

GENERAL

1. Why are you running for Congress and what makes you uniquely qualified to represent CD2?

I was born in Tucson to immigrant parents. My family faced authoritarianism and paid the price. The Iranian regime told my mother what her life would be based on her gender. She has proven them wrong with each of her College degrees. My father was told his books must be edited to suit the needs of the Turkish government. He stared down their threat of jail and has spent his life in celebration of human expression in the law, education and the arts. I am American because of their courage and integrity. It's my family who taught me that in the United States I have a duty to serve and the opportunity to help elect people to office. At age 14 I carried petitions for candidates, I organized other young people. I organized to add our voices to the process because I wasn't taught to fear power but to bend it to our expectations. Young people have expectations that are the starting point for our nation's best moments. I'm running because this is one of those moments.

2. What is your biggest platform issue/what is most important to you?

Inequality has many faces. During the last 40 years the American economy has expanded greatly, but most of the benefits have gone to the top 20 percent and has even been concentrated in the to 1 percent or less. Today, three people have as much wealth as the bottom 150 million Americans. Government policies have greatly helped the top earners to accumulate wealth, and government policy has prevented most Americans from gaining or sustaining a middle class life. Republicans say they oppose income redistribution, but that is not true. They love redistributing income up. My solutions are discussed throughout this questionnaire, including revising our tax policies and priorities, fixing our healthcare system and lowering its costs, refocusing and reducing our military expenditures so they protect us better and cost less, and providing every child a lower cost, higher quality education, and giving a good training to people who choose not to go to college.

ECONOMY/JOB

3. What are the most important things that Congress should do to improve the economy?

Congress can do many things to improve the economy and livelihoods of Americans. Our spending and budget process is supposed to begin in the House and we must return to regular order including full committee hearings, debate, and amendment process. Congress must pass a real budget, not skimp by on continuing resolutions that leave doubt and limit the way Americans can plan for the future. Small business could be helped in many ways

including net neutrality, lower cost small business loans, and new-business depreciation schedules. An infrastructure plan would create jobs and conditions favorable to economic development. The federal government should also invest heavily in basic science in our universities and government research laboratories. Finally, healthcare is 18 percent of our GDP due to ridiculous prices, the highest in the world. By reducing the cost of healthcare we can lift part of this burden from our economy freeing up a significant part of our GDP for more productive investments.

4. What, if anything, should the federal government do about the growing economic disparity between the poor, the middle class, and the wealthy?

Americans can create wealth when they have the materials and tools to do so. In today's worldwide economy, those tools include access to affordable healthcare, childcare, and quality public education up to and including college. When we separate access to health insurance from employment, we free up the entrepreneurial spirit to start small businesses. When families have access to childcare they can stop worrying about choosing between a paycheck or the children. American workers can best choose for themselves the skills they need to compete in our new economy when they can attend a good school. Affordable public education was a pillar of American prosperity in the 20th century. We must return to that principle in the 21st century.

5. What would you like to see happen with the federal minimum wage?

The federal minimum wage is too low. It should be increased and then tied to inflation so that minimum wage workers are not constantly falling behind.

6. Do you consider unions to be part of the solution, or part of the problem? What steps should Congress take to strengthen or weaken their role?

The history of the American labor movement is the history of the American middle class. Americans must insist on extending protections to labor, including collective bargaining, to workers throughout the United States and, via treaty, the world. The assaults on the rights of public sector unions must stop. States should respect our teachers enough not to force them to strike for decent wages, but their right to strike should be protected. Conversely, our public safety unions for law enforcement officers often represent the biggest obstacles to addressing training against inherent bias and punishment for bias offenses by LEO.

We need a Democratic President to appoint new members of the National Labor Relations Board, the government agency which enforces and rules on labor law, which is now dominated 3 to 2 by Republicans.

FOREIGN POLICY

7. In the realm of foreign policy, what are the issues of greatest concern to you? What should Congress be doing to address them?

Critical issues include:

- Recommit to stopping nuclear proliferation and work to reduce current nuclear arsenals
- REbuild our diplomatic corps
- Re-assume the leadership of the free world by rearticulating our values as a democratic country.
- Re-assure and strengthen our alliances
- Lead the reconfiguration and strengthening of international organizations including the UN, WHO, WTO, the World Bank, etc.
- Join the TPP and the Asian Development Bank
- Development of an investment plan for Central America and Southern Mexico
- Become an honest broker, where possible in regional contests for influence such as between Iran and Saudi Arabia, but do not take sides

8. How should the U.S. respond to Russian interference in U.S. elections?

Mueller's investigation and other legal proceedings must be allowed to finish their work and the public needs to learn their findings. We need further sanctions against Russia and the oligarchs around Putin, who should no longer be invited to the White House. Our cybersecurity systems should be greatly strengthened. Americans and American organizations or companies who help the Russians should take steps to not be an unwilling accomplice and potential accomplices should be concerned about the consequences of such actions.

