

AFL-CIO

2018 CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

First Name Steny	Middle Name Hamilton	Last Name Hoyer
State Maryland	District 5th District, U.S. House of Representatives	Party Democrat
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incumbent <input type="checkbox"/> Challenger <input type="checkbox"/> Open		
Do you currently hold or have you previously held public office(s)? Describe. 5th District, U.S. Hous of Representatives, 1981-present; Maryland State Senator, 1967-1979		
Have you received an AFL-CIO endorsement in the past? If so, for which office(s)? Yes, for 5th District, U.S. House of Representatives and Maryland State Senate.		
Official Campaign Committee Name Hoyer for Congress		
Campaign Address 4201 Northview Drive, Suite 220		
City Bowie	State MD	ZIP 20716
Campaign Manager Jazz Lewis	Email jazzlewis@hoyerforcongress.com	Cell Phone (301) 464-5710
Are you now or have you ever been a union member? Union(s) and local(s)? No		

Please return this questionnaire to:

1. REWRITING THE ECONOMIC RULES TO RAISE WAGES

The defining economic challenge of our time is raising wages and living standards for the vast majority of American workers. Wages have been flat or falling for the bottom 90% of wage earners since 2009, and for the bottom 70% of wage earners since the 1970s. Wage stagnation is not the inevitable outcome of immutable economic forces, but the predictable result of policy decisions made on behalf of the most privileged segments of our society. We must make different policy choices going forward if we want the vast majority of workers to be the primary beneficiaries of economic growth. We must: (1) strengthen collective bargaining and freedom of association; (2) ensure full employment; (3) protect and strengthen labor standards and expand employment protections for working families; (4) reform the global economy; and (5) reform Wall Street.

After World War II, there was a dramatic reduction in economic inequality and a dramatic increase in U.S. living standards. Wages and compensation rose in tandem with productivity until the late 1970s. Since 1979, however, wage growth has been flat or falling for the bottom 70% of wage earners, while productivity and corporate profits have soared. Virtually all income gains since the end of the Great Recession have been captured by the 1%.

1. Congress should rewrite the rules so that all working people have the freedom to join together and negotiate with their employers for better wages and working conditions. The decline of unions in recent decades has been a key factor behind the stagnation of wages for both union and nonunion workers. Congressional Democrats' "Better Deal" agenda includes a comprehensive set of proposals to protect the freedom of workers to join together and negotiate for higher wages and better working conditions.

- ➔ Would you support creating a mandatory mediation and arbitration process to ensure corporations and newly formed unions reach a first contract? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you support strengthening penalties on predatory corporations that violate workers' rights, and combat misclassification of workers as supervisors and independent contractors? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you support strengthening workers' right to strike for basic workplace improvements, including higher wages and better working conditions? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you support banning state laws that undermine worker freedoms to join together and negotiate? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you support providing millions of public employees with the freedom to join a union and collectively bargain with employers? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you support streamlining the National Labor Relations Board's procedures to secure worker freedoms and effectively prevent violations? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you support protecting the integrity of union elections against coercive captive-audience meetings? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you use federal purchasing power and policy to help expand opportunities to negotiate? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you co-sponsor and vote for the WAGE Act (sponsored by Sen. Patty Murray and Rep. Bobby Scott), legislation that would strengthen penalties under the NLRA, expand coverage, provide for mediation and arbitration of first contracts, and protect immigrant workers? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you co-sponsor and vote for the Workplace Democracy Act (sponsored by Sen. Bernie Sanders and Rep. Mark Pocan), legislation that would (1) permit workers to form unions through a process known as majority sign-up and (2) establish first-contract mediation and arbitration? **While this legislation has not been introduced this Congress, I support those concepts and would have supported a previous version introduced in the last Congress.**

2. Congress should help ensure full employment. Until the 1970s, full employment was the primary objective of economic policy making. In recent decades, this goal has been sacrificed to largely unfounded fears of accelerating inflation, and excessive unemployment has had profoundly destructive effects on wage growth for the vast majority of workers. Meanwhile, America's infrastructure continues to crumble, falling to 25th in the world, according to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, costing millions of jobs and hindering economic growth.

