

Senate District 15 - Sen. Angie Taylor (D-Reno) and Republican challenger Mike Ginsburg's policy question responses:

Education

If you had the power to make specific policy changes, what is one measure you would propose to improve Nevada's education system?

Taylor said if she could wave a magic wand and make one change to Nevada's education system, it would be to reduce class sizes, allowing for more individualized attention.

"We have some of the largest class sizes in the country," Taylor said. "What an educator will tell you, and the research will tell you, is that it seems like three or four kids don't make a difference, but it does."

Taylor said the challenges lawmakers have to weigh when working toward smaller class sizes are twofold: increasing the number of certified teachers and ensuring that schools have the space to accommodate more classes.

Ginsburg said his mother was an educator for 35 years at Reno High School, and teachers are underpaid for the services they provide.

"We need to make sure the teachers are getting a good salary. How many teachers have put money into their own classrooms?" he asked. "I would say probably all of them, at some point, have ... put money into their own classes. We need to make sure that teachers are compensated for what they do."

Should lawmakers bring Nevada's per-pupil education funding in line with the national average?

Even with the historic increase in education funding authorized in the 2023 legislative session, Taylor said the state is still far behind the national average.

She said lawmakers need to bring the state's per-pupil education funding in line with that benchmark, and there needs to be accountability to ensure that the funding is leading to greater student success.

That doesn't just mean increasing graduation rates, Taylor said, noting that evaluating proficiency and learning outcomes is vital.

"Every district is different. How are we doing? Are we making progress now? What are those gaps? We know we're behind. We need to catch up, but let's make sure we're just spending it in the right way," Taylor said.

Ginsburg said he would support bringing the per-pupil funding to the average if the state is behind, but that it depends on where the funding is going and he wants to focus on teacher salaries and accountability measures.

“It needs to go to the educators,” Ginsburg said. “We need to be able to track those educators ... I would say I'd love to bring test scores up. I'd love to bring the school districts themselves up if they're underperforming.”

Would you support providing funding for free school meals to all K-12 Nevada students? Should it be means-tested (provided for free only for students from low-income households)?

“I would support free breakfast or lunch,” Taylor said. “I did, and I would do it again, and hopefully it will come back and I'll have an opportunity to vote for it in the Senate.”

Ginsburg said school meal programs should be means-tested. In wealthy areas, he said, a lot of the kids that are getting free meals are probably not using them, leading to food waste.

“Let's focus on the schools that need them, the people that need them, communities that need them, across the board,” he said.

What disciplinary actions do you believe schools should be able to take if a student is disruptive in the classroom or threatens a teacher?

Taylor pointed to the [bipartisan school safety measure](#) she passed in the 2023 legislative session alongside a complementary bill from Republican Gov. Joe Lombardo that [tightened school discipline laws](#), expanding the ability of schools to suspend or expel students. She said she's already having conversations about those policies and what else needs to be done or changed.

Taylor said that in addition to measures that protect staff and fellow students, it's necessary to identify and address the root causes of the behavioral issues leading to the disruption.

Whatever the case, a student needs to be educated, Taylor said, noting that three months of suspension away from school is not a solution.

“There's a discipline piece. It has to happen. It has to be safe,” Taylor said. “But we can't throw kids away.”

Ginsburg said he didn't believe it would be his responsibility as a legislator to tell a school district how it can or cannot punish kids.

“That decision should be left to the school district without interference from the state,” he said.

School choice

Do you support providing state funding for school choice options, such as state subsidies for private schools?

Taylor said her answer is yes and no.

She said she supports funding for school choice options within Nevada's public school system. Those include magnet schools, Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, International Baccalaureate programs and other options.

"The challenge that I have is a woefully underfunded public school system," Taylor said. "How about we adequately fund our public school system first?"

She said that once Nevada's education system is fully funded, lawmakers can discuss state subsidies for private schools, but other programming is also needed to support students from marginalized backgrounds and those who may require special support.

Ginsburg said a child's education should not be driven by ZIP codes, and if a parent wants a child to attend a charter school, private school or another education alternative, they should be able to do so.

"A parent shouldn't have to live across from a school, but have to drive their child 4 miles to another school, because it's a better school," Ginsburg said. "That is where I think we have the biggest problem."

