



THE OKLAHOMA PROSPERITY PROJECT

resources for an informed workplace and democracy

For more information, visit our website at: www.okprosperity.com

Voter's Guide for Oklahoma House District 55

As the October 13th Special Election approaches, every candidate running for the Oklahoma House District 55 says, "I am **FOR economic development.**" But what will they do to help Oklahoma companies grow and compete – and stop our job drain to other states and nations? How will they create an environment that attracts quality new companies, jobs and opportunities for Oklahomans?

The Oklahoma Prosperity Project is a partnership between our state's employers, The State Chamber, local chambers of commerce, trade associations, and economic developers. To date, more than 1,300 organizations, representing nearly 500,000 employees, are becoming informed on election issues that impact our economy, our jobs, our wages and our families.

Our mission: To elect to Oklahoma's State Legislature, pro-jobs Democrats, Republicans and Independents who will grow our state. The Prosperity Project is free, nonpartisan, and does not endorse candidates.

The Prosperity Project Voter's Guide lets you compare how the candidates in your district say they will vote on economic growth issues. For more information, go to www.okprosperity.com.

Candidates for Oklahoma House District 55:

Alex Damon (D)

303 N Cordell Street
Cordell, OK 73632
Phone: 580-832-2787
Occupation: Mayor / Business Owner
Website: www.damondistrict55.com

Jeff Ledford (R)

500 North Bailey Street
Hobart, OK 73651
Phone: 580-726-2066
Occupation: Manufacturing Manager
Website: N/A

Larry W. Peck (D)

P O Box 339
Sentinel, OK 73664
Phone:
Occupation:
Website: N/A

Todd Russ (R)

P O Box 98
Cordell, OK 73632
Phone: 580-660-5100
Occupation: Banking / Business Consulting
Website: www.toddruss.com

Answers are as submitted by the candidates in response to the Candidate Survey. "FTR" means a candidate failed to respond to the survey. '-' means a candidate did not respond to this survey *question*.

Issue One: Growing an informed, educated and skilled workforce that will expand Oklahoma's economy for generations to come. Will you vote to:

	<u>Damon</u>	<u>Ledford</u>	<u>Peck</u>	<u>Russ</u>
1. Enhance tax exemptions for certified employee training and re-training expense costs?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes
2. Support evaluations and accountability standards that result in measurable achievement gains for students, teachers and schools, and correspond with national standards?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes
3. Develop and fund performance awards for high-quality teaching, such as merit pay, in order to maintain teacher salaries competitive within the region?	Yes	Yes	FTR	--
4. Establish a system for identification of, and intervention for, K-12 th grade students who are falling behind?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes
5. Support extension of Oklahoma's school year to the national average?	Yes	Yes	FTR	--
6. Streamline common school district administrative functions in order to promote a more efficient and cost effective system?	Yes	Yes	FTR	--
7. Expand physical fitness and health testing in our schools to monitor the growth and development of a healthy workforce?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes
8. Fund Oklahoma's higher education to the regional average?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes

Issue Two: Promoting affordable healthcare for employees at a reasonable cost to employers. Will you vote to:

9. Expand incentives that encourage employers to provide:				
A. Health care coverage for their employees?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes

B. Wellness programs for their employees?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes
C. Long term care insurance for their employees?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes
10. Provide individuals with tax incentives for purchasing:				
A. Individual health insurance?	--	Yes	FTR	Yes
B. Long term care insurance?	--	Yes	FTR	Yes
11. Require an actuarial-based cost-benefit analysis prior to considering any health insurance mandates and support a study to analyze the overall impact of previously enacted health care mandates?	--	Yes	FTR	Yes
12. Support a long-term funding mechanism for Medicaid so medical doctors, hospitals, nursing homes and other providers are fully reimbursed for their costs?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes
13. Support initiatives that will enhance the value and quality of health care, such as evidence-based medicine, adoption of Health Information Technology, and quality and cost transparency?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes
14. Enhance the educational capacity at Oklahoma universities, colleges and career technology centers to address the high demand for nursing and other allied health professionals?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes

Issue Three: Creating and maintaining a competitive business environment in Oklahoma. Will you vote to:

