

Independent Party of Oregon – Questionnaire
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1. Congressional estimates suggest that the Social Security Retirement fund will be able to pay only 75% of currently calculated benefits by 2040. Currently, Social Security is funded by a payroll tax and a tax on self-employed persons ("FICA") on annual wages up to \$106,800 (2011).

Which do you support regarding Social Security:

Other: First, we must end tax breaks and loopholes for the wealthiest, for industries like Big Oil companies and other large corporations that don't need them. If after those steps are taken we still need to shore up Social Security to make sure the promise is there for future generations, then the next step would be to raise the Social Security income tax cap. Seniors didn't cause the financial crisis and we shouldn't ask them to bear the cost with the benefits they worked an entire lifetime to earn.

2. Congressional estimates suggest that the current Medicare funding system will run out of funds as early as 2017. Medicare is funded separately by a payroll tax and a tax on self-employed persons on all earned income (no ceiling). Currently Medicare provides some hospital coverage (Part A) at no charge to everyone at age 65, and provides other coverage (Parts B, C for equipment, doctor's visits, procedures) for about \$40/month for everyone at age 65 (Rx coverage is another add-on premium).

Which do you support regarding Medicare:

Expand Medicare to younger workers to spread costs

Allow Medicare to negotiate drug prices on prescription drugs to lower costs

Other: Crack down on Medicare fraud

3. Money spent by wealthy individuals and businesses on campaign contributions and lobbying is more important to politicians than opinions of constituents.

This is certainly not how I approach being a representative. The opinions of my constituents are more important to me than campaign contributions.

4. The United States Supreme Court has ruled that corporations can make unlimited independent expenditures in federal elections. Do you support or oppose that decision?

Oppose

Why? We need to work for policies that get money out of elections, not policies that increase it.

5. What should the federal government do to increase jobs in the United States?

Build and repair infrastructure, such as roads, rails, and schools

Other: We need to help small businesses access capital so that they can grow their business and create jobs. I did this as a state legislator, passing legislation to streamline and increase the number of small businesses eligible for capital through the state's economic development department. I will work on this issue in Congress by working with the Small Business Administration as well as by supporting legislation to increase the member business lending cap of credit unions.

6. The federal budget deficit has been \$1.3 trillion in each of the past 2 years. What should the federal government do, if anything, to reduce the deficit?

Increase taxes on:

The wealthy only

Corporations

If by tax increases this question means ending the Bush tax cuts on the most wealthy and ending tax benefits for individuals, corporations and established industries like Big Oil companies that don't need them, then yes, I do support changes to the federal tax code that increase tax fairness and make our tax code more progressive.

7. Cut spending on:

Military (and CIA)

Agriculture (Reallocate resources to better support small farmers.)

Other: We also must end the Bush tax cuts for the most wealthy and end tax benefits for individuals, corporations and established industries like Big Oil companies that don't need them. I also believe that our troops have done their job and it's time to bring them home. It's time that we invest public dollars in rebuilding our own country.

8. Real wages have not increased in the United States for middle class jobs in the past 25 years. Wealth is now more concentrated in the top 10% (and top 1%) of individual taxpayers than it has been since 1929. Anyone born into a low-income family faces great hurdles in financing education and acquiring a secure middle-income job.

This is a problem, because the changes are structural and opportunities do not exist for workers to gain secure employment.

9. Is there anything government can or should do about it?

Yes, government has to enact appropriate laws and regulations regarding trade, tax rates, and social programs to ensure that all segments of our economy

share equally in national prosperity.

Other: Fight cuts in and work to increase funding for early childhood programs like Head Start, which lead to greater opportunities for children in the long term. Also we should increase funding for student loans and grants.

10. During the period after the financial crisis of 2008, Congress enacted TARP (Troubled Asset Relief Program) or the "Wall Street Bailout" of \$700 billion to insurers such as AIG and institutions which had held a form of insurance on debt called credit default swaps.

In addition, the Federal Reserve offered trillions (\$3.8 - \$4.2 trillion) more in zero interest (taxpayer) loans to large banks (Goldman Sachs, Bank of America, Societe General) which were "too big to fail." Corporate officers paid themselves huge bonuses and stockholders profits increased (about \$104 billion of TARP money flowed between banks and Wall Street and was paid to private interests). As for the zero interest loans to banks, the banks are holding onto that money or loaning it at credit card rates to consumers or loaning it to the government, making "free money" on the float.

