



The Coconino Coalition for Children and Youth exists to provide leadership in developing community-wide strategies that enhance the well-being of children and youth in Coconino County.

CCC&Y is non-partisan. Visit www.coconinokids.org to view candidate responses.

CCC&Y 2018 Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Kyrsten Sinema

Office: United States Senate

1. What do you think the two most pressing issues are for youth and their families?

As I meet with families all across Arizona, the top concern I hear is access to affordable, quality health care. No Arizona family or child should go without access to quality, affordable care, and no parent should wonder if a cough or a rash will become a pre-existing condition that puts affordable care out of reach for a daughter or a son. I worked across the aisle to reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and to protect AHCCCS, our state's Medicaid program, from Washington efforts to weaken these programs. The security of affordable health care is crucial to helping Arizona families and children build better lives, and I will continue to fight for this core value.

Arizonans also want great schools for our kids. Education was my ticket out of poverty and back to the middle class. I'm proud of hardworking teachers and support staff across our state who spoke out and brought public education to the forefront. Our schools help shape Arizona's next generation and the direction our state will take. Both parties must come together to advance smart, bipartisan solutions that invest in our schools and help attract and retain great teachers who inspire Arizona students to succeed.

2. What do you believe the role of elected officials is in their communities when it comes to serving and advocating for children and youth?

Arizona's elected officials should lead by example and work as hard as the people they represent. First, elected officials should listen and learn directly from everyday Arizona families about the challenges our kids face. Second, elected officials should take on those challenges and identify opportunities to deliver real results that help everyday Arizona families get ahead.

That's what public service is all about – solving problems for everyday people. One thing I've learned through my career in public service is to be an effective advocate, you have to have good working relationships with members of both parties. You have to be open to opinions that are different from your own, and you have to be willing to learn and grow. No political party is always right, and I'm proud of my record of independence and willingness to work across the aisle to deliver for Arizona.

3. Within the duties of your elected office, how can you support the children and families of our community? If elected, how will this be expressed in your agenda?

Standing up for kids and families is something I've done my entire career. Earlier this year, I worked with Senator John McCain to protect billions of dollars in education funding from a lawsuit that would have jeopardized those dollars when Arizonans could least afford it. I'm working to ensure every Arizona family has access to quality, affordable healthcare and great schools that deliver a world-class education. That's how we give the next generation a shot at success and an opportunity to achieve the American Dream.

Too often, our government doesn't work for everyday Arizonans, and my office is always in the community as a resource to solve people's problems. When people have issues with a federal agency, problems obtaining Social Security or veteran's benefits, or are struggling with red tape and government bureaucracy, my team and I are always here to listen, take action, and get things done.

4. How would you, as an elected official, support an equitable school system for ALL students, cradle to career? As 90% of human brain development happens by age 5, please additionally share your thoughts on early childhood education and its role in the educational system.

I believe every Arizona child deserves the opportunity to succeed, and that starts with great schools and great teachers. I've worked to protect Title I funding because it helps fund our highest need areas and close crucial opportunity gaps. I also supported bipartisan budgets that provided funding increases for Head Start and other crucial wraparound services, such as school psychologists, nurses, and social workers. Finally, I'm working to protect KidsCare and child nutrition programs from cuts, because I know our kids can't succeed when they aren't healthy and ready to learn.

As a school social worker, I know firsthand that the path to success starts early, with a robust commitment to early childhood education. Particularly in reading

and math, studies show we can make the biggest difference early on in improving college and career readiness and reducing dropout rates. That's why I supported the Every Student Succeeds Act, the bipartisan education reform law that for the first time authorizes a federal commitment to early childhood education.

5. As childhood abuse, neglect and foster care continue to be major issues in Arizona, what prevention and trauma response strategies do you support for our child welfare system, the Department of Child Safety and/or our local communities? How would you propose using local, state and federal funds to improve outcomes for youth experiencing foster care or additionally, work toward prevention of child abuse in our communities?

As a social worker, I have seen the challenges foster youth face and know the harm a broken system can do to young people. Throughout my career, I have fought against child abuse and worked to protect children and families. It is important that local, state, and federal resources receive strict scrutiny and are coordinated to produce locally-led best outcomes. Programs to prevent abuse and support foster youth should be fully funded, and engagement with parents and guardians should be a primary focus. Continuing and expanding opportunities to succeed through educational and employment opportunities are also critical to enabling foster youth to build better lives.

6. Lastly, please feel free to share any further information with voters.

Arizonans know Washington is dysfunctional. I'm focused on cutting through the chaos to do what's best for everyday people in our state. I worked across the aisle to protect KidsCare, AHCCCS, and billions of dollars for public education in Arizona. I fought against child abuse and exploitation. I supported funding for career and technical training, education, and job creation. I know neither party is right all the time. I'll continue to work with anyone with a good idea and deliver results for Arizonans.