

League of Women Voters of Oklahoma
Questions for Candidates for November 2010 Election

State Auditor and Inspector Responses

Republican: **Gary Jones** www.jonesauditor.com

Democrat: **Steve Burrage** www.steveburragecpa.com

List your academic and professional credentials, specific accomplishments and volunteer activities. Stat why you are running and what qualifies you for this office (100 word limit)

Gary Jones: B.S. Business Administration/Accounting; Certified Public Accountant, certified fraud examiner, farmer, rancher, uncovered more corruption than last 3 auditors combined.

Steve Burrage: I graduated from OU with a degree in accounting I am a CPA with a permit to practice and take my yearly required continuing education classes. I have over 30 yrs of accounting and financial experience, I am running so that I can remain you State Auditor and continue using my over 30 yrs of business experience and practices to make the office as effective and efficient as possible. My top priority as State Auditor I protecting your hard-earned tax dollars and making sure they are being spent properly, free from all waste, fraud, and abuse.

What do you see as the most important issues facing your office and staff? (200 word limit)

Gary Jones: Public corruption, wasteful government spending, insufficient use of tax dollars, misuse of public funds.

Steve Burrage: One of the most important issues in my office is having a highly qualified and professional staff. Since my appointment as State Auditor in July 2008, I now only have qualified professionals working in the office. I by dissolving non-essential administrative staff positions was able to cut the administrative overhead, 1.2 million dollars. In turn I have been able to hire more auditors, who are essential to providing a quality product to the taxpayers. Another important issue is providing quality audits. As State Auditor, I have been providing quality audits that make sure your tax dollars are being spent properly and free from all waste, fraud and abuse.

When waste, fraud, or abuse is found, the audits help provide the evidence needed to prosecute and punish those who wronged the taxpayers. These quality audits also provide the leadership of each agency with suggestions on how to improve their accounting and appending practices to better protect the taxpayer dollars. As State Auditor, I have also made it a priority to publish the audit reports on my office's website so the taxpayers can see the findings and better understand how their tax dollars are being spent and protected.

Candidates for the office of Oklahoma Attorney General

Republican: **Scott Pruitt**, www.scottpruitt.com

Democrat: **Jim Priest**, www.jimpriest.com

List the educational, professional, or community experiences that prepare you to be a good attorney general. (100-word limit)

Scott Pruitt: I bring experience as an attorney, business owner and state senator to the Office of Attorney General. I have been involved in Constitutional issues in the courtroom, classroom and with local, state and national religious organizations with whom I've served as speaker and advisor on church-state issues. As a business owner I met a payroll, led employees and put capital at risk so I understand firsthand how our laws and regulations affect business and industry in Oklahoma. Serving as a State Senator, I lead on issues such as workers' compensation, lawsuit reform, transparency in government and getting tough on crime.

Jim Priest: I have been engaged in the active practice of law in Oklahoma for over thirty years

I have an "AV" rating in the national Martindale Hubbell legal directory (the highest rating possible)

Listed in the publication "Best Lawyers in America"

Chosen by other state lawyers as an Oklahoma "Super Lawyer"

I have tried nearly a hundred trials and argued numerous cases in federal and state appellate courts

Admitted to practice before the United States Supreme Court

I have handled thousands of lawsuits and know how to try a case in court, and how to keep clients out of court.

From 1980 to 2005, I served as an attorney and director at one of Oklahoma's leading law firms, McKinney & Stringer

What will be your priorities if elected Attorney General? (100-word limit)

Scott Pruitt: I will prioritize resources within the Office of Attorney General to create a “Unit of Federalism” to stop Washington from infringing on our state’s rights, starting with rejecting the nationalization of healthcare. I will seek to hold the federal government accountable for its failure to secure our borders – a situation which burdens Oklahoma with increased drug trafficking, crime and other very real costs.

I will aggressively prosecute criminals who violate our laws, especially predators who prey on children and the elderly. I will ensure criminal appeals do not languish, and will fight against the public corruption that exists in government.

Jim Priest: The number one priority of the Attorney General is to protect our citizens, especially those who are most vulnerable: our children, our seniors, and the victims of domestic violence. I believe protection is best accomplished through (1) prevention and (2) prosecution.

One of the programs I will initiate is called Safe at Home. Home should be a safe place. But far too often home is a place of heartache, harm and sometimes even homicide. Child abuse, elder abuse, domestic violence, drug use, and cybercrimes should not be part of our Oklahoma homes.