- ➔ Would you advocate for appointments to the Federal Reserve Board of Governors those who are committed to full employment—measured by the growth of real wages in line with productivity? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you support and advocate for an approach to budget and taxes that focuses on the needs of working families—by raising significantly more revenues over the long term from big corporations and the wealthy so we can make the investments we need in infrastructure, education and good-paying jobs for working people? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you support \$2 trillion over 10 years in additional funding for large-scale infrastructure projects, such as school modernization, water and energy systems, and transportation—including highways, public transit and airports—necessary to bring our nation's infrastructure to no less than a B+ grade from the American Society of Civil Engineers, and that would generate good jobs? **Yes, and I would support raising revenues to achieve that objective.**
- ➔ Would you support efforts to expand Buy America coverage, eliminate waivers and exemptions, insist on a domestic supply chain for national defense production, and strengthen local procurement standards? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you fight for a national manufacturing policy based on public investment in new technologies, maximizing the advantage of our energy abundance, the domestic production of clean energy goods and an expectation of rising pay? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you support the federal government focusing workforce development funds on high-quality jobs and high-road employers? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you support parity for increases in nondefense and defense spending? **Yes**

3. Congress should protect and strengthen labor standards and expand employment protections for working families. The failure to update labor standards and expand employment protections to help working families has been a significant factor limiting wage growth in recent decades. At the same time, prevailing wage laws that have helped maintain wage standards and guarantee high-quality work on projects using taxpayer money have come under increasing attack as corporate interests have increased their power in Congress.

- ➔ Would you support federal and state legislation to increase the minimum wage to \$15 per hour—with indexing and parity for tipped workers? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you support federal and state legislation to codify the Obama administration's overtime rule and guarantee overtime eligibility for workers making less than \$47,476 per year? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you oppose efforts to either weaken or repeal the Davis-Bacon Act? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you oppose efforts to weaken or repeal the Service Contract Act? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you support efforts to ensure that Section 13(c) transit labor protections apply to all federal transit programs, including all "innovative finance initiatives"? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you oppose efforts to undermine the use of project labor agreements (PLAs)? **Yes**

- ➔ Would you demand that any federal infrastructure legislation maintain high labor standards to ensure that infrastructure investments create good jobs—such as Davis-Bacon Act prevailing wages, Section 13(c) transit protections and applicable rail labor standards? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you protect public-sector employees' pay, rights and benefits when special interests push privatization and contracting-out schemes? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you support legislation and budget resources to end the misclassification of employees as contractors? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you support policies to ensure that automation enhances human work and that the economic gains from automation are broadly shared? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you oppose further federal pay freezes and benefit cuts that already have cost federal employees more than \$159 billion in lost income? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you oppose legislation to take away just cause protections, support restoration of just cause protections for Veterans Affairs employees, and support an enduring and objective civil service system with fair pay, benefits and working conditions for civil servants? **Yes**

4. Congress should reform the global economy. U.S. global economic policies have promoted the economic interests of multinational corporations over those of working people in the United States and overseas; contributed to the deindustrialization of America; and put downward pressure on mid-level wages.

Repeatedly, America's workers have raised their voices against poorly designed trade rules, such as those enshrined in the North American Free Trade Agreement and the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement. Now, the Trump administration is renegotiating NAFTA. However, it remains unclear exactly what improvements, if any, it will make to that flawed model. NAFTA's most important failures are:

- ➔ A weak labor side agreement that failed;
- ➔ Unreformed investment rules (Investor-State Dispute Settlement) that increase corporate influence over our economy and undermine our democracy;
- ➔ Complete lack of effective rules against currency manipulation; and
- ➔ Restrictions on Buy American policies that open the U.S. government's procurement market to foreign firms.