Should the federal government file lawsuits to "claw back" the \$100 billion + bonus and profit money paid by Wall Street and banks to themselves with taxpayer money?

Yes

11. Should the federal government investigate possible crimes committed by financial institutions and prosecute?

Yes. After law school, I worked at the Federal Trade Commission and one of my first cases involved a mortgage broker that was scamming people out of their homes. The case ended when the U.S. Department of Justice indicted the company and its president on 17 counts of fraud. The president was convicted and sentenced to nine years in prison. This case is a good example of how I started my career standing up for families and small businesses.

12. The "auto industry bailout" was separate from TARP and Federal Reserve actions. Congress approved \$80 billion in loans to domestic auto producers, and the U.S. Government now owns stock in GM and Chrysler.

I don't know yet. It was an important step to try and save as many jobs as possible, but what remains to be seen is if jobs were saved in the long term. If the two companies that took federal money are able to stand on their own in the long term, keep Americans employed and pay back the government, we can call this a success.

13. The average U.S. household pays about 14% of its income in federal income

taxes and, effectively, an additional 15.3% of its income for Social Security and Medicare taxes.

The combined rate is close to 30%. The average rate of federal taxes paid by households in the top 5% of income is less than 30%, mainly because (1) there are no Social Security taxes on annual income over \$106,800 and (2) capital gains and some dividends are taxed at 15%. The average rate of federal taxes paid by households in the top 1% of income is also about 30%.

Other: Federal tax rates should be adjusted to increase tax fairness and make our tax code more progressive so that the wealthiest are paying their fair share.

14. Average annual income for the top 1% of households is about \$1.8 million. Adjusted for inflation, it has tripled in the past 25 years, while the average annual income of the median household has dropped by 7% over the past 10 years. Democrats in the U.S. Senate have proposed a 5% surtax on household incomes in excess of \$1 million per year. Do you support such a surtax?

Other: I support a surtax. After we have ended the Bush tax cuts for the wealthiest and all other tax benefits for those who can thrive without them, then we should determine the appropriate rate for a surtax.

15. What other changes should be made to the federal tax code?

Tax hedge fund income the same as income from wages

Other: I will consider changes to the tax code that close loopholes and increase tax fairness, making our tax code more progressive.

16. Which federal tax subsidies should be eliminated or greatly reduced:

Oil and natural gas exploration in the United States

Ethanol production

17. The United States has 100,000 troops in Afghanistan, which is 30,000 more than 2 years ago.

How many U.S. troops should be in Afghanistan as of January 2012? _I want our troops coming home sooner than the President has proposed, but I also want to know from military leadership that the quicker exit strategy does not irresponsibly increase the risk to our troops_

How many U.S. troops should be in Afghanistan as of January 2013? __I want our troops coming home sooner than the President has proposed, but I also want to know from military leadership that the quicker exit strategy does not irresponsibly increase the risk to our troops_

How many U.S. troops should be in Afghanistan as of January 2014? _0_

18. The United States has 45,000 troops in Iraq, a number which is 5,000 lower

than one year ago. The Government of Iraq has requested that all be withdrawn by the end of 2011.

How many U.S. troops should be in Iraq as of January 2012? 0

How many U.S. troops should be in Iraq as of January 2013? 0

19. Should the Federal Government set the standards for food and consumer product safety or should we rely on manufacturers to self-police?

The Government needs to enact and enforce minimum standards to protect the consumer from harmful products and ensure food safety.

20. Should the United States approve the construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline that would deliver to U.S. refineries synthetic crude oil extracted from tar sands in Canada?

No

21. Should Congress approve the proposed free trade agreements with South Korea, Colombia, and Panama?

Congress has already voted on these trade agreements. As a member of Congress I will base my vote on any trade agreements using the following criteria: one, does it create jobs in Oregon's First Congressional District? And two, does it contain labor, environmental, human rights and consumer protection provisions?

22. Should the Federal Government continue to subsidize interstate high speed rail and Amtrak service?

Yes

23. What should the next CD 1 Representative do about the Columbia River Crossing (new planned bridge across the Columbia between Oregon and Washington)?

Other We need a new bridge over the Columbia River, but we need greater accountability going forward. So much money has been spent – over \$140 million – and we don't have much to show for it. Second, until the project leaders present a solid and reliable financial plan, it's hard for any of us to move this project forward at the federal level. To fight for this project and the funding, I need to be able to show that the money is going toward actually building a bridge.