Candidates for Superintendent of Public Instruction

Republican: **Janet Barresi** website: <http://www.janetbarresi.com>

Democrat: **Susan Paddack** website: <http://www.votepaddack.com>

Independent: **Richard Cooper** website: <http://web.me.com/recooper59>

List the educational, professional, or community experiences that prepare you to be a good superintendent of Public Instruction. Please include your campaign website to give voters access to additional information. (100-word limit)

Janet Barresi: I have a BA in Education from OU, a MS in Speech & Language Disorders from OUHSC, and a DDS from OU College of Dentistry. As a business woman, educator and education reformer of 15 years, I will bring a unique perspective to the Superintendent's office. I will apply to the state the lessons learned from my two public charter schools, one of which is ranked 68th on Newsweek's list of the nation's top high schools. Those lessons are local control of schools, accountability and transparency of finances and performance, increased teacher effectiveness, and a focus on teaching and learning.

Susan Paddack: Bachelor of Science in Education from the University of Colorado and a Master of Education Degree in Secondary Education from East Central University. Currently, State Senator, District 13. Prior to election as State Senator, the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence employed Susan for nine years as their Director of Local Education Foundation Outreach. Before joining the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence, Susan was employed as a secondary science teacher in middle and junior high schools in Texas, Colorado, and Oklahoma. She also served as an adjunct faculty member for East Central University's Education Department.

Richard Cooper: Being a product of public schools (Oklahoma and Georgia), being trained in public institutions of higher learning (Cameron University and Oklahoma State University), and being a part of a teaching and learning community of educators, not just in Oklahoma but nationally, I feel uniquely qualified to take on the most important task facing our next State Superintendent—make learning and teaching the focus of Oklahoma public education.

What policies will you promote to help better prepare high school students for college or for entering the workforce? (100-word limit)

Janet Barresi To prepare students for college or the workforce, we need to teach critical thinking skills and accurately measure student performance. Among other things, that means we must reform testing. Our current tests are often simple memory tests instead of a measurement of critical thinking skills. In addition, reporting of current state testing results is designed to obscure actual student performance. Just a few years ago, students could miss over half the questions on one state math test and still be rated

“proficient.” That “proficient” label will not help a student get a job if they have not mastered content.

Susan Paddack: I have supported (and served as senate author) for legislation that ensures a more rigorous curriculum designed to help students be prepared for college or work. This curriculum is designed so that students will master the subject content they need to be successful in whatever path they choose-- be it work, technical training, or college. Also, we need to better utilize the tools available to us. Currently, students take Explore and Plan tests which serve as indicators for college readiness. With professional development for teachers and parental education, students can be guided to use these tests to determine their strengths and areas that need improvement.

Richard Cooper: I will promote two essential tasks. First, teaching Oklahoma students to learn how to learn. Second, teaching Oklahoma students to learn how to live. Public schools must equip students to do both of these for life.

What changes would you like to see in Oklahoma’s public education system? (100-word limit)

Janet Barresi: My vision for reforming Oklahoma’s education system is one that abandons failed big government policies and replaces them with proven strategies that are targeted, research based and most importantly, student centered. As state superintendent, I will work to improve academic standards to prepare all children for good jobs, whether they go to college or straight into the workforce. I will work to reduce red tape and heavy-handed mandates, improve testing, empower teachers, and increase transparency and accountability within our school system. My work at Harding Charter Preparatory School proves all Oklahoma children can thrive academically, regardless of socio-economic challenges.

Susan Paddack: We will need to make many changes in the coming years to meet the needs of students. First, we need a vision for education in our state. We must design a strategic plan that will accomplish that vision by bringing all the stakeholders into the discussion. Educators, business and community members, career tech, higher education, and parents must all work together to define what we want for our children and how each of us

has a role in making that happen. The additional step would be advocating for good public policy that ensures that the plan can be accomplished.

Richard Cooper: I would like to see a commitment to the real purpose of public education.

