

Questions for Candidates and Elected Officials

Shannon Grove, Republican candidate for State Assembly, 34th District

1. Nearly a quarter of Kern’s population (24.4%) is at or below the federal poverty level, according to the California Poverty Measure, but ranks 23 in the state in terms of eligible residents’ utilization of CalFresh—an estimated loss of \$73.6 Million in federal nutrition benefits. What policies would you support to boost participation among the currently eligible population for a program that has a \$1.79 economic multiplier for every \$1 spent?

2. California’s current three-year drought is the worst in at least 100 years. Consequently 428,000 acres have been fallowed, and over 17,000 jobs lost. What policies would you propose to build on-farm resilience in the face of climate change and a more sustainable use of Kern’s water?

3. We estimate that 17.2% of the California’s workforce is in the food system, including production, processing, distribution, retail, and service industries. According to the KEDC, nearly a quarter (24%) of Kern’s private sector jobs are food system-related, yet many of the workers are undervalued and are more likely to experience substandard working conditions. What labor issues in the food chain are you most concerned with, and how would you address them?

4. The Kern Food Policy Council is pursuing the creation of a comprehensive, county-wide food system assessment that will help us create new relationships between policy and action, as well as explore the potential for community-based pilot projects directly addressing the physical and economic health and well-being of Kern County residents. In what ways, if any, would you support this effort?

A job is the best long term poverty fighting tool we have. Government policies should encourage job creation by lowering taxes and eliminating regulations that hurt businesses. Encouraging people to become dependent on food stamps only encourages permanent poverty and dependency. Since 1850 California has had 12 droughts. In the past the state government responded to the growing water needs of farmers and cities by building water storage and delivery systems. We need to expand these systems to meet our current water needs. Instead we have given water promise to farmers to the habitats of fish in the Delta. Bad working conditions tend to remain when workers have limited job opportunities. That's why government should be creating an atmosphere where water is abundant and agriculture is allowed to thrive.