

**Champaign County's
Business Empowered PAC
Candidate Survey**

Candidate Name: Scott Lee Cohen

Office Sought (district): Lieutenant Governor

Campaign Committee Name: Citizens for Scott Lee Cohen

Champaign Committee Address: 566 West Lake Street, Lower Level

City: Chicago Zip Code: 60661

Telephone: 312-441-0300 Fax: 312-441-0303

E-mail/Website: email: scott@scottleecohen.com website: www.scottleecohen.com

Are you seeking an endorsement from the Business Empowered PAC? Yes: YES

Are you the owner of a business? Yes: YES

If yes, type of business and total number of employees: Retail/Pawn store and Cohen's Green Cleaning Supply Company. Total number of employees – 5

Please Include a Brief Biography or Resume Along With Your Survey Responses. You May Also Include a Piece of Campaign Literature if You Like.

Return by December 18, 2009

Andrew Proctor, Champaign County Chamber of Commerce, 1817 S. Neil Street, Suite 201, Champaign, IL 61820
AndrewP@champaigncounty.org, phone: 217-359-1791, fax: 217-359-1809

Candidate Survey

Candidate name: **Scott Lee Cohen**

Please limit your responses to 150 words per question. Use additional pages as necessary. Please hand deliver or mail your completed survey to: Champaign County's **Business Empowered PAC**, 1817 S. Neil Street, Suite 201, Champaign, IL 61820.7269. Surveys must be received no later than 5 p.m. on December 18, 2009.

If you would prefer to complete this survey electronically, please contact Andrew Proctor at 217.359.1791 or AndrewP@champaigncounty.org.

1. If you are an incumbent, what are your top three accomplishments during your tenure in this office?

I am not an incumbent.

2. What are your top three priorities for improving the business climate in the State of Illinois?

Job creation is the most important element to improving the business climate. There are many ways this can be achieved.

- 1) *By giving more tax incentives to small local businesses, which are the real engine of our economy.*
- 2) *As Lieutenant Governor I will use the office to become a "business liaison" between businesses (small and large) and the state government to attract jobs to Illinois. Making the business community around the country and the world aware that Illinois is a great place to grow and expand businesses throughout all sectors. I will travel wherever there is a possibility to grow the Illinois economy and bring jobs back to Illinois. Our image may be tarnished, but I will work to get us back into the top states for business growth.*
- 3) *As a business liaison, making the state government more accessible to the business community and giving Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity a bigger role to help expand the Illinois economy. Being an advocate for jobs is one thing, but taking action with the tools currently in place is what counts and that is what I intend to do with this office. Be the Top Job/Economic Liaison for Illinois.*

3. In your opinion, what are the most important issues facing Illinois businesses?

In my opinion, the most important issues facing Illinois businesses are the same issues facing all Illinois residents, the general state of the overall economy and the high rate of unemployment and hoe foreclosure, the banking crisis which has led to banks not making money available to small businesses, not for profit, social service organizations and individuals, and finally the third issue is the high cost of health care.

4. Briefly explain your perception of how the position you are seeking currently affects Illinois businesses?

I view the position of Lt. Governor as one of advocacy and as a liaison. The State Constitution does not specify duties and the main role is to be ready to serve as Governor. Therefore, I would use the position to be the advocate for and serve as a liaison to the Governor and the General Assembly for Illinois businesses. It is not reasonable to expect that in order to be heard one must hire lobbyists to

represent your interests. I will use my background as a small business owner in this role and in the office.

5. Would you support a tax and/or fee increase to solve Illinois' budget deficit? If not, how do you propose addressing the projected \$11 to \$15 billion deficit for FY2011?

I would support a tax and/or fee increase to solve Illinois' budget deficit only after all other avenues had been examined and utilized. I believe we must make cuts of unnecessary programs and positions first, eliminate other areas of waste from the state budget, explore means and programs that reduce costs, identify and implement new revenue streams and then if a budget deficit remains look at tax and/or fee increases that are fair and balanced.

6. Illinois is currently behind approximately \$3 billion in its Medicaid payments. Would you support some type of managed care program to reign in costs and increase efficiencies in providing health care?

I think we need to start by reviewing our processes and correcting areas in our systems that have resulted in the loss of federal dollars, and we need to see what happens with the health care reform legislation at the federal level. Whatever steps Illinois takes need to be coordinated with the new plan coming out of Washington in order to be most effective and best meet all the needs, both in terms of care and financial. I do believe that as we move forward with this reform it is important to have all of the stakeholders involved in working towards the solution – government/elected officials, representatives of the hospitals and other care providers, the insurance industry and patient rights advocates and consumer rights organizations. We need to start taking team approaches to complex issues.

7. Illinois recently submitted a grant application to the Federal Railroad Administration to capture a portion of the \$8 billion federal stimulus money dedicated for high speed rail. Do you support or oppose high speed rail and would you, if elected, advocate for the allocation of state dollars for high speed rail projects in Illinois?

I support high speed rail and would, if elected advocate for the allocation of state dollars for high speed rail projects in Illinois. High speed rail makes sense from a business and an environmental perspective and it the best way to provide and meet for our transportation needs as we move forward.

