

# Chicago Tribune

## **Casten vs. Ives and Redpath: 10 questions for the candidates running for the 6th District of the U.S. House of Representatives**

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Illinois has 18 congressional districts, and each one features a contested race this year. Several include third-party candidates.

Congressional districts are determined by overall state population. Illinois, due to shrinking population, could lose a seat in the U.S. House, possibly two, following the completion of the U.S. Census.

To learn more about the candidates running for Congress, read their Tribune questionnaires here:

**Why should voters elect you and not your opponent(s)? Please limit this to policy and approach, not a biography recitation.**

Being a member of Congress requires knowing where your talents are and having the intellectual curiosity and humility to ask for expertise on the rest. It also requires being honest with the voters about where your moral and ethical redlines lie. Whether as a scientist, CEO or member of Congress, that has always been my approach.

Since I've taken office, I've been an open book when it comes to my beliefs and my values. I've held over 40 town halls. I've prioritized the issues closest to me; combating climate change, securing affordable, high-quality health care for anyone who needs it, and transforming our economy.

My opponent has no stated policy positions on her website for voters to evaluate. She said she would give Donald Trump an "A" grade to arguably the most incurious person to ever hold the office of President. We don't need rubber stamps. We need public officials who are clear and transparent with their values.

**What are your highest priorities for Illinois and the nation?**

- Facing the reality of our climate crisis means implementing solutions that address both the urgency and complexity of the situation we're in. Action on climate change isn't something that can wait, and it will be my top priority in the next Congress.
- We must provide universal, high-quality health care that is affordable for all Americans. The COVID-19 pandemic shows that access to health care is more important than ever. We need a system that does not force people without health insurance to defer

preventative check-ups and then end up overloading our emergency medical system when they are faced with more acute care needs. We can and must do better.

- Everybody in the 6th District wants a strong economy with good jobs that enable us to provide for our families. I believe that all Americans should have access to economic opportunity no matter their zip code. That's why I voted for the Moving Forward Act to make transformative investments in America's infrastructure and create millions of jobs while taking bold action to combat the crisis.

**Assuming your victory, choose a single issue you would prioritize in the coming term – name it and describe what you want to accomplish.**

My legislative priority when coming into office was climate change, and that remains my primary goal. It was my honor to be selected by Speaker Pelosi to serve on the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, to represent the United States at the COP-25 Climate Conference in Madrid Spain and to play an integral role in the creation of our 500+ page report, mapping the legislative route to ensuring we pass a habitable planet onto our children. Vox called this plan “the most detailed and well-thought-out plan for addressing climate change that has ever been a part of US politics — an extraordinary synthesis of expertise from social and scientific fields, written by people deeply familiar with government, the levers of power, and existing policy.”

In the next Congress, we have to put that plan into action. We have passed comprehensive energy bills in 1978, 1992 and 2005. We are overdue for a new bill, and I hope to lead the effort to make our recommendations the centerpiece of that policy.

**In 150 words or fewer, make a pitch for the presidential candidate you support.**

Our country is currently suffering through a pandemic that, at the time of this writing, sees 1,000 Americans die every day. Our economy is suffering from levels of unemployment we haven't seen in a century. In short, our country is hurting. We need a president who can speak with genuine empathy to all Americans while addressing these problems. We need a president who will make it clear that there are basic standards of decency and competence that we demand of all public officials. Joe Biden is that man.

**Are you prepared to take up real reform to Social Security and Medicare to ensure their future solvency? What specific reforms would you be willing to support?**

Ensuring that Social Security and Medicare continue to provide economic security for American families requires working on both the cost and revenue side of the ledger, but absolutely cannot include any cuts in services provided.

On the revenue side, both programs suffer from the fact that they are progressive policies funded by regressive taxes. The cap on FICA contributions at \$137,700 of income means that the wealthier you are, the less you contribute as a percent of income. Taking off that cap would substantially solve near-term challenges, and I was proud to co-sponsor H.R. 860 which would start that process.

On the revenue side, we have huge opportunities to lower the cost of health care in this country which would in turn drastically cut the cost of Medicare. We spend approximately \$10,000 per person per year on health care, yet have vastly worse health outcomes than countries like Switzerland and Germany spend \$7,000 or less. Getting to those levels would free up ~\$1 trillion/year in healthcare expense, a significant portion of which would accrue to Medicare. That means defending and expanding the ACA. We must also remove the rules that currently prohibit Medicare from negotiating with pharmaceutical companies; the CBO has estimated that this would save \$456 billion from 2020-2029 if implemented.