Follow-up question for Ginsburg: Research shows that universal school choice programs in Arizona and other states have contributed to state budget deficits as more parents than expected enroll in the program. Should there be any caps on a similar system in Nevada, and if not, how would you address the costs?

Ginsburg said he would have to see the specific numbers in Nevada before deciding whether there should be any caps. He added that education costs money no matter how it's provided.

"As a matter of policy, I don't think offering kids the education of their choice is a bad thing," he said. "Everybody has an agenda, and those that think school choice is a waste of money are looking at it from their likely anti-school choice perspective."

Follow-up question for Taylor: Should students who currently receive Opportunity Scholarships (tax credit-funded scholarships allowing children from low- and middle-income households to attend private school) keep them over the next biennium? How about their siblings?

Taylor did not give a direct yes or no answer. She said some of the funding that went to Opportunity Scholarships in the past was not managed as well as it could be, and there's enough funding to get the program through the next biennium.

She said she expects the Legislature to examine whether changes are needed to ensure that tax dollars are spent appropriately and transparently and that there is accountability surrounding the funding.

Health care

What aspect of Nevada's health care system do you believe needs the most attention in 2025 (i.e. prescription drugs, provider shortage, Medicaid reform, social services)? If you could implement one change in that area, what would it be?

The high cost of prescription drugs is an issue, Taylor said, noting that she supports caps for drug prices in the form of a bill from the 2023 legislative session that was vetoed but would have had the state adopt prescription drug price caps negotiated by Medicare under the Inflation Reduction Act.

She said another part of the problem is the lack of providers. Taylor said the state needs to continue efforts to expand training opportunities, such as residencies, for doctors, and explore other options to increase the number of registered physician assistants and technicians in Nevada.

Ensuring Medicaid patients can get doctor's appointments and receive quality care is also a high priority, she said.

Ginsburg said Nevada needs to attract and retain more medical professionals to the state.

The state has limited residency opportunities, and he said the state should find ways to increase those opportunities.

"I'm not just talking about doctors ... We're talking [physician assistants], psychiatrists, anybody in the medical profession," he said. "We need to make sure that we're attracting them, and that means having great schools, great communities.

"It's just like a business ... We're trying to bring businesses here," Ginsburg added. "We should try to bring our top medical professionals."

Should Nevada [adopt](#) prescription drug price caps negotiated by Medicare under the Inflation Reduction Act?

Taylor said it was unfortunate that a measure to adopt prescription drug price caps was vetoed after it passed through the Legislature. She added that she hopes to get a chance to vote on the legislation in 2025.

“I think that's really important for us to give people relief in that area,” she said. “Unfortunately, there are still seniors that have to choose between that and their food or rent, or whatever the case may be.”

Ginsburg said he believes Nevada should closely examine the prescription drug price caps negotiated by Medicare under the Inflation Reduction Act. He said those caps mark a “significant step toward making essential medications more affordable for seniors and families” and addressing the rising costs of health care.

“If we can ensure that patients benefit from reduced prices without negatively impacting local health care services or job growth, I would be in favor of exploring these types of price caps,” he said.

Would you support a [nurse licensure compact](#), an agreement allowing a nurse to hold a multistate license recognized by any of the compact's member states?

Taylor said she's supportive of policies that increase the number of medical professionals in Nevada but would not support a nurse licensure compact that has been opposed by various labor unions in Nevada.

Labor unions affiliated with the AFL-CIO, including nursing unions, have said that joining the compact benefits hospitals over workers, undercuts existing nurses, undermines collective bargaining and fails to address bigger problems such as patient-to-nurse ratios.

It's important for Nevada to grow its own nurses, Taylor said, adding that a bigger opportunity is supporting nursing programs within the state and making Nevada an appealing place to work as a medical professional.

She said she doesn't want to close the door on bringing more medical professionals to Nevada, but she wants to maximize opportunities to ensure nurses' caseloads are manageable, they're safe in the workplace and they have positive work environments.

Ginsburg said he would support a nurse licensure compact.

Environment

Would you support the following environmental legislation proposals?

A proposal to create a state-run program to buy back water rights ([SB176](#) aimed to create and fund — initially with \$5 million — a tool that would allow state regulators [to buy back water rights](#) in areas where past state regulators had issued more legal rights to use water than there was water to go around). (The proposal did not receive a vote in the Legislature).