We should be in close touch with other democracies under attack by the Russians and share information and techniques. We should take collective action with our allies to counter these attacks.

9. Should the U.S. be involved in foreign conflicts, and if so, what criteria are needed to engage?

We have been at War for two-thirds of my life. On September 14th, 2001, Congress passed an Authorization for Use of Military Force in response to the attacks of September 11th. We have invoked that Authorization 41 times since and those are the instances that have been declassified. We are training young people to fight abroad using an authorization that was written before they were born. Congress must take back from the Executive branch the power and means to go to war.

10. What changes would you like to see in the U.S. approach to terrorism?

We must insist that the Gulf States take a much more active role in fighting terrorism rather than funding some of it. That includes monitoring more closely internal support for terrorism and the institutions that create fertile ground for terrorism. We need to confront domestic terrorism and correctly call out the primary sources: the militia movement, white nationalism, and various “sovereignty” groups.

We must also use our language appropriately; all regional conflicts are not terrorism. Terrorism should not become a “catch-all” phrase describing all conflict since it muddies our thinking.

ENTITLEMENTS

11. Do you favor increasing, decreasing, or leaving unchanged Social Security and Medicare benefits? How should Congress ensure that these programs are financially viable going forward?

Social Security and Medicare are essential to seniors and the disabled. Current minimal Social Security benefits are too low and should be increased. The financial problems facing Social Security in the future can be solved by changes involving one to one and a half percent of GDP which could be obtained by lowering the ridiculous prices Medicare is forced to pay and by forcefully attacking Medicare fraud primarily by providers which is estimated to be about \$60 billion a year.

Medicare needs the ability to negotiate prices and be vigorous in its anti-fraud efforts. Health care now accounts for up to half of many seniors; total budget, which is excessive. Medicare needs to be made more affordable through programs that lower health care costs. There is no reason why Americans should pay the highest prices in the industrialized world.

A reduction in the \$80 billion we are spending this year in Afghanistan would help our finances and refocus our values.

HEALTH CARE & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE

12. Do you believe the federal government should ensure that all Americans have health insurance coverage? Describe the health care system most likely to be successful in the U.S. (please be specific with regard to single payer, universal, etc.) and how does it get funded?

Other health care systems constantly innovate to fight the rise of health care cost. Both single payer and higher regulated multi-payer systems outperform our own. We must find our own way to provide high quality, universal health care at a lower cost than 18 percent of GDP. We should not believe Republicans who say we have to make a choice between good health care and universal care or that universal, affordable health care is not possible. Every other modern industrial country does it; we can to. But it takes political will.

13. According to the Guttmacher Institute, the unintended pregnancy rate in the U.S. was 45% in 2011, and approximately two thirds of unplanned births are paid for by public insurance programs, primarily Medicaid. What role should the federal government play in reducing the rate of unintended pregnancy?

The federal government should ensure that all women have access to the appropriate form of contraception. Women who can control their reproductive health have better outcomes in education and professional life. The federal government should enforce laws prohibiting states from making education or contraception unavailable. We should be vigilant that poor women in particular have access to the information and services they need.

14. In cases of unintended pregnancy, what role should the federal government play regarding the choices available to women?

The right to an abortion is a Constitutional right and the Federal government must enforce that right. For women who choose to bring their pregnancy to term there must be adequate support for healthcare and and childcare. The Federal government must make it clear that sexual orientation or gender identity must not disqualify potential parents from adoption.

EQUAL RIGHTS

15. Specifically, what should Congress do to better protect Americans from workplace discrimination?

Workplace discrimination needs to become more than headlines in a news cycle. Congress must do more than the bare minimum that it enforces on itself. Congress should lead in policies, lead by example.

16. What, if any, protections do you believe are missing for LGBTQ people?

While the Obergefell Supreme Court decision granted marriage rights, LGBTQ persons lack Federal protections in many areas. Many of those missing protections can be better

addressed beginning with the Equality Act, H.R. 2282. Currently that bill has all the Arizona Democrats in the House as co-sponsors, Rep. McSally failed this test. This is the Trans inclusive bill.

Four appellate courts (First, Sixth, Ninth, and Eleventh) have ruled Employment discrimination is barred under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 but Atty Gen. Sessions has withdrawn the DOJ from pursuing these decisions and Pres. Trump continues to appoint bizarrely extreme Judges.