**What do you view as the government's obligation, if any, to help American workers secure health insurance? Do you support the creation or continuation of a program, such as Medicare for All or Obamacare? Do you have a different idea? If you support a government-related insurance plan, how would you pay for it?**

Every country with universal healthcare spends less per capita than the United States does and has better health outcomes as measured by Mortality Amenable to Healthcare. This isn't surprising; an ounce of prevention still costs less than a pound of cure, but that prevention depends on consistent access to the healthcare system. As such, we have both a moral obligation and an economic incentive to ensure that no one's access to healthcare is constrained by their individual ability to pay.

That said, I do not believe that there should be a single, government provider of healthcare for the same reason I don't think there should be a single government provider of education. Just as private, parochial and home schools keep our public school system disciplined, competition among providers in our healthcare system will work, as long as we maintain sufficient regulation to prevent that competition from impacting price at the consumer level. To that end, I support the ACA with a full public option, along with expansions of Medicare and Medicaid to ensure that no one is left out. Ideally, I would like to see the adoption of a system such as Switzerland has where all citizens have access to the same menu of choices rather than the current US model where the menu varies by age, wealth, employer, union status, veteran status and state.

**Identify 3 national security threats to the United States. Choose one and explain your approach to dealing with that threat.**

- The rise of global authoritarianism in the wake of Donald Trump's pull back from NATO, Paris, the JCPOA and other post-WWII treaties and alliances.
- The rise in domestic terrorism and white nationalism within the United States.
- The global spread of online misinformation.

These three issues are intimately linked. In the executive branch, we are overdue for US leadership and should initiate discussions to update the Geneva convention to address cyber warfare. There are international consequences for countries that violate another country's territorial sovereignty, but no explicit consequences for those who would steal our information.

In the legislative branch, we need to remove the fiction that social media companies are simply “platform” companies with no responsibility for the content that their users see. After all, their business model is predicated on their use of algorithms to boost specific content. I questioned Mark Zuckerberg on this issue in October 2019 and have subsequently led a letter to demand that those companies remove disinformation relating to COVID-19 from their websites. I believe we will need to pass legislation that holds these companies more explicitly liable for promoting disinformation.

**COVID-19 has destroyed jobs. The economy needs to be rebuilt. What policy steps should Congress take (beyond stimulus money or bailouts) in the next year to create as many jobs and as much prosperity as possible?**

The first and most important way to rebuild the economy is to put the COVID-19 public health crisis behind us. As long as people cannot go outside in crowded public spaces without fearing for their health, we will not restore the economy.

Since the pandemic, unemployment has surged, GDP has fallen by 33% on an annualized basis and the economic pain has been disproportionately borne by those who were least able to participate in the prior expansion. Had we let scientists and public health officials lead a nationally-coordinated response, we would now be recovering. Our failure to do so now risks more lasting economic dislocation as temporary furloughs morph into structural unemployment, and as temporary business slowdowns morph into Chapter 7 bankruptcies.

The scope of what Congress should do once we emerge from this pandemic depends substantially on how quickly we get the public health crisis under control. If we remain on the current course we run the very real risk that the Depression-level downturns in our economy will require New Deal-level recovery programs. In that case, we should leverage historically low US borrowing costs to invest in large scale, economically-accretive federal infrastructure programs, with a focus on building the low cost, low carbon green infrastructure of the future, providing coast-to-coast broadband and working to ameliorate the structural inequities that made this downturn more painful than it needed to be.

**When have you shown independence from your party on an issue of major import?**

I have never voted for a bill that did not align with my values. The degree to which those values align with a particular political party is a happy coincidence, but we cheapen the public understanding of elected office when we presume that people in positions of leadership simply follow the will of their party.

But more than that, it implies that there is no room for diversity of opinions within a political party. I prioritized climate change but do not support the Green New Deal. I prioritized universal health care but do not support Medicare for All. Those positions are at odds with some members of the Democratic party but are consistent within a party that prioritizes science and vigorous debate.

At a separate level, when leadership of the Democratic party pushed through a bill on a voice vote that would have reduced competition among tax preparation firms, I voiced my complaints

to leadership and the media and quietly led the effort to get this language removed before it was finalized in the bill signed by the President.