Taylor said the measure was introduced on the Senate side and failed so she didn't have a chance to consider it as an assemblywoman, "but my understanding is that it seems like this is an approach that would conserve water while not causing undue burden on Nevadans."

Ginsburg says he supports "free and fair market solutions" to tackling environmental challenges.

"We should allow conservation groups or other private third parties to buy back water rights if they want to conserve them," he said. "I don't think the state should be spending taxpayer funds on it, especially when there are tons of conservation groups with deep pockets who could do it themselves."

Would you support limitations or bans on the sale of natural gas appliances?

"Honestly, I don't think an outright, blanket ban on natural gas appliances is practical," Taylor said. "There are too many Nevadans that just can't afford it."

She added, however, that the Inflation Reduction Act has shown there are ways to incentivize consumers to make the switch or to make choices that are better for the environment, without mandating a change that would cause a financial burden on vulnerable populations.

Ginsburg said he would not support limitations or bans on the sale of natural gas appliances. Some power in the state is generated through natural gas, Ginsburg said, adding that natural gas can be a cheaper alternative to other forms of energy.

Do you agree with the state's goal to make it to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050?

Taylor said she supports the goal.

Ginsburg did not directly answer the question but said he believes it's an "unrealistic goal," noting that technology changes over time.

Elections

Will you support the voter ID initiative on the 2024 ballot? Why or why not?

Taylor said she would not vote for the initiative because it will [disproportionately affect](#) older Nevadans and Nevadans of color, who are less likely to have a [valid license or passport](#), and there's no evidence of any kind of significant voter fraud.

"Let's be clear, I don't want anyone to vote who's not legal to vote, but we don't have a problem. Why put a barrier in place?" Taylor said. "Why would I take a chance on disenfranchising folks for no reason?"

Taylor said her mom is 81 years old, doesn't drive and she doesn't know if her mom's license

has expired or if her mom still has one.

If voter ID passes, Taylor said people such as her mother would have difficulty voting even though they're citizens.

"My mom's going to vote," Taylor said. "But what if she doesn't have me? What about those seniors who are in assisted living or nursing care or their family lives elsewhere?"

Ginsburg said he will support the voter ID initiative because it prevents noncitizens from voting and believes that "voter ID strengthens election laws and is supported by a [vast supermajority](#) of Nevadans."

Signature verification alone doesn't feel like the best method of identification, Ginsburg said.

Follow-up question for Ginsburg: How would you respond to critics of voter ID laws who say the requirement could prevent older voters who may no longer have an ID from casting a ballot?

Ginsburg said he'd like to see reliable data showing that older voters are disenfranchised and then would "welcome" a conversation about the issue.

Should Nevada continue to hold a presidential preference primary, or move back to a caucus?

Taylor said she liked the primary because she felt the process was clear, and she thinks it's probably easier to get a higher turnout with a primary than a caucus.

Ginsburg said Nevada should have a presidential preference primary, but also understands the reality that the state party gets to decide.

"I believe a [presidential preference primary] system gives more voters a say and is less confusing," Ginsburg said.

Do you believe so-called ballot harvesters should have to register and/or report more information to the state?

"Ballot harvesting" refers to the practice of someone dropping off a completed ballot at a voting site for someone other than themselves. After the 2020 election, former President Donald Trump and his supporters [falsely claimed](#) that fraud had taken place via [widespread ballot collection](#) and drop-off.

[As of June 2024](#), 24 states, including Nevada, permit someone chosen by the voter to return mail ballots on their behalf. About 15 states have laws specific to who may return a ballot, such as a family member or caregiver, and 10 states do not specify where someone may return another person's ballot.

Taylor said there has been no evidence of widespread fraud in the election system.

“They have been proven to be fair, under both Republican and Democratic secretaries of state,” Taylor said. “The accusation of fraud via ballot harvesting is yet another baseless MAGA (Make America Great Again) extremist talking point.”

“I believe ballot harvesting should be against the law,” Ginsburg said.

Follow-up question for Ginsburg: Do you believe the 2020 election was stolen?

Ginsburg said he did not believe the 2020 election was stolen.