Candidates for Labor Commissioner

Republican: Mark Costello www.markcostelloforlabor.com

Democrat: Lloyd Fields www.lloydfields2010.com

List the educational, professional, or community experiences that prepare you to be a good labor commissioner. Please include your campaign website to give voters access to additional information. (100-word limit)

Mark Costello: I graduated with a BA from the University of Kansas. In 1991 AMCAT (American Computer & Telephone) was founded. I served as Chairman of USA Digital, a telecommunications company licensed in 40 states that was founded in 1997. Volunteering for Habitat for Humanity has been a long time favorite where I have spent numerous hours. Currently, I am running for Labor Commissioner because I believe in Oklahoma. I want to create a job friendly business environment for all our children as well as support workers' compensation reform. I have over twenty-five years of business experience in forming businesses and creating jobs.

Lloyd Fields: I am a graduate of Charles Page High School in Sand Springs, Oklahoma. I am a certified Plumbing, Heating and Air conditioning Contractor. As a small businessman, I have experience in providing jobs, making payroll, and ensuring that workers have workers' compensation coverage. I was the first Labor Commissioner in the nation to obtain certification as a NARSO Amusement Ride Inspector. Additional information can be found on my website at www.lloydfields2010.com

If elected, what would you do to improve working conditions and the quality of life for the average worker in Oklahoma? (100-word limit)

Mark Costello: If elected I will promote the well being of wage earners by advancing the need for more and better paying jobs. On my web site, www.markcostelloforlabor.com, I have listed my twelve-point plan to

promote job creation in Oklahoma. Believing that bureaucratic overhead is a major problem due to waste and duplication, I will propose to merge the Department of Labor, Department of Mines, Construction Industries Board and Oklahoma Employment Securities Commission into one agency. I propose to call it the Oklahoma Department of Employment and Safety, which can provide greater service to citizens of Oklahoma.

Lloyd Fields: Quality of life is largely dependent on our health and financial stability. Under my leadership, ODOL programs have enhanced workplace safety resulting in a healthier work force, fewer lost-time accidents, and lower workers' compensation rates to employers. We verify Oklahoma employees are covered by workers' compensation insurance.

The ODOL also provides an impartial venue for resolving wage disputes between employers and employees. Under my leadership, the ODOL has earned a reputation for fairness in working with both parties to resolve these issues.

The ODOL protects children the workforce by enforcing both state and federal law regarding hours, workplace safety, etc.

Candidates for Governor in 2010

Mary Fallin www.maryfallin.org

Jari Askins www.JariAskins.com

***Qualifications:** List the educational, professional, or community experiences, which prepare you to be a good governor. Please list your campaign website to give voters access to additional information. (100-word limit)*

Mary Fallin: I am the only candidate in the race for governor to have private sector experience as well as experience as an elected official on both the state and federal level. I served as a state representative for 4 years before being elected lieutenant governor, a position I held from 1995 to 2007. I then served in the United States Congress, a position which I still hold.

Prior to my time as a public servant, I worked as a district manager for a national hotel corporation, where I won “manager of the year.” I’m also a graduate of OSU.

Jari Askins: I want to put my experience and ability to work for Oklahoma. These are tough times and I want to help the state I love with all my heart. I think my experience as a judge, legislator, head of the Pardon and Parole Board and Lt. Governor gives me the right background to lead. I also believe we need a governor who can work with both parties and bring them together in the best interest of all Oklahomans. That is what I did as a legislator and that’s what I will do as governor.

More information is available at JariAskins.com.

***Economy:** What in your opinion is the most important thing you could do as governor to improve the economy of Oklahoma? (100-word limit)*

Mary FallinAs governor, creating more and better jobs will be my number one priority. I’ll lead the way by working towards lower taxes on businesses and individuals, reducing government bureaucracy and eliminating the kind of red tape that keeps a lid on small business growth.

We also need to renew our commitment to education. Without a highly skilled, well educated work force, businesses will choose to locate elsewhere and our citizens will find it harder than ever to compete in a global economy. That’s why increasing school rigor and getting more money into our classrooms will be priorities during my administration.

Jari Askins: First and foremost is building a better-educated workforce. We need to do our best to make sure every high school graduate is ready to work at a skilled job or to succeed in college. We also need to concentrate on growing the number of college graduates. That’s not just my opinion. It’s what I hear from business leaders here in Oklahoma and in other states as I meet with them in my role as Lt. Governor.

We must also continue efforts to relieve small businesses from a complicated maze of regulations. Small businesses are our greatest job creators.

Health: *How do you propose taking care of Oklahomans' health needs? (100-word limit)*

Mary Fallin: The rising cost of health care is a burden on our families and our economy. As governor, I will work with both the private insurance market and our public agencies to reduce the costs of medical treatment and expand access to affordable, quality health care. I'll also encourage preventative care so we can reduce medical costs and tragedies created by illnesses like diabetes.