The other point to be made here is the House of Representatives will not represent or address LGBTQ people while Republicans run it. We can't fix the Religious Freedom Act to prevent medical professionals having legal sanction to discriminate against LGBTQ people [Do No Harm Act]. We can't pass the Dream Act which would have a huge impact for many many young queer people. The Every Child Deserves a Home Act would prevent federal funds from being used to fight LGBTQ families willing to foster and/or adopt children. What's missing for LGBTQ communities in Federal law cannot be adequately addressed in 150 words, sadly.

17. What more should Congress be doing to end hunger in America, and to ensure the safety of our food and water?

The most important are efforts to create more shared prosperity and to have a higher rate of economic growth. Minimum wage legislation would also help. We need to ensure that SNAP, the school lunch program I swell funded. Our Farm legislation must be rebalanced so that tax dollars and our values support nutrition and biodiversity more than large corporate farm operations.

No child should be hungry at breakfast or lunch in an American school, and the quality of food needs to be upgraded. We need to introduce our children to eating right in schools. My mother is a credentialed dietitian and expert in the care and prevention of diabetes. so, I understand based on my families knowledge and experience that prevention of diabetes is critical.

The EPA and the FDA needs to have the mandate and adequate resources to ensure the safety of our food and water.

EDUCATION

18. What responsibility does the federal government have to ensure that students are safe from bullying and/or discrimination in public schools, including charter schools?

The Safe Schools Improvement Act connects Federal funding for schools with the requirement to create codes of conduct prohibiting bullying and harassment. It also requires gathering and reporting data on harassment and bullying so we can identify best practices in a report presented to Congress every two years. We strongly support this bill as well as the rest of the legislative agenda of the Tyler Clementi Foundation, headed by their Executive Director, Jason Cianciotto, a former Tucsonan.

19. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, only about a third of U.S. high school seniors are ready for college-level coursework. What do you see as the cause(s) of the problem, and what are some possible remedies?

One of the sad legacies of our public education system was the sexist way the teaching talent pool was subsidized by the lack of opportunities for women in other professions. That is not quite the same anymore, but the way we compensate educators must be given the same priority as any line item in the Defence budget.

The Republican party no longer believes in public education. To improve student preparedness we must work at the local, state, and Federal level to defeat the Republican agenda to destroy public education.

20. What would be the most effective way for Congress to help make college more affordable?

In the not-so-distant past, States operated public universities as a lower-cost alternative to private colleges. States may lack the political will to return to those days but the Federal government can make changes. We should pick up the tab for students who want to take certain majors and/or work in depressed parts of the country. We were able to incentivize students to respond during the Cold War, we can incentivize them today.

We should repeal the Trump college endowment tax and replace it with incentives for schools to use more of those resources for full access to higher education for economically challenged families.

Many students could benefit from free community colleges for their first two years of college.

Affordable college education is both a state and a federal responsibility.

PUBLIC SAFETY

21. What reforms should be implemented in law enforcement?

We ask law enforcement to perform many tasks today, and expect near perfection for all of them. Training on cultural issues and inherent bias must be emphasized.

As supported by police chiefs across the country, we need to reduce the number of guns in circulation and limit the lethality of weapons. Red flag laws would also reduce the danger of domestic violence, which often requires police intervention. I also support legalizing marijuana and support rehabilitation programs for opioid and other drug users.

The United States also needs a stronger mental health program and support systems to reduce the number of homeless. We also need at the federal level to enlarge and strengthen capabilities to fight cyber crimes and to enforce federal laws against “white collar” crimes.

22. What reforms are needed in the criminal justice system?

America incarcerates too many people. Many non-violent crimes should be addressed by community-based programs. Many drug offenses should be decriminalized and invest in drug rehabilitation programs.

More support should be provided for public defenders and we need to rely less on plea bargains, which deprive many poor people of their right to a trial. We have lost sight of the ideal that “everyone deserves their day in court.” The poor just get a deal; too often a bad deal.

Poor people are being abused by unscrupulous bail bond companies. This issue could be addressed by federal legislation.

Our prisons have become too violent and are often run by gangs. We have to innovate in how people are incarcerated and how they are treated. In Holland, during the last 10 years, the prison population has been cut in half and the crime rate has been cut by almost 40 percent. In America, we have states that spend more for prisons than for education.

Congress should return to the Obama era policy of no longer utilizing for-profit prisons.

23. Who should not be allowed to possess firearms? Do you support universal background checks and if so, how should they be implemented?

I was an intern in Gabby’s Congressional office and I strongly support universal background checks. I support laws that limit the lethality of firearms such as banning the sale of firearms with particular performance metrics and/or large capacity ammunition systems. We must also look into the “after-market” items and enhancements that profoundly change the lethality of firearms.