**If you are an incumbent, tell us the most significant accomplishment of your current term. If you are a newcomer, tell us how you as a rookie would keep from being a backbencher.**

I am most proud of the report put together by the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis that Vox called ‘the most detailed and well-thought-out plan for addressing climate change that has ever been a part of US politics.’” I was not just a participant on the committee, but played an extensive role in the writing and editing of nearly every section of that report. This report is the road map to deal with the greatest existential threat to our species. I look forward to working with my colleagues next term to turn this roadmap into law in the 117th Congress.

**Why should voters elect you and not your opponent(s)? Please limit this to policy and approach, not a biography recitation.**

As a state legislator, I fought to reform systems failing both those served by government and those funding government. I stood up against tax hikes, unbalanced budgets and job-killing regulations. When elected, I promised to be a lobbyist for the taxpayers. I kept that promise.

My opponent has been a lobbyist for his own interests. In office less than a year, he complained that his \$174,000 annual salary was “peanuts,” and backed Congressional pay raises. Rather than reform the system, Sean Casten works the system. He pushed for special deals that would benefit his own company. He would raise taxes on 90% of Americans.

My opponent has stated that “Bipartisanship is overrated.” By contrast, as a state legislator, I worked with Democrats on issues like health care access, protecting condo owners and reforming higher education contracts.

Sean Casten refused to stand up to the corruption in his own party or to disavow radical ideas, like Defund the Police. I opposed both parties when they passed unbalanced budgets and tax hikes. I never wavered from standing up to the special interests. And I called out corruption in both parties - from crony political appointments to the ComEd / Exelon bailouts to advancing comprehensive college board reform in the wake of the College of DuPage board scandal. And as an Army Veteran, a legislator and - now - Military Mom, I have dedicated my life to defending the lives, liberty and property of those I represent. I will do the same in Congress.

**What are your highest priorities for Illinois and the nation?**

The highest priority is to restore the rule of law throughout the nation and Illinois. The first responsibility for government is to secure the peace and the constitutional rights of her people. There cannot be job and business growth without law and order restored.

The last few months have been unsettling for Americans as we have watched as lawlessness spread across the nation. Looters and rioters destroyed property, illegally occupied and controlled public grounds, upended livelihoods, and unnerved many who no longer feel safe in

their own communities. In Illinois, lawlessness extends from our most powerful politicians, their special interest friends, and the lobbyists who grease the skids between the two, to the streets of Chicago overrun with murder, looting and criminal damage to property, to the suburbs where armed home invasions and carjacking have happened.

The country and this state have been through corruption scandals at the highest levels. Admittance to spying on Americans for no reason by the Obama intelligence community to, in Illinois, investigation after indictment after guilty plea for bribery and more, voters have no confidence in their elected leaders. Businesses have no confidence that there is a level playing field. Taxpayers have no confidence that taxes are used responsibly.

Once we apply the rule of law equally to all and restore respect for our public institutions, including police, our priorities must be on a growing economy built on education and job training programs that give opportunities to all.

**Assuming your victory, choose a single issue you would prioritize in the coming term – name it and describe what you want to accomplish.**

Six months ago this answer would have been different. Job number 1 is to restore a vibrant economy with full employment as we had in January 2020.

The COVID 19 crisis and the civil unrest that has resulted in damaging entire sectors of our economy. While recent job numbers indicate that our massive economy is resilient enough to recover somewhat despite a government mandated shutdown, it is only because many small businesses have received financial support from the American taxpayer and many individuals are receiving plussed up unemployment benefits, relief from eviction, and other community support. Turn off the federal and state spigot of support and the economy will go in a tailspin.

Americans did what elected officials at all levels asked them to do. They stayed home, wore masks, and made ZOOM a behemoth in the online meeting space. Our healthcare systems, manufacturers, and scientific community figured out new tests, better treatments, and ramped up protective equipment and medical devices.

Now it is time to get back to work and back to school.

The American taxpayer can no longer shoulder the burden of the economic shutdown. Federal legislation should be passed for liability waivers for businesses and schools as it relates to opening up and contracting of the COVID 19 virus. Additional federal financial support should be tied to states allowing businesses and schools to operate normally with appropriate, but not oppressive safety measures.