15. Develop laws to stimulate venture capital investment in Oklahoma technology companies?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes
16. Identify a permanent funding source for the Economic Development Generating Excellence (EDGE) Endowment Fund to boost research and development and get new projects from the drawing board to the marketplace?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes
17. Increase funding for the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology (OCAST) to support promising biotechnology and nanotechnology applications that produce new or improved products and create new higher tech jobs?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes
18. Fulfill the promise that the State of Oklahoma made to attract new businesses and grow existing companies and new jobs by preserving existing incentives and exemptions?	--	Yes	FTR	Yes
19. Support policies and incentives that keep Oklahoma a leading petroleum producing and refining state?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes
20. Encourage and protect incentives for investment in rural Oklahoma?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes
21. Create a permanent Joint Legislative Standing Committee on International Trade to help our businesses expand international trade market opportunities?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes
22. Limit state legislation that creates "patchwork laws" on immigration that conflict with federal enforcement efforts?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes

Issue Four: Lowering the high costs of conducting business and growing jobs in Oklahoma. Will you vote to:

23. Abolish our current workers' compensation court system and go to a more administrative system?	--	Yes	FTR	Yes
24. Establish a Medical Director for our workers' compensation system who will oversee all medical delivery systems, treating programs and disability ratings?	--	Yes	FTR	Yes
25. Require plaintiffs who file frivolous lawsuits to pay the legal costs incurred by defendants?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes

Issue Five: Preserving Oklahoma's favorable tax climate. Will you vote to:

26. Eliminate all taxes on capital gains so Oklahomans can save and invest more?	--	Yes	FTR	Yes
27. Eliminate the estate tax?	--	Yes	FTR	Yes
28. Eliminate Oklahoma's Franchise Tax, a nuisance tax businesses pay for "the right" to do business in the state?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes
29. Oppose wholesale attempts to change the state's tax structure without proper hearings and input from the private sector?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes

Issue Six: Building and maintaining a strong transportation infrastructure ensures safety for our families and efficient movement of our commerce. Will you vote to:

30. Dedicate funds from motor vehicle license fees, now going into the general revenue fund, to transportation programs?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes
31. Provide support to upgrade facilities at Oklahoma's regional general aviation airports in rural areas?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes
32. Maintain the progress of the past several years on funding of Oklahoma's roads and bridges?	Yes	Yes	FTR	Yes

Issue Seven: Providing quality water for Oklahomans and our economy.

Will you vote to:

- | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 33. Oppose any significant changes to Oklahoma water law pending completion of the comprehensive water plan update? | Yes | Yes | FTR | Yes |
| 34. Recognizing that stream water is a state-owned resource, make certain that Oklahoma's water needs are determined and met before other considerations are addressed? | Yes | Yes | FTR | Yes |

35. Is there anything else you'd like voters to know about you and your campaign?

Damon: I have lectured statewide (and out-of-state) on implementing creative industries economic development plans, especially in rural communities. For this and related work, I received the Governor's Arts Award in 2005. I was honored by the Oklahoma Conference of Mayors and the Oklahoma Municipal League as "Mayor of the year" in 2008. I would like to continue the work I have started, and carry it forward to the state level.

Ledford: After 34 years of manufacturing experience I am fully aware of employers and employees needs and perils in today's systems. I have worked closely with workers comp reform and education for the last 12 years in Oklahoma. Bringing together Government, Education, Industry and Agriculture is critical to our future success in Western Oklahoma. My business experience and my involvement in Oklahoma Workforce as a Governor Appointed Board member for Workforce and Economic Development and Rural Action Partnership Program as well as board positions on Western Technology Center and General Tommy Franks Leadership Institute have given me the insight and knowledge to identify and help direct legislature to meet Western Oklahoma needs.

Peck: FTR

Russ: N/A

36. What are your two priorities to grow Oklahoma's economy?

Damon: Education and training to create a more capable and skilled workforce; A new spirit of vision for Oklahoma industries, from entrepreneurial endeavors to welcoming established corporations.

Ledford: My top priorities in the House would be to get a voice to Legislature for Rural & Western Oklahoma and to get much needed information back to employers and employees of Western Oklahoma as to what is available today and in the future to improve the economics of our district.

Peck: FTR

Russ: I will push for Workers Comp reform for small business in Oklahoma to help us be more competitive. Having owned and operated my own small business for nearly 15 years, and being directly involved with small business for over 25 years, I understand personally the challenges and frustrations of small business in Oklahoma. I will also look into franchise tax and other tax reforms that are unnecessary burdens on small business in Oklahoma.