

## Vivian Smotherman

### Restore the Balance Candidate Questionnaire Responses

- 1. Why are you running for Colorado State Senate? What qualifications do you bring, and how are you preparing to serve if elected?**

I'm running because this district is incredibly diverse, and I firmly believe its communities deserve strong representation. My qualifications include my experience as a Navy veteran, offshore oil and gas superintendent, hog farmer, and teacher, along with recently earning degrees in history and anthropology. My diverse background reflects the diversity of the people I aim to represent. Over the past nine months, I have traveled throughout all 14 counties in this district, engaging with residents, listening to their concerns, and then researching the history and details to propose well-informed solutions.

- 2. Do you agree with the seven principles Restore the Balance feels should guide political conduct in Colorado? If not, please identify and explain why.**

Yes, I agree with the seven principles of Restore the Balance. These principles resonate with my core belief that effective governance requires more than just ideological stances—it demands cooperation, fact-based decision-making, and a commitment to the public good. Political discourse should be a contest of ideas where the goal is not to overpower opponents but to find common ground that serves the community. By fostering respectful dialogue and prioritizing evidence over rhetoric, we can tackle the real issues facing our state. Furthermore, ensuring that citizens can participate in politics free from threats or harassment is crucial to maintaining a healthy democracy. I am committed to these principles because they provide a foundation for governance that transcends partisanship and focuses on the well-being of all Coloradans.

- 3. Do you believe Colorado's current election laws and procedures provide for secure elections and encourage voter participation? Please explain.**

Absolutely. Colorado is a leading example of secure and robust election systems. Our state ensures that every registered voter has access to a ballot delivered right to their mailbox, and a reliable text messaging system further supports this. It's a model that other states should look to.

- 4. If elected, what actions will you take to help find common ground with your fellow elected officials on both sides of the aisle?**

I plan to keep an open mind, maintain open lines of communication, and foster productive dialogue with my colleagues across the political spectrum. Real progress is

made when we listen to each other, respect different perspectives, and work together to create solutions that benefit all constituents - Republicans, Independents, and Democrats alike.

**5. If elected, how will you listen to and represent the concerns of constituents who don't agree with you?**

I'm committed to promoting legislation that respects cultural differences and acknowledges situational intersectionality. This approach ensures that I am doing everything in my power to represent the broadest spectrum of constituents fairly, without marginalizing those with differing views. I will actively seek out and consider input from those who may not agree with me, ensuring that their voices are heard in the legislative process.

**6. What are the top three issues facing Colorado, and how do you plan to address these issues if elected?**

While Colorado faces many critical issues, my campaign has focused on housing, rural healthcare, and education. These issues are deeply interconnected. For instance, increasing affordable housing, fully funding education, and ensuring fair compensation for teachers will create communities that attract young professionals, including healthcare providers, thereby improving access to rural healthcare.