Would you oppose a renegotiated NAFTA that failed to include updated labor and environmental provisions requiring countries to meet minimum international standards and including effective tools that would ensure timely enforcement?

- ➔ Would you support efforts to strengthen enforcement of trade agreements? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you support legislation that allowed for the application of countervailing duties to address currency manipulation (currency CVD)? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you defend worker rights globally and work to raise labor standards in the global supply chain? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you vote to make corporations pay the same taxes on offshore profits as they pay on domestic profits, so they no longer have a tax incentive to send jobs overseas? **I voted against the Republican tax law that ended taxation of corporations' outsourced operations and most other corporate profit earned overseas. We need a tax system that encourages employers to invest in creating good jobs here in America.**

- ➔ "Fast track," trade authority, the legislative procedure that allows trade deals to be negotiated in secret and deprives Congress of the opportunity to amend the final deals, is up for renewal in 2018. Would you oppose an extension of such authority unless it is amended to require more congressional and public input and oversight into trade negotiations? **Yes**

Would you support budget and tax policies that promote the creation and retention of good jobs in the United States? **Yes**

- ➔ Would you support taxing corporate income from outsourced operations the same as income from domestic operations? **I voted against the Republican tax law that ended taxation of corporations' outsourced operations and most other corporate profit earned overseas. We need a tax system that encourages employers to invest in creating good jobs in the US.**
- ➔ Would you support proposals to encourage investment in domestic manufacturing, production and employment to ensure a robust manufacturing sector? **Yes**

5. Congress should reform Wall Street. Wall Street has diverted resources away from productive investments toward unproductive speculation, and allowed financial and corporate executives to claim a bigger slice of the economic pie without making the pie bigger.

- ➔ Would you support passage of a Wall Street speculation tax to discourage harmful speculation that shortchanges investment in the real economy, and to generate revenue for investment in jobs, infrastructure and education?
See attached sheet
- ➔ Would you support full implementation of the Dodd-Frank law? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you support a 21st century Glass-Steagall Act and breaking up the too-big-to-fail banks? **see attached sheet**
- ➔ Would you vote to end the tax deductibility of stock-based executive pay and end the CEO bonus loophole that encourages short-termism in corporate management that leads to downsizing, outsourcing, offshoring and insecure work? **I am willing to consider proposals that effectively address the problems of "short-termism" and economic incentives for corporate executives to move their company's jobs overseas.**

Would you vote to close the "carried interest" loophole so that the income of private equity and hedge fund managers is taxed as much as the income of working people? **Yes**

- ➔ Would you support legislation to require the Postal Service to provide such basic financial services as paycheck cashing and electronic funds transfer as a step toward establishing nonprofit, public postal banking?
I support efforts to keep the Postal Service financially stable.

2. RETIREMENT SECURITY

Retirement income security is beyond the reach of most Americans. According to the nonpartisan Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, the retirement income deficit—the gap between what Americans have accumulated for retirement and what they will need for a decent retirement—is a staggering \$7.7 trillion. This gaping deficit is explained in large part by the fraying of our private pension system, with fewer private-sector workers now covered by traditional pension plans.

As currently constructed, retirement savings plans, like 401(k) plans or IRAs, cannot make up for the loss of traditional pensions. They require workers to bear all the risk, often are insufficiently diversified, suffer from poor returns, and typically carry heavy fees and expenses. Nearly half of all working-age families have no retirement savings whatsoever. Even for families close to retirement who have some retirement money, the typical balance amounts to only \$400 per month.

Would you support passage of a Wall Street speculation tax to discourage harmful speculation that shortchanges investment in the real economy, and to generate revenue for investment in jobs, infrastructure and education?

The best way to discourage reckless financial speculation is to ensure that financial regulators, including the SEC, have the resources they need to enforce financial regulations and punish bad actors. It is also imperative that these agencies be led by people who are independent of Wall Street and are willing to crack down on practices that violate the law, harm consumers and average investors, and create risks to the economy.

