quality child care across the state.
- Expanding access to ensure free, universal preschool in every community.
- Supporting the Iowa Main Street grant program and the Community Attraction and Tourism grant program.

**What unique perspective or skills do you bring to the Iowa Legislature?** My experience as a farmer, a former law enforcement officer, and former school board member have provided me with important skills that allow me to listen to people across my district. I also have the ability to work with Republicans and Democrats at the Capitol to solve problems and create new opportunities.