Finally, I'll continue to lead the fight against Obamacare – an expensive, government-run health care plan that will deteriorate the quality of our medical services. We cannot afford a plan that puts government and bureaucracy before our well-being.

Jari Askins: It is obvious that far too many Oklahomans are without health care. It is equally obvious that unfunded federal mandates are not the answer.

I believe in improving and expanding the Insure Oklahoma program. This innovative plan was created in Oklahoma to help low-income, working adults and their children get health insurance. The state covers 60 percent of the cost, the employer 25 percent and the employee just 15 percent. Insure Oklahoma is a model for the nation and I want to make it even better while working with the federal government to make sure Medicare and Medicaid remain solvent.

Corrections: *What can be done to ease the problems in our prisons? (100-word limit)*

Mary Fallin: Dangerous criminals should be locked up so they aren't on our streets and in our neighborhoods. Under my administration, providing our correctional officers with the resources they need to run safe, secure facilities will be a priority.

I will also look at ways to address prison overcrowding. For non-violent offenders with drug-related problems, many of whom are women, there are often better, cheaper alternatives to long prison sentences. Drug related courts and rehabilitation centers save tax dollars, reduce our prison population and encourage drug addicts to get healthy and contribute to our communities. These programs will have my support.

Jari Askins: All law-abiding citizens believe we should be tough on crime. That's what I did as a judge, head of the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board and as a legislator. At the same time, I've always believed "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

We need to be smart about prisons. I wrote the law establishing Drug Courts, giving offenders a chance to stay out of prison if they behaved themselves. I also worked for legislation allowing community sentencing for non-violent offenders.

***Education:** How can we assure a quality education for all Oklahoma children in light of budget cuts? (100-word limit)*

Mary Fallin: Quality schools create quality work forces, which are absolutely essential to job creation, business growth and long term prosperity. Improving our workforce and providing that prosperity will require getting more money into our classrooms and cutting down on administrative overhead. It will require more parental involvement and the empowerment of local communities to develop learning programs that fit their particular needs. And it will require a commitment to rigor from our state government, our teachers, our administrators and our parents. I'm ready to make that commitment and to end mediocrity in our schools.

Jari Askins: If there is a silver lining to budget cuts, it may be that school districts are taking a hard look at making the most of every dollar. One of the ways efficiency can be accomplished is by better use of technology. Not every school can afford an accomplished expert to teach math, science or foreign language. They can afford computers and video classrooms allowing access and interaction with great teachers.

Administrative costs can be reduced by sharing services between our smaller school districts.

We need to thoroughly review our goals, testing and the way we motivate students to learn.

Candidates for Lieutenant Governor in 2010

Republican: **Todd Lamb** www.votetoddlamb.com

Democrat: **Kenneth Corn**, www.c4ok.com

Independent: **Richard Prawdzienski**

List the educational, professional, or community experiences that prepare you to be a good Lieutenant Governor. Please include your campaign website to give voters access to additional information. (100-word limit)

Todd Lamb: Oklahoma State University, B.A.
Oklahoma City University School of Law, JD
Oklahoma State Senator
General Counsel, CLS Group
Governor's Personal Assistant
Lifetime Member, NRA
Association of Former Agents of the United States Secret Service
Deacon; Sunday School Teacher, Quail Springs Baptist Church
Little League Sports Coach

Kenneth Corn: My entire life has prepared me to be Lieutenant Governor. I grew up in Southeastern Oklahoma, the son of blue-collar parents who dropped out of high school and were raising a large family on a meager income. Without the help of others, I never would have been able to attend and graduate from college. As a legislator, I developed a reputation for tackling tough issues, defying my own political party and the legislative leadership, working in a bipartisan fashion, and for getting things done to improve the state. I am a Boy Scout leader and a deacon in my church.

Richard Prawdzienski: Master of Business of Administration from Oklahoma City University. Worked for Dept of Air Force as an Acquisition Logistics Manger, planned support of weapon systems and life cycle costs. Created and managed a Real Estate Investment Company. Travel to 47 states and observed how people lived. I was a President of a neighborhood association and officers in various organizations.. My wife is a Southern Gal, I a Yankee, we are together since 1978, prove I can work with people from different backgrounds.