Would you support a 21st century Glass-Steagall Act and breaking up the too-big-to-fail banks?

I support full and vigorous implementation and enforcement of Dodd-Frank, which has done so much to protect consumers and improve the safety and soundness of the U.S. and global economy.

Social Security remains the foundation of retirement income for working families and the principal insurance against family impoverishment due to death or disability. The Social Security system is extraordinarily well crafted, with a progressive benefits structure that delivers higher returns to lower-wage workers and ensures workers and beneficiaries will not outlive their benefits, which are protected from erosion by inflation. But as important as they are, Social Security benefits are too low—only \$16,428 per year for the average retired worker, which is just \$4,000 above the individual federal poverty level.

With a nearly \$2.9 trillion trust fund and the ability to pay all promised benefits in full until 2034, the program is not in crisis. Over the next 75 years, Social Security's modest funding shortfall, amounting to 1% of gross domestic product (GDP), can be addressed without any benefit cuts to current or future retirees.

- ➔ Would you oppose measures to replace any part of Social Security's guaranteed benefits with individual investment accounts? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you oppose efforts to reduce Social Security's guaranteed benefits under current law, including proposals to: (1) increase the retirement age (which already is increasing to 67 under current law); (2) change the calculation for the annual cost-of-living adjustment; (3) change the benefit formula; or (4) institute means testing? **see attached sheet**
- ➔ Would you support measures to strengthen retirement income security by increasing Social Security benefits? **see attached sheet**
- ➔ Would you support a measure to require all financial professionals and firms who offer advice on retirement accounts to put the best interests of their client ahead of their own financial interests and to take affirmative measures to mitigate their conflict? **Yes**

3. OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

In 1970, Congress enacted the Occupational Safety and Health Act in response to the unacceptable number of workers who were being killed or seriously injured in the workplace. Since then, significant progress has been made, but the toll of workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities remains high. Each year, thousands of workers are killed and millions more injured or diseased because of their jobs. In addition, some groups of workers, including Latino workers and immigrant workers, are at much greater risk due to the dangerous conditions and lack of protections. Millions of workers are not covered by the law, and for other workers, protections are inadequate.

The Obama administration strengthened worker safety and health protections, enhancing enforcement, issuing important new safety and health safeguards on silica and beryllium, and strengthening anti-retaliation protections for reporting job injuries. But business groups and many congressional Republicans opposed these measures, and now under the Trump administration are pushing to roll back and weaken protections, and cut the safety and health budget. These same groups also are pushing "regulatory reform" legislation that would make it impossible for OSHA, the Mine Safety and Health Administration and other agencies to issue needed safeguards to protect workers and the public.

- ➔ Would you support legislation to strengthen the Occupational Safety and Health Act and extend OSHA coverage to all workers, strengthen whistleblower protections and enhance OSHA's enforcement programs? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you support increases in the job safety budget to strengthen standard setting, enforcement, and worker safety and health training programs? **Yes**

Would you oppose efforts to reduce Social Security's guaranteed benefits under current law, including proposals to: (1) increase the retirement age (which already is increasing to 67 under current law); (2) change the calculation for the annual cost-of-living adjustment; (3) change the benefit formula; or (4) institute means testing?

Congress must work to strengthen and preserve Social Security for future generations, and I'm strongly opposed to changes to current benefits for individuals at or near retirement age. Any changes made to the Social Security program must be made with extreme care, so as not to negatively impact our seniors who rely on the program.

Would you support measures to strengthen retirement income security by increasing Social Security benefits?

I strongly support efforts to protect the solvency of Social Security. Congress should consider different ways to implement guaranteed minimum benefits so that vulnerable Americans can retire with dignity.