“People often combine the stolen election theory with rightful criticism of our election laws,” he said. “I believe that we need to do a better job cleaning the voter rolls, stop automatic voter registration, require voter ID, and get rid of universal mail-in voting.”

For Taylor: Do you believe that President Joe Biden should have been replaced on the ticket?

“I think President Biden made that decision, and I think we honor the decision he made,” Taylor said.

Housing

What’s the most effective thing the Legislature could do to help address the state’s housing crisis?

Taylor and Ginsburg described the state’s housing crisis as “like an onion,” with many layers and requiring different types of solutions.

Taylor said it’s harder to address the issue from a state perspective because it is, in some ways, better addressed by local governments that are aware of their own needs.

Taylor said one policy that could have an immediate effect is preventing corporate landlords from buying up properties in the state. As a landlord herself, Taylor said that policy wouldn’t target smaller landlords who own two or three homes but larger companies that are buying up significant swaths of properties and keeping families out of the market.

She added that there are longer-term proposals, such as public-private partnerships to develop housing, and ways to incentivize developers to include low-cost housing options, that could benefit people who may not qualify for some of the state’s housing assistance programs but still struggle to afford a roof over their heads.

Ginsburg said the housing crisis has multiple layers, and lower- and higher-income families have different needs.

The costs of housing have risen with the cost of materials and labor, Ginsburg said, and the problem doesn't lie exclusively with developers and builders who are trying to make a living. He also suggested that the Legislature requiring project labor agreements (a type of collective bargaining agreement for construction projects and a union priority) alongside building projects has contributed to the problem.

Would you support removing the state's [summary eviction process](#)? Are there changes to the summary eviction process you would support, such as [requiring a landlord to file first in a summary eviction](#)?

In the 2023 legislative session, Taylor supported a measure to change the requirements of the state's summary eviction law to require a landlord to file instead of a tenant. The bill was later vetoed by the governor. She said she would support the proposal again.

Taylor said it's an unfair burden on the tenant to begin the legal process and the requirement that a tenant file first is unique to Nevada.

"I live in a house and I have a rental property, and you hope that helps to create some income or build some wealth," Taylor said. "The business piece is important. It really is, but the people piece is important, too."

Ginsburg said he did not want to change the system.

"I support the summary eviction process," he said.

Do you agree with Gov. Joe Lombardo that the heart of the state's affordable housing crunch could be solved by allocating more federal land for housing development? If not, what do you believe is missing?

Taylor said she supports policies that alleviate the crisis for families, but what she hears the most from voters is that the cost of housing is too high, and there are short-term solutions that need to happen.

"It's important for us in the Legislature to just continue to fight for those things that lower costs for families," Taylor said. "Those things that hold landlords, even like me, and especially corporate landlords, accountable to give people a chance."

Ginsburg said the release of lands for housing development is needed, but it's not possible to use all the land, and other solutions need to be considered.

Mental health

What, from a policy perspective, is a contributor to Nevada's mental health crisis and what is a policy solution you'd like to see implemented to address it?

Addressing the state's mental health crisis will take a number of different solutions, Taylor said, adding that one area she would like to see addressed is the shortage of mental health providers.

"We've got to do all that we can to help provide that so that when someone is in crisis, when they do need help, there's someplace to turn," Taylor said.

Another place to address, she said, is the factors that contribute to mental health crises such as substance abuse, housing stressors and financial fears.

Taylor pointed to the Legislature setting aside \$200 million for a homelessness fund in 2023 to serve Clark County and believes there are also solutions within the realm of private-public partnerships and building out longer-term services.

Ginsburg did not give an answer.

Gun policies

Would you support the three gun control measures that Lombardo [vetoed](#) during the 2023 legislative session? What do you believe should happen? Are there any policy areas you'd like to see changed?

Taylor said she has "no interest in taking away people's guns" but that she wants to make communities and schools safer.

Taylor said she would support the three gun control measures, which proposed prohibiting access to certain semiautomatic firearms to those younger than 21, criminalizing possession of guns near polling locations, cleaning up a contested state law banning "ghost guns," and restricting access to guns for those convicted of a hate crime. Taylor said she would support the legislation again.

She pointed to the 1 October mass shooting in Las Vegas in 2017 as an example when bump stocks were used on a gun, basically converting it into a machine gun, and said the proposed reforms could likely have saved lives if they were in place.

