

# THE EDMOND SUN

## Hunter supports health-care reform

**James Coburn**

The Edmond Sun  
June 19, 2008

EDMOND, OK — Dianne Hunter recalled life as a farm girl in Hinton when her father died. Her mother was left alone to raise her two sons and two daughters.

"When it came to working that ground in springtime for planting, there were more tractors that showed up than you could put in the field," said Hunter, a candidate for House District 96. "You see that in every community. Someone's having a hard time — everybody pitches in together."

This sense of community motivates Hunter to run for the state House of Representatives.

District 96 voters will have the choices of Republican candidate Mike Idleman of Choctaw, who is a former Edmond Memorial High School teacher, Republican Lewis Moore, 49, of Arcadia; and Democrats Jon-Paul Ammirata of Luther and Hunter of Edmond. The Democrat and Republican candidates will face off in the July 29 statewide primary election and the winners compete in the Nov. 4 general election.

The seat is open because incumbent Rep. Lance Cargill, R-Harrah, chose not to file for re-election this year.

Education, health care, energy, manufacturing and better roads and bridges will be the focus of Hunter's campaign.

Hunter speaks with patients about their health-care concerns at her husband's ears, nose and throat clinic in downtown Oklahoma City where she serves as administrator. Some families depend on SoonerCare benefits for their children.

In 2006, Dianne Hunter supported her husband Dr. David Hunter's campaign for the U.S. House of Representatives in the 5th District.

"What prompted that is we just kept seeing government legislation directed to the health-care field. ... What I see so often are people that are making the suggestions or passing bills regulating health care, don't have the working knowledge of what can or can't be done in a clinic, hospital or nursing home facility."

### Finding Health care Solutions

On the subject of universal health care, Hunter forecasts it will be decided on a state-by-state basis.

"We need somebody on the House floor who understands health care," said Hunter, 58. For her to support universal health care would depend upon the form devised, she said.

"How are you going to provide that health care? Are you just going to mandate to every employer — 'You absolutely have to carry health insurance on your employees?'" she said.

Hunter questioned if Oklahomans would be willing to pay \$10 for a hamburger or \$6 for a gallon of milk for the sake of universal health care. "The up-charge will be to the end consumer, and we'll have to see how that works out," she said.

There also is the working poor, whose employer does not help pay for health care. These families might be paying for insurance if they have to choose between paying for food, gas, a mortgage or saving for their child's college education, she said.

"Then, do you come up with something where the doctors get a tax break for seeing patients who fall in that category?" Hunter said.

Another health-care plan might establish the recipient's deductible to be based on their income tax. "So everybody gets this universal health care, but your deductible can be \$25,000 if you're in the \$250,000 income bracket. Your deductible can be \$500 for the year if you make \$17,000 a year."

Making health care accessible to more Oklahomans won't be easy. But Oklahomans are innovative when it comes to problem solving, she said.

## **Education and Life Skills**

Creative ideas for finding solutions begins with education. Education is the cornerstone of society, Hunter said. She earned a bachelor's degree in English and a master's degree in education at Southwestern Oklahoma State University.

In supporting public education, Hunter favors schools with small classes. "If you're going to mandate certain things, just mandate that a parent has to spend one day a semester in their student's classroom," Hunter said.

She suggests that schools teach life skills because they're not being taught skills such as balancing a checkbook at home.

"I'm talking about the fourth- or fifth-grade about how you manage money — what is involved in the manufacturing of a product."

Somebody recently complained to Hunter that Oklahoma has among the worst teenage pregnancy rates in the nation.

The roles of parenting and family could be explored more thoroughly in the schools, she said. "I'm so sick of the wedge issues — 'You're not going to teach my kids about sex.' I don't want to teach them about sex. I want to teach them about family responsibility. And that's not sex education."

## **Windpower and Human Resource**

In addition, Hunter said to look to the heavens for answering part of the nation's energy crisis. Geothermal technology and wind power are clean and make economic sense, she said.

"I stand in the backyard and the wind blows over me, and that is just energy blowing across this state going to waste," Hunter said.

In Edmond, almost 3 percent of residents use wind power, said Charlie Burgett, utility director for Edmond Electric. Wind power is growing as a nationwide trend, Burgett said, but there remains room for growth for wind power as a generation supply alternative.

Oklahoma being at the crossroads of America, is a practical location for creating more manufacturing jobs because energy consumption has set transportation costs involving goods at a premium.

Oklahomans don't want welfare, she said. They want a job.

"Our greatest resource in the state is the people," Hunter said. "And they're willing to work."

To learn more about the candidacy of Diane Hunter, visit [www.hunterforhouse.com](http://www.hunterforhouse.com)