**In 150 words or fewer, make a pitch for the presidential candidate you support.**

I support the President's re-election. I've seen most politicians run for office on promises, 5-point plans and reform agendas that gain the support of hopeful voters, only to betray those voters and abandon their campaign promises and plans once elected. Love him or hate him, Trump never forgot who put him in office. He cut regulations that allowed the economy to flourish and job numbers to rise, rebuilt our military, and nominated conservatives to the

Supreme Court. That said, I have never been accused of playing “Follow the Leader” (ask Bruce Rauner). I have disagreements with him on issues such as enacting unbalanced budgets and large spending bills. I’ve been primarily a policy-focused legislator, and have a record of working across the aisle to get good legislation passed. I focus on principles and policy, and will work with anyone - regardless of personality - to improve the lives of those I represent.

**Are you prepared to take up real reform to Social Security and Medicare to ensure their future solvency? What specific reforms would you be willing to support?**

I have already suggested reforming social security. Public sector workers in the state of Illinois get full control of their own retirement without having to participate in social security through the SURS self-managed plan, but such plans are denied to the rest of it. The SURS self-managed plan has a TWENTY-year track record of success. Participants put away 15% of income into the plan (8% employee, 7% employer). These plans are portable, secure (they own them), and allow the employee to retire when they have met their goals.

Social security recipients on the other hand put away 12.4% of income only to receive on average a 1% return after working until late 60's to get the maximum benefit. New employees should be put into a SURS-style plan, current employees should be given the option to move contributions to a self-managed plan, and others (probably wealthier individuals) should be given the option to buy out their net benefit at a much lesser amount. The buyout percentage should be low enough to compensate for adverse selection issues.

Medicare is a more difficult fix as it is a program nearly everyone cannot wait to get on from the very rich to the average worker. In fact, retirement decisions are often made around medicare eligibility rules. I have no specific recommendation on changing the program, but I am open to a conversation that involves more competition for patients and more transparency for taxpayers.

**What do you view as the government’s obligation, if any, to help American workers secure health insurance? Do you support the creation or continuation of a program, such as Medicare for All or Obamacare? Do you have a different idea? If you support a government-related insurance plan, how would you pay for it?**

I do not support a government-related insurance plan, Medicare-for-All or Obamacare. And neither do the Democrats – at least not for themselves or their special friends. Democrat politicians and their union buddies don’t have Obamacare plans. Why should the American people?

To be honest, significant parts of Obamacare are no longer in place. Gone are the individual mandate, Cadillac health plan tax, medical device tax, and strict requirements pertaining to the expansion of Medicaid. Over 30 states have filed 1332 waivers to design their own solutions.

The solution for the American worker is to provide them with a robust insurance marketplace that lets them choose the plan that is right for them in coverage, cost, and network. Americans expect to control their own decisions over the most important aspects of their lives. If politicians would allow reforms which include price transparency, expanded Health Savings Accounts, returning to the state’s control of their Medicaid programs, and eventually equalizing the tax

advantages of employer sponsored coverage and individual coverage, we will be well on our way to getting people the coverage they need and can afford.

Nearly 25 years ago (long before Obamacare) multiple Federal laws mandated coverage for preexisting conditions both for those with employer sponsored health insurance and those who buy their own individual policies. Those laws empowered states to design their own health insurance options which were more efficient, cost less and provided better access to care for those with preexisting conditions than Obamacare does today.

**Identify 3 national security threats to the United States. Choose one and explain your approach to dealing with that threat.**

The Chinese Communist Party poses the biggest threat to our nation and the world. The Chinese have taken aggressive actions in the South China Seas, in Hong Kong, with their minority populations, and most recently on the border with India. Their Belt and Road program, industrial espionage, spying in the halls of academia in the United States, and unfair trade practices threaten all aspects of our life and relationships with other countries.

American leaders should begin with the following:

- Demand a full investigation into the origins and spread of the COVID 19 virus, repayment for costs related to the crisis, and no-notice international inspections of their biological research laboratories.
- Work with our Allies to remove China from the World Trade Organization if they continue to disrespect trade laws, the tenets of the Sino-British Joint Declaration, human rights of their people, and international water boundaries.
- Continue to support Taiwan independence.
- Provide asylum for Hong Kongers under political persecution.
- Increase military patrols of the South China Seas.

A second security threat is a nuclear-armed Iran. Iran, supported by Russia, is a threat to regional peace currently and with a nuclear weapon would be a threat globally.

Third, domestically speaking, the resiliency and lack of redundancy in our infrastructure which includes our power grid, telecommunications and internet security, and the security of other physical structures such as roads, bridges, pipelines, and water systems poses a threat if they were to come under a wide-scale terrorist attack.

