

# The Post and Courier's Election 2020 Candidate Questionnaire

**NAME:** Sandy Senn

**OFFICE SOUGHT:** Senate District 41

**PARTY (IF APPLICABLE):** Republican

**INCUMBENT?** Yes or No

**EMPLOYMENT:** Attorney, Sennlegal, LLC

**PREVIOUS OFFICES HELD OR SOUGHT:** None other than the current senate seat.

## SC Legislature

- 1) Why are you the candidate who should be elected? Please be specific about your own accomplishments and what differentiates you from your opponent(s).**

In the senate I have passed good bills and stopped bad ones. At home I have worked hard on constituent service with flooding, unemployment assistance etc...regardless of party affiliation. When a constituent calls me for help, I get to work.

My opponent has made false statements about my work, the money I make and my votes. Even after he was provided with proof of his misstatements, he continued being untruthful to the public. He has taken the low road; I will keep taking the high road.

- 2) What do you see as the state's greatest challenge, and how would you try to address it?**

Education is the state's greatest challenge. My focus has been to increase access to technical school and STEM training while the students are still in high school and to increase apprenticeship training. We have seen an uptick in both since I have been in office and pressing for funding. This approach ends up with students ready to go to work or continue further in college without much capital outlay and student loans. K-4 funding and reading readiness is also vital.

- 3) What are the three things the Legislature most needs to do next year? Please be specific. (200 words)**

We need to address education as mentioned above but we also need to make decisions regarding Santee Cooper while also always keeping an eye on the Public Service Commission. The PSC oversees monopolies and not just electric ones, so we must be vigilant lest we have another debacle like the nuclear fiasco. I have voted out each and

every incumbent commission member and voted in all new ones who will be much more watchful of rate increase requests.

We need to make state agencies accountable and ready for emergencies. DHEC specifically needs an overhaul from top to bottom. We need new protocols in place to protect against future pandemics/emergencies. And, while overall I think our state has too many regulations, DHEC certainly needs to enforce important regulations relating to the environment such as pollution and sewer spills. This, they have not done.

Finally, we need to insist on budget transparency to stop pork spending. All monies I got in the budget for projects locally were transparent and on a line item. I didn't even know money could be appropriated after session ended. This is shameful and needs to be stopped.

**4) What is the most important thing the Legislature can do to improve public education in South Carolina?**

In addition to what I wrote in reply to question #1 above, we need to start by addressing funding such as teacher raises which were promised but not delivered upon in this year's continuing budget resolution. Further, we need to encourage more people to enter teaching as a career with programs such as "Call me Mister" which encourages minority males to consider taking the helm in a classroom. We must provide K-4 availability especially in areas known to have racial or financial disparities so that all students can start school on an even footing.

**5) What if any changes would you make to laws affecting the authority of city and county governments?**

As a matter of policy, I support Home Rule because local governmental officials know the needs of their hometowns best. Therefore, things such as a city-wide mask mandate or plastic bag ban garnered my support once passed by municipalities. Sure, some things have disappointed me which are governed on the local level such as permitting too much construction before having adequate infrastructure or beach towns trying to prevent citizens from accessing the beach. But, from a policy perspective, citizens can more easily approach their local city and county officials to effectuate change than they can on the statewide level.

**6) What if anything should the Legislature do to help reduce flooding in the Lowcountry and throughout South Carolina?**

Thankfully, our last week in session S. 217 (which I not only co-sponsored but guided through the finance committee) passed. This small change in the law allows governments to use accommodation tax money to be bonded for flooding projects. A-tax is paid primarily by tourists. It is used to sponsor many programs such as the arts and tourism events/festivals. Now, local governments can designate a percentage to also pay for large flooding projects in the tourist areas and then take money previously dedicated to downtown to pay for needed flooding projects such as the Church Creek Basin/Central Park cluster.

**7) What if any taxes or fees should the Legislature increase or reduce?**

We also passed business license tax reform the last week in session which postdated this survey. That tax has always needed reform as it was extremely burdensome on small businesses which conduct work in many counties/cities. Now, the way the tax will be structured businesses will not be required to obtain a ridiculous number of licenses and the tax paid will be based on net and not gross. Whomever originally thought that a tax should be based on gross and not net was far off base and that has now been corrected.

**8) Under what circumstances, if any, is it appropriate for the Legislature to increase or reduce taxes or fees?**

When tax revenues create significant overages, the natural tendency for the legislature is to start dishing out pork. This, I deplore. And, when inevitably overages turns into shortfalls due to the economy, the government then cuts services leading to dissatisfaction on all levels.

Nobody likes paying taxes but everyone expects the government to pave roads, educate children and provide services such as Medicare/Medicaid, unemployment and social security. Raising taxes should be a last resort; doing away with them should only occur when there is an injustice like the business tax mentioned above because the government must function.

**9) Describe at least one instance that shows your willingness to work across party lines even when that's at odds with your political base.**

I got my first gun at age 10 and own nine of them presently, yet I do not support open carry without background checks or training. I would support putting in on a referendum so voters can decide but even gun dealers support training. I do not want guns legally in the hands of the mentally ill and thus split from my party on that issue and others.

**10) Please tell us anything else you think it's important for us to know about you or this election.**

I am a wife, mother of three and a long-time lawyer for first responders. I also am an animal advocate having served on the board of the SPCA for five years and was a founding member of the anti-dogfighting taskforce.

I believe our police officers need to be up-funded, not defunded and we need to take control of violence that has grown roots in our beloved Lowcountry. We have always made it through tragedies together and still loved one another. We need to reject outside influences which promote violence and racial tensions.