- ➔ Would you oppose efforts to weaken or defund the regulatory and enforcement programs of OSHA and MSHA? **Yes**
 - ➔ Would you oppose efforts to weaken or block implementation of OSHA's new standards on silica and beryllium, new regulations on injury tracking and stronger anti-retaliation protections for reporting job injuries? **Yes**
 - ➔ Would you oppose legislation that would make it more difficult or impossible for government agencies to develop and issue new needed safeguards to protect workers, the public and consumers? **Yes**
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4. IMMIGRATION

The AFL-CIO supports comprehensive immigration reform and has strongly advocated for keeping families together and creating a road map to citizenship. Immigration reform must be done in a comprehensive manner to protect U.S. workers and reduce the exploitation of immigrant workers. The most effective way to eliminate the competitive advantage unscrupulous employers gain by hiring undocumented immigrants and captive guest workers is to ensure that all workers— regardless of where they were born—are paid prevailing wages and have the full protection of labor, health and safety, and other laws.

Immigration reform must include five major interconnected pieces: (1) a broad, inclusive road map to citizenship; (2) an independent, professional bureau to measure labor shortages and ensure employers are not bringing foreign workers into the country to displace U.S. workers or to lower industry wages and working conditions; (3) improvement, not expansion, of existing temporary worker programs; (4) a secure, effective work authorization mechanism that treats workers fairly; and (5) rational, humane border control measures.

The AFL-CIO supports working people with temporary protections granted by the executive branch through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and Temporary Protected Status programs. By extending relief and work authorization to more than a million people, DACA and TPS have helped prevent unscrupulous employers from using unprotected workers to drive down wages and conditions for all workers in our country. Rather than terminating these successful programs, we need to extend protections that allow people to live and work without fear, and afford them the status to assert their rights on the job. **Congress should enact immigration reforms that will help ensure safer workplaces, build a stronger economic future for our nation, and support the basic rights and dignity of all working people.**

- ➔ Would you support a timely, certain road map to citizenship? **Yes**
 - ➔ Would you oppose enforcement-only immigration policies that increase fear in our workplaces and communities? **Yes**
 - ➔ Would you support efforts to reform temporary worker programs by strengthening workplace protections and employer oversight? **Yes**
 - ➔ Would you support measures to extend permanent protections to working people with DACA and TPS? **Yes**
 - ➔ Would you support legislation to draw clear lines of separation between immigration enforcement and local and state law enforcement? **Yes**
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5. WORK AND FAMILY POLICIES

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, requiring employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid (but job-protected) family or medical leave, was a major step in helping workers balance the demands of work and family. But its limited coverage and the inability of millions of workers to afford leave without pay constrains the FMLA's effectiveness.

Only 59% of workers are covered and eligible to take leave under the FMLA and, according to a 2012 U.S. Labor Department study, nearly half (46%) of eligible workers who needed leave but did not take it said they could not afford it. To address these shortcomings, Congress should expand FMLA eligibility and resist calls by employers to curtail FMLA rights by limiting the circumstances under which employees can take leave. Congress also must enact paid family and medical leave insurance that guarantees up to 12 weeks of paid leave for workers to care for newborns or sick family members, or to recover from their own illness.

The Fair Labor Standards Act requires employers to pay a time-and-a-half cash premium for work performed in excess of 40 hours per week. Under the guise of helping families balance work and family, some in Congress have proposed giving employers the option of offering compensatory time off (instead of a cash premium) for overtime work. Supporters claim this legislation would give workers more flexibility and control over their schedules. In reality, compensatory time proposals would undermine the 40-hour week—resulting in more workers working longer hours for less pay—and would give flexibility and control to employers rather than workers.

Congress must guarantee at least seven paid sick days for every worker. Employees should not have to choose between coming to work sick or staying home without pay—and risking their jobs. Yet about three in 10 private-sector workers do not have access to paid, job-protected sick days. Low-wage workers are especially vulnerable: 78% of the lowest-wage workers—the majority of whom are women—do not have a single paid sick day. When workers cannot access paid sick time, their economic and job security suffers. Just 3.5 unpaid days away from work jeopardizes a typical family's ability to afford groceries when breadwinners do not have paid sick days.