8. Illinois passed a \$31 billion capital program last spring to improve Illinois' infrastructure, schools, universities, and communities, however, many of the bonds to fund the capital program have not been sold mostly due to Illinois' structural deficit problem. What would be your plan for selling the bonds, and/or finding alternative revenue to finance the much needed capital program?

First, while I agree that the capital spending program passed last spring to improve Illinois' infrastructure was needed, I also think the bill contained a lot of unnecessary waste. One example is the \$40 million dollars for a Westside campus of Chicago State University that the University did not request and was unaware was in the bill and has not even planned. While I do not necessarily disagree that such an institution may very well be needed in this area, it seems irresponsible to allocate this level of funding for a project that has no data whatsoever to back it up. This is but one item in the bill that is not justified. I think it is for reasons like this that it is hard to pass bond initiatives with voters. I would support the expanded gambling revenue source that the bill contained as a means of financing the infrastructure capital program.

9. Would you support measures that would give businesses relief such as property tax credits and tax increment financing (TIF) assistance when municipal mandated costs are imposed? If yes, how?

Yes our municipalities around the state are hurting to pay their bills like so many other services around the state. We must work with those municipalities to support them with TIF's and other tax credits. The municipalities are on the frontline in our state and it is imperative they receive the funding to continue to better our state.

10. Do you believe government should continue to legislate restrictions and unfunded mandates on businesses or let the marketplace determine the activity? Why?

I do not believe in unfunded mandates but do support reasonable regulations where abuses have been proven in the past.

11. In this current economic situation, sales tax revenues are declining. How would you propose to address declining municipal revenues?

Costing cutting measures must be imposed at all levels to attempt to make up for the lost revenue in this tough economy. If that is not enough, other measures must be looked at. I am opposed to increasing taxes as a first resort, but if all other revenues have been explored then it may be considered for a temporary solution, until the economy is back on track.

12. Is there any other information you would like to provide?

I come to this campaign from a business background. I am a small business owner who decided to run for office because I felt government needed people with new ideas, a different perspective and innovative approaches to the problems facing Illinois. Illinois government is represented by a large number of lawyers and career politicians and I feel there is a need for people from more diverse backgrounds with different viewpoints to be at the decision making table if we are going to move our state forward. The issues facing our state are complex and interconnected and we need to approach the solutions with a comprehensive, strategic plan. The business world operates within budgets and this concept needs to be transferred to government.

Surveys must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on December 18, 2009

Support may only be provided to candidates who complete and return this questionnaire.

Return of this survey implies permission for your answers to be posted on the Champaign County Chamber of Commerce website and/or *Commerce Connection* newsletter. The PAC board reserves the right to edit all responses which exceed the 150 word restriction for the purpose of print space constraints in our publications.

Scott Lee Cohen
Candidate for Lieutenant Governor

Scott Lee Cohen is a lifelong Illinois resident, born in Chicago and raised in Lincolnwood; Scott currently resides in the Bucktown Neighborhood of Chicago. During Scott's senior year of high school his father became ill, and Scott took over his Chicago-based business to help support their family. Over the years, Scott grew the family business from one store to multiple locations; Scott further diversified and expanded his business interests to include commercial and residential real estate.

Scott has continued his entrepreneurial pursuits, recently launching a green cleaning supplies company, Cohen's Green Cleaning. The company provides an alternative to harsh cleaning chemicals by offering a range of safe and affordable cleaning products.

Last year, when it became clear that former Governor Rod Blagojevich was not going to step down from office, Scott decided to take action and speak out against the governor's actions. He started the citizens group, Rod Must Resign, which was one of the first organizations to publicly call for former Governor Rod Blagojevich's resignation. As president and founder of Rod Must Resign, Scott collected signatures and held a press conference outside of the former Governor's Chicago office with over 250 Illinois residents. Scott's experience with Rod Must Resign encouraged him to continue his fight for ethical government and he made the decision to run for Lieutenant Governor of Illinois, launching his campaign on March 18th, 2009.

Scott has campaigned across the state spreading his message of "Leadership that Listens." After returning to Chicago from one of his fourteen day state tours, Scott decided to address the need for jobs that he saw throughout the state. Scott began hosting job fairs, connecting job seekers with employers. As a result, many Illinois residents have found employment.

Scott has always been active in his community as a former Little League Coach and a supporter of several National Night Out activities to prevent violence in our neighborhoods throughout Illinois. Scott Lee Cohen is a recipient of the Illinois Law Enforcement Explorer Conference Appreciation Award and the Department of Homeland Security Contribution Award, which are given to citizens who have demonstrated commitment and service to the Illinois law enforcement community. Scott also created a scholarship fund for students in the program who wish to pursue a career in law enforcement.

As Lieutenant Governor, Scott is committed to bringing jobs and economic development to the State of Illinois. Scott will use his experience as an entrepreneur to create good paying jobs. Scott will work hard to provide quality healthcare and a good education to every Illinois resident. As a father of four, a lifelong Illinois resident and a small business owner, Scott understands the challenges that Illinois residents face and sees opportunities to make our state a better place to live. As your Lieutenant Governor, Scott Lee Cohen will continue to move Illinois forward by cleaning up Springfield and upholding the integrity of the office.