What would you do as Lieutenant Governor to promote Oklahoma businesses and to attract new businesses to Oklahoma? (75-word limit)

Todd Lamb: I will tirelessly promote the quality of life we have in Oklahoma, as well work to make our business climate more competitive with Texas and the world. I want to lower our tax burden, streamline our government and have an education system preparing us to compete for 21st century jobs. We have to recruit companies to Oklahoma (something I did when serving on the Governor's staff) as well as encourage homegrown companies to expand here.

Kenneth Corn: I would become the chief job recruiter for Oklahoma and make the Lt. Governor's office the center of the state's job creating efforts. I would focus on providing a larger, better-educated workforce to attract those industries with high-paying jobs and on helping grow small businesses that keep our small communities vibrant and alive. I also would work to improve the state's infrastructure, which is always helpful in drawing new jobs to a state.

Richard Prawdzienski: First I will daily tell our legislators their statutes are keeping businesses away.. Example, Title 26-108-6 keeps new political parties out of the state. New political parties increase business for newspapers, tv/radio, hotel, restaurants, printers, post office and more. I will also put a spot light on strange rules like liquor retail stores can't sell a cork screw or glass wine, nor can the shop even put a bottle into a holiday bag.

What would you do to promote tourism in Oklahoma? (75-word limit)

Todd Lamb: We have a wonderful state with incredible sites from the Black Mesa to the Ouachita Mountains, and everything in between. Backed by a western heritage appealing to travelers from around the world, state tourism accounts for thousands of jobs and billions of dollars for our state economy. It is important that during these tough economic times, our government does not institute taxation policies that deter tourism. I will be vigilant in keeping this from happening.

Kenneth Corn: The Lieutenant governor plays a pivotal role in the state's tourism efforts. I would work to develop first-class public tourist destinations and do all that I could to work closely with private tourism enterprises or make sure they are successful. As Lt. Governor, I would support bolstering our tourism marketing campaigns outside our borders and push for upgrades to our state parks and recreational waterways.

Richard Prawdzienski: I will constantly ask individual and businesses to take the lead and think outside the box. Example: Tell alumni's that instead of just building a bigger football stadium develop world class computer-aided sports training complexes, not just football, but also bowling, tennis, golf, skeet, etc. If they build it people will come.

How would you work to keep more young people, who have been educated in Oklahoma, from leaving Oklahoma? (50-word limit)

Todd Lamb: Jobs. To keep educated people in Oklahoma, we have to have the jobs they want. While our state has created a quality of life that appeals to younger workers, we must make our business climate more competitive for the businesses providing the skilled jobs sought by these young people.

Kenneth Corn: We stop the exodus by attracting new companies who provide great pay and benefits in exciting technologies and industries. We have great events like the NBA, WNBA, professional hockey, tier-one concerts and art events, not just in big cities, but all across the state.

Richard Prawdzienski: Just as the Gunnery Sergeant told us while we were graduating USMC boot camp, "Your duty station is only good as you make it", I will consistently send that message to our citizens, young and old.

How do you differentiate yourself from the other candidates running and what difference would your election make to the people of Oklahoma? (100-word limit)

Todd Lamb: As a family man, a businessman, a State Senator, and someone who has traveled on economic development missions while on the governor's staff, I bring unique experiences that are tailor made for Lt. Governor. As a Secret Service Agent traveling the globe, I witnessed the perception others have of Oklahoma, and I know we can improve on that

image. Raised in Enid, I know that urban and rural Oklahoma must be partners, not competitors, as we improve our state. And, I share the conservative values of Oklahoma and, because of my children, have both eyes on the future of Oklahoma.

Kenneth Corn: I don't come from a wealthy family. I don't have a famous political name. I come from good, hardworking, every-day stock who understands what it means to achieve and accomplish something when you have so few opportunities to do so. I have worked my entire adult life to help and serve people. The people of Oklahoma want their government back. They want bold leaders who will not wilt under pressure. They want a Lt. Governor who will listen to them and get things done. I have been that type of public servant. I will be that type of Lieutenant Governor.

Richard Prawdzienski: My mind is open. I will listen and respect people regardless of backgrounds. I will appreciate the beauty of a flower but I will also look at the roots. Understanding the roots will help Oklahoma grow into the most beautiful state in the nation. "We the people" electing an Independent it will send a message to the old guard and that old guard will realize that they must change.