24. What should the next CD 1 Representative do to help the rural areas in the District?

I've spoken with a number of people throughout the First District about their concerns, and no matter where they live – rural, suburban or urban – jobs are at the top of the list. Their concerns are both about jobs today and in the long term. There are a number of things I will do as the First District's next Congresswoman for immediate and long term job creation, but I must say this: Jobs absolutely are the top priority, and Congress needs to start behaving that way. Americans need jobs. It's time for Congress to stop bickering and do theirs.

We must invest in infrastructure and put Oregonians back to work in communities throughout the First District repairing roads, bridges, water systems, ports and improving schools – all of which are central to our communities being ready for economic development and where families and businesses can thrive.

Because not everyone works in construction, we also need to help small businesses access capital so that they can grow their business, create jobs and increase their bottom line. The credit market is tight, and Congress can enact policy to help provide low-cost capital to businesses looking to grow. I did this as a state legislator and I will work on this issue in Congress.

We also must invest in our Oregon assets, and for rural areas this includes supporting green energy investments and keeping our ocean, river, forests and agricultural land healthy. By creating 21st century jobs in our traditional industries and by supporting policies that keep these resources healthy, we will have jobs in these industries for the long term. This will also help the many small businesses that rely on a robust, sustainable tourism industry.

It is also important that we save the jobs we can. Oregon is one of 22 states that have work share programs, but they are not used enough. Work share programs help businesses avoid lay-offs. Instead of laying-off workers, hours are cut and through unemployment insurance, the government fills the gap in pay. People keep their jobs, and businesses and government both save money. Congress should encourage Oregon and all states to use this public-private partnership more to avoid any further lay-offs.

In the long term, we need to invest in a stronger system of public education from pre-K through college, including our community colleges. I started my college education at Lane Community College in Eugene and know first-hand that community colleges play an important role in getting people back to work by offering job retraining programs for people who have lost their job through no fault of their own.

Colleges throughout the First District are assets, particularly for our rural areas.

High school students should have post-secondary education opportunities no matter where they live. As a State Senator, I supported legislation to make sure that students of all ages learn the skills that are necessary to meet the current and future needs of employers. I also supported a bill that set standards for college credit acceleration courses. These courses help high schools students get a head start on college, saving students and families money on tuition costs. Federal education policy should also support these efforts.

Although the issues I've listed thus far represent what I am hearing from most people in the First District, I also want share that as a member of Congress I will work with communities on affordable housing and hunger. Affordable housing is an issue that is often associated with urban areas, but I know that smaller communities also have unique challenges related to providing housing for families of all income levels. I also will support federal programs that fight hunger. As a state legislator, I passed legislation that helps more Oregon schools, agencies, and community groups participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Afterschool Meal and Snack Program, making sure more kids receive additional nutrition before going home.

25. What should the next CD 1 Representative do to help the urban and suburban areas in the District?

All of what I said above applies to our urban and suburban areas of Oregon. All communities need investments in transportation, capital for small businesses, a strong system of public education, adequate affordable housing and clean water.

Urban and suburban areas have additional challenges related to population growth that increase pressure on transportation systems and schools. These areas also have population growth in emerging communities that increase the need for culturally specific outreach, particularly within schools. Public policy and services need to be tailored to meet the needs of these emerging communities.

Clean, safe water, while important for every community, is also an issue that must be addressed as the population grows. Like safe roads, mass transit choices and great schools, a reliable, clean and sufficient source of water for the long term is important to attract businesses and families. I look forward to working with the many partners involved in the Tualatin Basin water supply project that is critical to the regional economy.

One final point I'll include is that the First District is also home to Oregon's high technology sector. Like all employers, these world-class businesses need an educated workforce. We need to be graduating students from our university system to be tomorrow's innovative entrepreneurs this industry needs to keep

growing.

26. How should Congress respond to the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court (Citizens United) that the First Amendment prohibits limits on independent expenditures by corporations and unions in federal election campaigns?

Congress should refer to the States for ratification a constitutional amendment stating that the First Amendment does not forbid limits on political campaign contributions or expenditures.

Other: As a member of Congress I will support legislation similar to the DISCLOSE Act that the U.S. House voted on last year to increase transparency in federal campaign contributions.