**COVID-19 has destroyed jobs. The economy needs to be rebuilt. What policy steps should Congress take (beyond stimulus money or bailouts) in the next year to create as many jobs and as much prosperity as possible?**

We need to pass legislation that gives liability protection to businesses and schools and links federal funding (which needs to be targeted, temporary, and audited) to states. I support the following specific measures to get us on track:

- A payroll tax holiday which would immediately help both employers and employees. Providing this tax relief is not new in economic crises.
- Putting job training in the hands of employers by providing tax credits for training. It is more efficient to support the training this way rather than through multiple other entities.
- I have been a skeptic of these in the past, however, the latest opportunity zone programs run by the federal government seem to be working. If the audits show success, it is a program that should be expanded.
- Encourage manufacturing, especially in pharmaceuticals and critical medical supplies to relocate to the United States.
- Keep our energy independence intact. It was a preposterous thought just ten years ago that we would be a net exporter of energy. Energy is the master resource and cheap, reliable, efficient power has been the greatest factor in lifting people out of poverty and giving them a greater quality of life. At the same time, the US has led all industrial nations in the greatest reduction in CO2 emissions.

**When have you shown independence from your party on an issue of major import?**

I served as a state legislator for six years. In that time I stood up to my own party on a myriad of issues.

The biggest challenge we have in Illinois is that, instead of being an opportunity to advance a policy agenda rooted in first principles, winning elections is just a means to distribute jobs, contracts, and other prizes to friends and political allies - for both parties.

I stood up for the people I represented, rather than falling in with the government's ruling class. I spoke out against Speaker Madigan's culture of cronyism and abuse, which has culminated in a massive federal investigation.

I also stood up to my own party. In 2017, nearly one-third of House Republicans - including caucus leaders - voted for the largest structural income-tax increase in history. I spoke out against the tax increase. Most of the House Republican Caucus voted for a bailout of Exelon on the backs of rate-payers. I spoke out against the bailout.

I am one of only a few who were willing to tackle structural or entitlement reforms - I advanced meaningful pension reform, property tax reform, education reform and Right to Work legislation.

In 2014, Illinoisans elected Bruce Rauner on the promise of an "Illinois Turnaround." In the end, Rauner betrayed every promise he made. I gave up a "safe" seat in the Illinois House to primary Bruce Rauner in 2018.

I stood up when it was important to stand up - not when it was popular to stand up.

**If you are an incumbent, tell us the most significant accomplishment of your current term. If you are a newcomer, tell us how you as a rookie would keep from being a backbencher.**

While I am not an incumbent, I am also no rookie. I have served as a state legislator. As a member of the super-minority, I realize quickly that I wouldn't have a lot of control over what legislation came to the floor each day. So, I made sure that I talked about what was going on in state government as often as possible. I consistently communicated to those I served to keep them in the loop on the legislation, arguments that were being made, and the implications of success or defeat. I shared with them what I was reading and my thoughts on different policy ideas. I worked across the aisle whenever possible to get legislation that directly impacted my constituents passed, including my reform bills and the audit passed in the wake of the College of DuPage spending scandal. I called for ethics reform in the state capitol before it was popularized by the #MeToo movement. I stood with victims of harassment and abuse in the state capitol to advance a victims' rights bill. And the legislation I initiated to ensure that insurance companies and health care providers provided adequate coverage when either one wanted to end their contract in the middle of a premium year was passed with the help of one of the most liberal members of the Democrat caucus.

**Why should voters elect you and not your opponent(s)? Please limit this to policy and approach, not a biography recitation.**

I am the only candidate in this 6th Congressional District election who will consistently stand for constitutionally limited government and both economic and personal freedoms. Republicans used to at least talk a good game of small government, but they don't even do that anymore, with the blowout spending that has occurred in the Trump Administration. Meanwhile, the Democratic Party has long advocated building a bigger and bigger government that is now topped off (for now—more is sure to follow) with stimulus bills that are blowing the accumulated national debt through the roof. I will work to reduce government spending, and I specifically call for the elimination of the Federal Departments of Education and Housing & Urban Development. All corporate welfare should be ended. All farm subsidies should be ended. That won't solve all of this nation's fiscal problems, but in three sentences, it's a pretty good start. I also think the Hall-Rabushka Flat Tax should be substituted for the current tax code. I will work diligently to end runaway deficits before a debt crisis occurs. The late economist Rudiger Dornbusch once said that financial crises take longer to develop than you expect, but once they finally happen they occur faster than you would think. We certainly experienced that 12 years ago. The last weekend of September 2008 looked a whole lot different than the first weekend.

