**Willner Lisa Democratic Party State Representative 35**

• EDUCATION. In an age dominated by complex science and technology, how can we ensure that students receive adequate STEM educations?

As a currently-serving elected member of the Jefferson County Board of Education, I have been a consistent advocate for increasing investment and student access to STEM education; moving as fast as funds will allow toward a 1:1 ratio of students: devices; and hands-on, deep, and experiential learning in the sciences and other disciplines. I support closing opportunity gaps for student access to after-school and summer enrichment programs in the STEM areas, and have been gratified to see the growth of robotics and engineering opportunities within our school district over the past few years. As a member of the Kentucky House of Representatives, adequate investment in P-20 educational opportunities, including STEM, for all Kentucky students will be a top priority.

On a personal note, my own two children attended Jefferson County Public Schools K-12. Both participated regularly in Science Fairs, science and math competitions, and in a Math, Science, and Technology magnet program. I value and am grateful for the opportunities my son and daughter received from their public schools in the STEM areas. In order to move us forward as a state, all Kentucky children must have the same access and opportunity.

• ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY: How do you balance economic stability with environmental health and conservation?

Without environmental health and conservation, there can be no long-term economic stability. In recent years, devastating financial cuts to the Energy and Environment Cabinet have made it impossible for government workers to do their jobs, creating a dangerous reality for the environment and for the public. I intend to carry on the important legacy of my current State Representative Jim Wayne (Rep. Wayne is retiring at the end of this year) in advocating for modernizing Kentucky’s upside-down tax structure, lowering the burden on middle class, struggling, and working people, and ensuring that wealthy people and corporations are paying their fair share. Tax modernization combined with new revenue streams would allow appropriate and much-needed investment in environmental conservation, public health and safety protections, and 21st century innovation and infrastructure.

In consultation with environmental engineer Sarah Lynn Cunningham, I’ve recently learned that Kentucky returns large sums of environmental enforcement matching funds to the federal government. These funds are desperately needed in Kentucky. The state needs to retain these federal funds, and to match them with state dollars. In addition, state funds earmarked for environmental protections must be protected from sweeps into the state’s General Fund.

• ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT: With nonrenewable resources on the decline in Kentucky, how do we create a sustainable Kentucky? What are your stances on: hydraulic fracturing, nuclear, and renewable energy sources? What are your views on climate change, and how would they affect your energy policies (if at all)?

As a legislator, I will support existing clean energy incentives, and will favor new incentives for safe, renewable, and clean energy. I favor innovation and research in clean energy technologies, and will oppose efforts to block emerging markets so that clean energy can continue its growth path.

I am an empiricist, and my policies on energy – and other issues of importance – will be grounded in what the science and research support. Regarding climate change, the research tells a robust and compelling story. Based on the research, there is strong consensus among scientists and scientific organizations that human activity is the primary factor in climate change that has occurred over the past century. As a student of human behavior with a PhD in clinical psychology, I am pleased that my profession and my professional organization, the American Psychological Association, has affirmed its alignment with the rest of the mainstream scientific community in recognizing the role of human behavior in global climate change. And as the executive director of the Kentucky Psychological Association, I am proud to work for an organization that values scientific evidence as one of its core principles.

• SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY. How will you foster a culture that respects scientific evidence and protects scientists? What role(s) specifically, if any, should government play in stimulating innovative science and technology so we continue to benefit from them?

As a school board member, I have supported policies that are evidence-based, and I have been a voice for research and reason. When I have advocated with my own legislators on issues I care about, or with other legislators on behalf of the Kentucky Psychological Association, I have brought data and evidence to support positions. I will continue to educate others about the value of that approach. I believe that government does play a role in stimulating innovative science and technology for the public good. An important element is ensuring adequate funding for our public educational institutions in order to support innovative research and high quality teaching at every level. Legislators can incentivize industry that benefits communities by bringing good-paying jobs in science and technology fields.

I would gladly sponsor or co-sponsor legislation to address the fact that Kentucky’s current regulated markets are structured to incentivize more, not less, energy use. I would support shifting the legislature’s focus to investment in renewable energy technologies, and the research that will be needed to maintain progress in this direction.