Further, employees increasingly face just-in-time scheduling practices—receiving very little notice of their work schedules and facing shorter, unpredictable work hours when work is slow—without payment for their scheduled shifts. Managers often assign workers to call-in shifts or on-call shifts that require them to wait for their employers' calls (often within two hours of their potential shift) to find out whether to report to work. The AFL-CIO supports The Schedules That Work Act (sponsored by Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Rep. Rosa DeLauro) to provide greater rights and protections to workers who face abusive scheduling practices.

- ➔ Would you support legislation to provide paid family and medical leave insurance? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you support legislation to require that companies guarantee at least seven paid sick days per year? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you oppose legislation that would excuse employers from their obligation under the FLSA to pay a cash premium for overtime work if they offer their employees compensatory time off? **Yes**
- ➔ Would you support The Schedules That Work Act that would empower hourly employees with greater scheduling flexibility and certainty? **Yes**
- ➔ What will you do to help achieve the goal of high-quality, debt-free higher education? **See attached sheet**
- ➔ What will you do to help the millions of Americans struggling with student loan payments? **I am a co-sponsor of the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act (HR2477). Legislation to allow those with outstanding high interest student loan debt to refinance at the lower interest rates currently offered to new federal borrowers.**

What will you do to help achieve the goal of high-quality, debt-free higher education?

I support the Education and Workforce Democrat's "Aim Higher" initiative to focus on access, affordability and completion in any re-authorization of the Higher Education Act. I oppose the Promoting Real Opportunity, Success, and Prosperity through Education Reform (PROSPER) Act." (H.R. 4508) that would make college more expensive for America's students and working families. I am also a co-sponsor of the Perkins Loan Extension Act of 2017 – bipartisan legislation to extend the Perkins Loan Program for a period of two years.

6. HEALTH CARE

Health care is a basic human right. That is why the American labor movement has fought for more than a century for a health care system that will guarantee that everyone can access high-quality health care without facing financial barriers to care. Our longstanding goal for achieving this is to move expeditiously toward a single-payer system, like Medicare for All, that provides universal coverage using a social insurance model, while retaining a role for workers' health plans.

In recent years, politicians ideologically opposed to government helping people get needed health care have attacked popular programs that provide coverage to millions of Americans. We strongly oppose attempts to reduce the benefits provided by Medicare, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, the Affordable Care Act and the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system. Similarly, we oppose policies that undermine the health benefits earned through work, such as the misnamed 40% "Cadillac" tax on high-cost coverage (worker-negotiated health plans), proposals to limit the tax exclusion for workplace health benefits, collecting revenue by imposing fees on worker plans, and undermining the ACA employer shared responsibility requirement.

Immediate gains can be made for working people by strengthening existing coverage and securing health care equity for all. We can advance toward a single-payer system by lowering Medicare's eligibility age from 65 to 55 and by creating a public health insurance option that builds upon Medicare or Medicaid as an alternative to coverage provided by for-profit insurance companies. Out-of-pocket costs for working families can be reduced by enhancing government's role in negotiating lower prices for medicines and medical services. The coverage expansions provided by the ACA can be protected through policies that will stabilize the individual market. We can slow the opioid epidemic by dramatically expanding access to effective treatment.

Congress should eliminate the health benefits tax on worker-negotiated health plans. The ACA includes a controversial tax designed to increase the out-of-pocket costs faced by workers with employer-based coverage.

- ➔ Would you support legislation to repeal this tax? see attached sheet
- ➔ Would you oppose any proposal to tax or impose fees on employment-based health coverage? see attached sheet

Congress should pursue every opportunity to make health care a right, as well as oppose attempts to erode coverage provided by Medicare, Medicaid, CHIP and the ACA, and shift costs to working people.