**What are your highest priorities for Illinois and the nation?**

I want the governments of the State of Illinois and the United States to get their profligate spending habits under control. Illinois must address its pension crisis, but there is little a Congressman can directly do about that. I would also like to see Illinois and the US move to a multiparty democracy. It is simply unnatural to try to cram everyone into one of two big political tents. The world is too complicated, with too many issues to consider. I am completely dissatisfied with both the Democratic and Republican parties, and their presidential candidates this (come to think of it, every) year. Even though so many people feel the same way, the two

older parties are propped up by our Single Member Plurality (single member legislative districts, person with the most votes wins) election system, sometimes also called “First Past the Post.” We should use Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) for single winner elections. Voters rank candidates in order of preference and no longer feel boxed into voting for the lesser of two evils. Legislatures don’t have to have single winner elections. It would be far better to have multimember districts, with several candidates from each party, and the winning candidates elected through RCV. No more “Vote for me, because I’m not the other candidate.” I support the Fair Representation Act in Congress, which would mandate multimember congressional districts in states with more than one member, and single winner RCV elsewhere. See online how both types of RCV work.

**Assuming your victory, choose a single issue you would prioritize in the coming term – name it and describe what you want to accomplish.**

The sooner that entitlement reform is addressed, the easier it will be. And, it will be very difficult, at best. That should be the top priority of the upcoming 117th Congress, and I address my proposed solutions in Question #5.

**In 150 words or fewer, make a pitch for the presidential candidate you support.**

I support and will vote for the Libertarian Party presidential ticket of Jo Jorgensen for President and Jeremy “Spike” Cohen for Vice President. I admit that one reason that I will vote for them is that they are not Trump/Pence or Biden/Harris. But, the main reason that I will vote for them is that they stand foursquare against the ever expanding government that is constantly served up by the R’s & D’s. Unless we change course soon, we risk a future federal debt crisis that would seriously harm the US and world economies. Also, if the LP presidential ticket (or our US Senate candidate, Danny Malouf) earn 5% or more of the vote in Illinois, the Libertarian Party will obtain ballot access for its statewide slate of candidates in 2022. We would not have to do a 25,000 valid signatures (about 40,000 signatures total) petition drive in three months then.

**Are you prepared to take up real reform to Social Security and Medicare to ensure their future solvency? What specific reforms would you be willing to support?**

With respect to Social Security, I support the Cato Institute’s “6.2% Plan,” which would allow people under the age of 55 to opt out of the Social Security system. They would be able to direct their employee portion of the FICA tax into private, inheritable investment accounts, receive a tradable bond based on their past FICA taxes paid, but waive their future Social Security benefits. This would address perhaps the main weakness of Social Security, which is rarely addressed, which is that there are no personal property rights in Social Security. Congress can change Social Security benefits at any time. The employer portion of the FICA tax will continue, so as to finance the payments of people still in the Social Security system. Those people who choose to remain in the Social Security system will get benefits from what is available to be paid.

I agree with the Cato Institute that, for Medicare, Congress should “allow seniors to opt out of Medicare without losing Social Security benefits” and “take all the money [currently spent] on Medicare and give it directly to enrollees as cash, as with Social Security, adjusting individual

enrollees' "Medicare checks" so that lower income and sicker enrollees receive larger checks, and should allow workers to save their Medicare payroll taxes in personal, inheritable accounts that will gradually replace Medicare transfers."

**What do you view as the government's obligation, if any, to help American workers secure health insurance? Do you support the creation or continuation of a program, such as Medicare for All or Obamacare? Do you have a different idea? If you support a government-related insurance plan, how would you pay for it?**

I think there is nothing more important than good health. Health care is a service, and a very important one, at that. But, I am generally not in favor of positive rights, and, therefore, I do not think that health care is a right. People don't have the right to the sweat of other people, even if it is for a good cause. It then follows that government should not have the obligation to secure health insurance, nor to provide health care. I absolutely do not support Medicare for All, and there should be a repeal of Obamacare. We need a vibrant and dynamic health care system, and it is difficult for me to see how more government control gets us there. We need to move away from the system of getting health insurance through one's employer. That is an anachronism from World War II, when benefits could be offered instead of pay raises. We need to end existing tax preferences for health care and encourage the development of large health savings accounts, combined with catastrophic coverage health insurance, to return the role of insurance in health care to something more rational. On the supply side, there should be deregulation of the health care marketplace. Insurance should be able to be sold across state lines. Medical professionals licensed in one state should be able to practice in another. To speed up drug approval, FDA authority should be restricted to regulating the safety of drugs, not safety and efficacy.