Criminals, those enduring a mental crisis, stalkers, domestic abusers and people on the terrorist watch list clearly should not have access to guns. I support “Red Flag” laws which protect potential victims. These laws do need a provision for due process review of action to take guns away.

A universal background system should clearly be a federal responsibility, combined with the involvement and cooperation local, state, military, tribal and other government organizations.

24. What steps should Congress take to address sexual violence?

Thanks to the Me Too movement, women are being heard. Congress has a duty to look at the laws surrounding “Non-disclosure agreements.” “Red flag” gun laws can address some of the acts of violence where women are victimized with guns from their own home. Another type of sexual violence is found in human trafficking. Sexual violence is a component of our culture today and talking about it is the first step in limiting its’ scope.

IMMIGRATION

25. What criteria should we use to determine which people should be allowed to immigrate to the U.S.?

A central facet of the American Dream is immigration. Immigration strengthens our economy and provides hope to people around the world.

Our immigration system should not be abused by people like Pres. Trump who import labor to undercut local payscale or create visas for those who can afford to invest in real estate . It should be modified to make seasonal labor available in certain industries.

We need to provide a pathway to citizenship to students who study in America and can offer unique skills or who provide special expertise. We also need to allow immigration among a certain number of people who have business skills and can invest in this country. Immigrants are a great source of new ideas and skills.

26. What criteria should be used to decide which people are deported?

DACA kids and young adults must be given a pathway to citizenship, and their direct family members need the right to remain in the United States and perhaps have a pathway to citizenship as well.

Congress failed for decades to deal with immigration, and it is wrong to penalize people who came here, and worked hard. We must recognize that they should also have a pathway

to citizenship. Deporting these people who are part of our social, economic and cultural mix in America, would be wrong.

27. Do you support a citizenship pathway?

There is no just immigration plan without a pathway to citizenship for those who “live in the shadows.”

CLIMATE CHANGE & ENERGY

28. How should Congress address the threat that climate change poses to U.S. agriculture, coastal property, public health, and national security?

The Pentagon and oil companies have recognized that climate change is real and a threat. Gabby Giffords lead on this issue in regards to our Armed Forces. We should reverse our decision to leave the Paris Climate Agreement become a leader in achieving its goals. Alternative energy technologies need to be subsidized to transition to be more sustainable. Subsidies will not be costly in the long run since the United States can become a leader internationally providing these technologies worldwide. The EPA also needs to be bolstered, not reduced.

29. What changes, if any, should be made to the tax code to encourage the growth of renewable energy sources?

As stated above, we should see subsidies for new technologies as an investment in our future and as a potential boost to our economy. The recent hurricanes have shown that losses due to climate change are likely to increase. We should also eliminate subsidies to oil companies.

30. What is your view of the U. S. pulling out of the Paris climate agreement?

The decision was wrong and should be reversed immediately.

VOTING/ELECTIONS

31. What specific steps should Congress take to address political corruption?

We need a Supreme Court that will reverse the terrible Citizen United decision. Congress needs to pass the DISCLOSE which would require reporting of dark money in elections. I support initiatives such as the By The People Act which fosters grassroots donations, but

would favor an approach not based on tax credits since many poor people would not benefit from them.

New members of Congress now spend up to 70 percent of their time fundraising. They are given quotas to meet by the parties. Congress is there to solve problems, not to devote the bulk of their time to pleading for money.

32. What should be done to ensure that every citizen has the ability to vote?

Not everyone needs to be a political organizer at 14 but we should educate students about civic engagement, the value and importance of voting. Right now there is a large group of non-voters who need to be invigorated to participate in our democracy. Things to encourage participation would be creating a Voter Holiday either through a federal holiday for the general election date, or encouraging business to allow for an extended lunch break for employees to vote.

VETERANS

33. What reforms are needed in the VA system?

First, the VA needs a competent and visionary administrator, not the President's personal physician. His appointment was a slap in the face to Veterans.

Second, I do not support efforts by this administration to privatize VA medical services.

34. What do you see is needed to combat the nearly 20 Veteran suicides a day?

Most veterans suicides are, in fact carried out with a firearm. That is why I do support "red flag" laws which would temporarily remove guns, under court supervision, from veterans who pose a threat to themselves. I also support due process provisions of those laws, but believe that the temporary loss of access to guns is preferable to suicide.

I also support initiatives to help veterans transition to civilian life. We are too often simply dumping veterans from one world - military discipline, foreign environments, witness to violence and suffering and many deployments - into a very different civilian world. We need to support our veterans better in this transition, as well as help those who become suicidal.

Last point, we need to create fewer disabled veterans by making better choices with our military.