

Eric Koch, Republican Candidate for Indiana State Senate District 44
Responses to questions from the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce
For the Nov. 3, 2020 General Election

1. The COVID-19 pandemic will have a significant impact on the state budget. What issues or priorities will guide your budgetary decisions in the next legislative session?

We are fortunate that the General Assembly has had the fiscal discipline to maintain a \$2 billion reserve that is now helping us weather this storm. We do not yet know what impact this pandemic will have on the state's budget over the next biennium. The state budget director instructed state agencies to submit budget plans for the next biennium which are 15% less than their current (FY21) appropriations. In a best-case scenario, that may be sufficient to align future spending with revenues. On the other hand, should we see a prolonged impact on the service, hospitality, and entertainment industries, we may need to look toward additional reductions in expenditures. We will have a better idea of what to expect when the Budget Committee receives the revenue forecast this December. Additionally, the administration is still waiting to see what action (if any) Congress takes to provide more relief to states. Should additional relief be provided, our budget may be partially shielded from the impacts of the recession. With that being said, it will ultimately be the Legislature that guides Indiana's budget priorities. Historically, K-12 education, infrastructure improvements, and economic development have been priorities of the General Assembly during budget sessions.

2. Many local businesses are struggling in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. What state financial aid, programmatic assistance or other actions would you support in the coming months to strengthen economic recovery?

Indiana has already been proactive in taking actions such as delaying the income tax deadline until July 15th, deferring property tax late payment penalties for 60 days, and the creation of the Small Business Restart Fund with \$30 million from federal Coronavirus Relief Funds. Existing economic development programs housed with agencies such as the IEDC, DWD, and CHE are also providing support for the economic recovery. Ultimately, employees and customers must feel safe and have confidence in the integrity of the information they receive and must rely upon.

3. Other than the current crisis, what will be your top 3 priorities in the state legislature that relate to the business sector?

1. Maintaining a positive tax structure
2. Maintaining a positive regulatory climate
3. Advancing policies that encourage savings, investment, thrift, personal responsibility, self-reliance, and free enterprise