Ginsburg said he supports the governor's vetoes, adding that he would not support any gun control measures.

Should Nevada ban the sale of semiautomatic weapons and/or implement an assault weapon ban?

Taylor said she'd like to have conversations with law enforcement officials and others about what limitations on the sale of semiautomatic or assault weapons would look like.

"I want people to be able to hunt, I want people to do all of that," Taylor said. "But people will support some restrictions. How far do they go? Don't know. But absolutely, I would support some restrictions."

Should there be a 30-day waiting period for all gun purchases?

Some research around waiting periods shows that they [could prevent](#) people facing mental health crises from purchasing a gun and using it to harm themselves or others, Taylor said, adding that she's open to a conversation about the idea but also wants to explore other solutions.

Ginsburg said he would not support a 30-day waiting period for gun purchases. He said if someone gets a hunting permit, they may need to buy a gun and a 30-day limit could negatively affect their hunting season.

Nevada does not have a waiting period to purchase a firearm.

Criminal justice reform

In 2023, lawmakers [lowered the quantity of fentanyl](#) a person must possess to trigger a [trafficking](#) charge, but didn't adopt Lombardo's proposal to raise criminal penalties for possession in any amount. Do you think that criminal penalties should be higher for fentanyl possession?

Taylor said she supported 2023 legislation that lowered the quantity of fentanyl required to trigger a trafficking charge and doesn't think adjustments are needed at this time.

Ginsburg said he wants to make "crime illegal again," and supports lowering the possession penalty thresholds to ensure drug dealers cannot skirt the law by going a few grams under the limit.

"Whether it's fentanyl, whether it's heroin, cocaine, whatever it is ... lower those," Ginsburg said.

In 2019, Democratic lawmakers pushed forward a wide-ranging package of criminal justice reforms that relaxed some penalties and aimed to curb a ballooning prison population that threatened to bust the state's budget. Lombardo proposed stiffening criminal penalties in 2023 and rolling back some of the reforms, but that pitch fell to the wayside. Would you support rolling back the 2019 reforms and stiffening criminal penalties?

"Part of our number one job in this state really is to keep people safe. And how do we make

things better for the people in the state?” Taylor said. “I don’t have any specific proposals to roll anything back ... but any policies that can help keep us safe, I’m all for it.”

She said she’s open to conversations with law enforcement officials to see what needs to be done.

Ginsburg said he supports stiffening criminal penalties.

How would you like to see the state address prison overcrowding? What needs to be done to address recidivism rates?

Taylor said the United States imprisons more people than any other country and said one of the keys to the issue is ensuring people who need a second chance have the support to do so.

“I’d want to have a lot of conversations about it, but I’m certainly open,” Taylor said. “What are other countries doing that we aren’t doing? Where’s the right place to draw that line?”

Ginsburg did not give an answer.

Tax credits

Would you support the expansion of the state’s film tax credit program?

Taylor said she hasn’t seen any concrete proposals yet, but it’s vital that any tax credit program expansion or plan give back to the state more than it takes and benefits all regions.

The last proposal in the 2023 legislative session focused on Southern Nevada and Taylor said she needs to be able to tell constituents how they would benefit from any tax credit expansion.

“I’m not outright opposed ... But I haven’t seen a proposal yet. You hear a little bit of this, little bit of that,” Taylor said.

Whether it’s stadiums or tax credits for movies, Ginsburg said he thinks Las Vegas gets more of the focus, and he wants to ensure “we’re not giving tax credits to people that aren’t going to bring any benefit to the state.”

“What I want to watch out for is making sure that the citizens, the counties, the cities and the state as a whole, aren’t taken advantage of and then make sure that we’re getting something out of this,” Ginsburg said.

Would you have supported the special session legislation to fund the A’s stadium? Or, for an incumbent, do you stand by your vote on the special session legislation to fund the A’s stadium?

Taylor, who voted against the legislation, said she stands by her position.

"I spent a lot of time on that, really thinking about it, really trying to look at the whole package of it," Taylor said. "At the end of the day, I didn't have one constituent from Northern Nevada that reached out and said they supported it."

Ginsburg said he wasn't a legislator at the time, didn't hear both sides of the issue, and wouldn't weigh in on whether he would have supported the legislation.