**Identify 3 national security threats to the United States. Choose one and explain your approach to dealing with that threat.**

Fortunately, the United States, with oceans on each side, and friendly nations to the north and south, does not have major security threats. However, three national security threats would be North Korea, non-state terrorists and the national debt. The last has been identified as a national security threat by James Mattis (Former Secretary of Defense), Admiral Mike Mullen (Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) and others. I have already addressed what I would do about the Federal debt, so I will address North Korea. The US has about 28,500 troops in South Korea, who might be a tripwire to conflict. South Korea is not of strategic importance to the US, has twice as many people as North Korea, and an economy at least 40 times the size of North Korea. South Korea can deter a conventional attack from North Korea without US assistance. The presence of US troops and the saber rattling done at times by Donald Trump are completely unproductive, and possibly counterproductive, in keeping the peace. The US needs to face up to the fact that the North Korean regime is not going to denuclearize. We cannot risk getting drawn into a war with North Korea when it will sometime soon likely have nuclear weapons that could strike the continental US. The US should draw down the number of its troops to zero as quickly as possible and engage in diplomacy with North Korea, with the goal of eventual reunification of the two Koreas.

**COVID-19 has destroyed jobs. The economy needs to be rebuilt. What policy steps should Congress take (beyond stimulus money or bailouts) in the next year to create as many jobs and as much prosperity as possible?**

COVID-19 hasn't destroyed nearly as many jobs as government's reaction to it. First, Congress should not stand in the way of states' reopenings and should start weaning the nation off of "stimulus" packages. Some of these have been counterproductive, as they have made unemployment benefits more lucrative than working, in some instances. It should then replace the nation's current individual and corporate income tax system with the Hall-Rabushka Flat Tax, which would do away with all deductions and credits, and apply one tax rate over a generous exemption based on family size. It would also do away with taxation of investment returns, including capital gains, which would help stimulate investment in the economy. Some austerity is needed in Federal government spending. Congress should look to the book *Austerity: When It Works and When It Doesn't*, by Alesina, Favero & Giavazzi (2019). From that book's description on [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com): "Looking at thousands of fiscal measures adopted by sixteen advanced economies since the late 1970s, Austerity assesses the relative effectiveness of tax increases and spending cuts at reducing debt. It shows that spending cuts have much smaller costs in terms of output losses than tax increases. Spending cuts can sometimes be associated with output gains in the case of expansionary austerity and are much more successful than tax increases at reducing the growth of debt." Congress needs to at least greatly decrease the rate of growth of the debt (and hopefully actually reduce the debt). It should look to this book for guidance.

**When have you shown independence from your party on an issue of major import?**

I have sometimes differed with my party on Second Amendment issues. Somewhere between banning butter knives and allowing private ownership of weapons of mass destruction, lines have to be drawn somewhere. The goal of such policy should be to maximize negative rights (the right to live, to be free, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from violence, freedom from slavery and property rights) in our society. I think there should be some restrictions. For instance, I don't think convicted violent criminals should be able to legally possess firearms. But, as well intentioned as many laws are, they can be difficult and costly to enforce. These are difficult matters on which to pass judgement. Nonetheless, if it could be shown that a restriction would very likely enhance negative rights in our nation, I would be for it. Indeed, I think that would be the correct libertarian answer.

**If you are an incumbent, tell us the most significant accomplishment of your current term. If you are a newcomer, tell us how you as a rookie would keep from being a backbencher.**

I am cognizant that, as a minor party candidate, I am a longshot to win this election. But, if I were elected, with the retirement of Justin Amash, I would likely be the only Libertarian Party member of the US House of Representatives. I would not caucus with either the Republicans or the Democrats, and I would be beholden to neither. I would be in the position to work with Democrats on some issues and Republicans on others, and to criticize either side. I would be seen as a unique Congressperson, and, hopefully, the media would be interested in that. Within

the institution of Congress, I would try to meet one-on-one with as many fellow House members as possible to learn how to best work with them and influence legislation in a libertarian direction.