- ➔ Would you support single-payer proposals or other approaches that extend comprehensive coverage and transition toward making health care a basic right, like reducing the Medicare eligibility age from 65 to 55 and creating a public option legislation? see attached sheet
- ➔ Would you oppose Medicare changes that shift costs to seniors, including premium increases, co-payment increases, benefit reductions or conversion to a voucher system? see attached sheet
- ➔ Would you oppose significant cuts to the Medicaid program, through block-granting, "per capita caps," changes to the funding formula or other approaches? I was proud to help lead efforts in 2017 to defeat legislation that would have repealed the Affordable Care Act and drastic cuts to Medicaid.
- ➔ Would you support legislation to preserve coverage provided by CHIP and the ACA? Yes

Congress should eliminate the health benefits tax on worker-negotiated health plans. The ACA includes a controversial tax designed to increase the out-of-pocket costs faced by workers with employer-based coverage.

Would you support legislation to repeal this tax?

I do think we should consider looking at reforms to the “Cadillac tax” prior to its implementation. I believe America’s employer-sponsored insurance system is important to ensuring American workers have access to health care coverage. I will continue to support policies that ensure workers’ access to quality and affordable health care. However, I share the view that an unlimited deduction is not sustainable.

Would you oppose any proposal to tax or impose fees on employment-based health coverage?

America’s employer-sponsored insurance system is vital to ensuring American workers have access to health care coverage. I continue to support policies that ensure workers’ access to quality and affordable health care, while containing the rising growth in health care costs.

Would you support single-payer proposals or other approaches that extend comprehensive coverage and transition toward making health care a basic right, like reducing the Medicare eligibility age from 65 to 55 and creating a public option legislation?

I believe that Americans should have access to quality and affordable health care. I was proud to work toward the passage of the Affordable Care Act, which has expanded health care coverage to 17 million previously uninsured Americans. When the Affordable Care Act was considered in the House, I strongly supported inclusion of a public option. I continue to support our health insurance marketplaces that are helping to reduce the number of uninsured Americans and providing millions of Americans with the ability to shop for and compare plans to find the right coverage at the right price. I will continue working to ensure robust competition and affordable options in the marketplaces and would support a public option, as well as expanding opportunities for Americans under 65 to buy into existing health programs, such as Medicare.

Would you oppose Medicare changes that shift costs to seniors, including premium increases, co-payment increases, benefit reductions or conversion to a voucher system?

I do not support the conversion of the Medicare program to a voucher system, or any actions that would jeopardize low-and-middle income beneficiaries’ access to affordable, comprehensive Medicare coverage. In the context of a big, balanced deficit reduction agreement, I believe that it must be a priority to ensure no benefit decreases for low and middle income Americans.

Congress should promote policies that enhance fairness, quality and cost-effectiveness in the health care system.

- ➔ Would you oppose changes that weaken the employer shared responsibility requirements of the ACA? I will continue to support the Affordable Care Act's employer shared responsibility requirements as I did when I helped lead efforts to adopt the law.
- ➔ Would you support legislation to advance government negotiation of pharmaceutical drug prices (especially for Medicare), address unfair and abusive practices regarding prescription drug monopoly rights, and require drug price transparency? I support efforts to contain the rising cost of perscription drugs and increase price transparency.
- ➔ Would you oppose efforts to restrict access to FDA-approved birth control methods for women? Yes

Congress should reject privatization of veterans health care. For decades, the Department of Veterans Affairs has used contract care to supplement the specialized, cost-effective, in-house care it provides to veterans. However, bills have been introduced to substitute contract care for the core, integrated services provided by VA.

- ➔ Would you support full funding of the VA to enable the VA health care system to remain the primary source of care to our nation's veterans and oppose efforts to substitute privatized care for these core services? Yes

7. EDUCATION

Congress should fully fund the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Currently, more than 50 million students attend our country's public schools. The teachers, paraprofessionals and other school employees who work with these students each day care deeply about the quality of our public schools and the education their students receive. Since 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act has represented the federal government's largest investment in K–12 education, and it is a crucial mechanism both in funding and in guiding policy for all public schools.