"I'm not going to go backwards and say, 'Would I have approved the A's stadium?' Because I wasn't there," he said.

He said he would evaluate any future proposal with an eye to how it would benefit the state and his constituents.

Vetoes

Are there any measures that the governor vetoed in the 2023 legislative session that you would like to see brought back?

Taylor said she'd like to revisit a bill implementing free universal breakfast and lunch, a bill capping drug prices and some of the housing policies that Lombardo vetoed.

"I'd love to see those things come back around and have an opportunity to say, 'hey, let's reconsider that stuff again,'" Taylor said. "These are still big issues for Nevadans."

Ginsburg said the governor vetoed them for a reason, and he supports the governor.

"He wasn't just sitting there with his veto stamp or his signature just randomly because it was in front of him," Ginsburg said. "He did what he thought was the best for the state. So I would support that and not bring any of those bills back."

Gaming

Would you vote to support a proposed constitutional amendment that opens the door for a state lottery and is making a second run through the Legislature in 2025?

Taylor voted for the proposed amendment in 2023 but said she wants more time to consider it in 2025 and has been meeting with proponents and opponents in the interim to better understand the policy's implications.

"Does that mean I said, 'Yeah, let's do a lottery?' No, it's too early for that. I have way more I need to learn," Taylor said. "I remain open to it, but let's have the conversation."

Ginsburg said he would not.

Should Nevada allow people to register remotely for sports betting rather than require them to show up in person to register?

Taylor said she honestly doesn't have an opinion on the issue and would need to do more research into its implications.

Ginsburg said he believes Nevada should allow the policy.

Transparency

Would you support any of Assemblywoman Heidi Kasama's (R-Las Vegas) proposed [legislative transparency and accountability reforms](#)?

Taylor said she's heard of the proposal... but hasn't had time to weigh the ins and outs of the legislation.

"Overall, I think it's important for government to be transparent, for government to be fair, for people to freely be able to access and get involved," Taylor said. "I'm certainly open to reading what the proposals are."

Ginsburg did not directly address the specific proposals but said the more lawmakers increase transparency, the more people will be less skeptical of their process.

"Our nation relies on trust in systems and processes to survive and we must do what we can to improve them and bring more transparency," he said.

Reproductive rights

Would you support a measure protecting in vitro fertilization (IVF) in Nevada? Would you change or expand Nevada's existing abortion protections? If so, which ones and why?

Taylor said she would support IVF protections in Nevada, and believes everyone should have the right to choose such a treatment.

"IVF is a way a lot of families get a chance to be families," Taylor said.

She said she supports Question 6, which would enshrine abortion protections in the Nevada Constitution, and a separate, more expansive proposed constitutional amendment protecting access to a wide variety of reproductive health services, including birth control, abortion and fertility treatments, which is going before legislators in 2025.

“It’s really important that every woman has a right to make the medical decisions that are best for her,” Taylor said. “I think that’s critically important, and that’s what I’m absolutely committed to.”

Ginsburg said if it came to a vote, he would support a measure protecting IVF.

“IVF is not at risk in Nevada, and I believe the government should not find solutions in search of a problem,” he said.

As for the issue of abortion, he described it as a “hard and charged issue.” As the father of three daughters, Ginsburg said he has fought to protect them since they were kids.

“The reality is in Nevada, abortion is legal up to six months, and that can’t be changed,” he said. “Abortion is the hardest decision a woman can make — we don’t need to make it harder by politicizing it.”

Should the state change its laws to require a 48-hour notification period for the parents/guardians of minors who are seeking an abortion?

Taylor said there’s nothing that jumps out to her about the law that needs to be changed.

Ginsburg said he would support a parental notification period.

“Abortions need to be safe for women, but parental notification is important too,” Ginsburg said. “I think we can all agree that an underage girl who has an accidental pregnancy by an older boy should not be forced to get an abortion ... without her parents knowing.”

Do you support Nevada Medicaid covering abortion services?

Taylor said she views the coverage as an equity issue and she would hate for someone to have less access to care because of their income level.

Follow-up question for Ginsburg: Should the state help fund crisis pregnancy centers, which offer services to people from an anti-abortion perspective?

Did not respond.