- ➔ Do you believe the federal government has a role in elementary and secondary education? Yes

Congress must oppose the use of school vouchers. Many states still spend less on K–12 education than they did before the 2008 recession. Despite this fact, some in Congress want to use taxpayer money to support private and religious schools, by expanding the use of vouchers, opportunity scholarships and tuition tax credits. Decades of experiments with voucher programs have the same conclusion: vouchers fail most of the children they intended to benefit.

- ➔ Do you oppose vouchers and/or other proposals that allow taxpayer dollars to be used for private and religious schools at the K–12 level, either as a limited experiment or as a full-scale program? Yes

8. CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Congress should reform the criminal justice system. Nearly one in 100 American adults is incarcerated. America's prison population, which has increased by 500% over the last 30 years, is the largest in the world. Mass incarceration has affected individuals and families across the nation, but has had a disproportionate impact on communities of color and people in poverty.

- ➔ Would you support legislation that would require the reduction of the "three-strike" penalty— mandating life sentences for certain individuals—to a term of 25 years, and shorten a previously mandated 20-year sentence for certain individuals to 15 years? I support comprehensive criminal justice reform that includes lessening the impact the "three strike" penalty has had on non-violent offenders.

- ➔ Would you support giving judges more discretion to sentence below prescribed mandatory minimums by expanding the existing “safety valve” and creating a new authority for judges to depart from certain mandatory minimums? Yes

Congress should restore full voting rights for all Americans. In the 2013 *Shelby v. Holder* decision, Chief Justice John Roberts wrote: “voting discrimination still exists; no one doubts that.” Yet in that same decision, a 5–4 majority of the Supreme Court invalidated key provisions of the Voting Rights Act that required jurisdictions with a long history of voting discrimination to seek federal preapproval of proposed changes to their voting laws. Almost immediately after that decision, states and localities no longer under federal oversight began imposing new obstacles to voting, shortening early voting periods and closing polling places.

Meanwhile, more than 500,000 U.S. citizens live in our nation’s capital and fulfill the responsibilities of citizenship. However, they have no voting representation in Congress. This situation is an affront to our principles of democracy.

- ➔ Would you sponsor and work to enact legislation to restore the strength of the Voting Rights Act? Yes
- ➔ Would you oppose efforts to erect obstacles to voting, including those based on economic condition or race? Yes
- ➔ Would you support efforts to promote greater voter participation and access, including early voting? Yes
- ➔ Would you support universal registration and oppose all barriers to universal registration? Yes
- ➔ Would you support legislation to allow the delegate elected by the citizens of the District of Columbia to vote in the House of Representatives? Yes

Congress should strengthen the Equal Pay Act to ensure women are not shortchanged at work. When the Equal Pay Act of 1963 was enacted into law, it became illegal for employers to pay unequal wages to male and female employees who perform the same work. Yet wage disparities between women and men are evident today in both the private and public sectors and at every educational level. The Paycheck Fairness Act would require employers to demonstrate that wage gaps between men and women doing the same work are truly a result of factors other than gender. It also would prohibit retaliation against workers who share salary information, or inquire about their employers’ wage practices. It would bring Equal Pay Act remedies and class-action procedures into conformance with those available for other civil rights, and strengthen the government’s ability to identify and remedy systematic wage discrimination.

- ➔ Would you support the Paycheck Fairness Act, legislation that would provide targeted remedies needed to update the historic Equal Pay Act? Yes

Congress should fully protect the rights of LGBTQ Americans. LGBTQ Americans need basic protections from discrimination—in credit, education, employment, housing and public accommodations. Significant progress has been made in recent years (coverage under hate crimes legislation, open participation in military service and marriage equality), but until comprehensive federal LGBTQ civil rights protections are enacted, LGBTQ Americans remain vulnerable to discrimination in almost every sphere of life.

- ➔ Do you support the Equality Act, legislation that would ensure that nationwide civil rights protections cover LGBTQ Americans? Yes