

2020 ELECTION QUESTIONS – CONGRESS - Tom Emmer

Top priority: If elected, what is your top priority for the 2021 Congress? Why are you running for office?

My priorities for the 2021 Congress will remain focused on helping every Minnesotan access the opportunities they need to be in the best position to succeed. This includes working to rebuild our economy and create jobs, continue to push Congress and the Administration to reduce the federal debt and deficit, and ensure the safety and security of the American people. It is an honor to represent the citizens of Minnesota's Sixth Congressional District and is a responsibility I do not take lightly. I will continue to push for policies that will benefit my constituents in Minnesota and continue to bring their ideas for change to Washington.

Economy: How do you grade the federal government's response to the pandemic? Are additional measures necessary to spur the economy? If so, what?

COVID-19 continues to have an unprecedented impact on our economy. In the early days of the outbreak, Congress acted swiftly to adopt legislation to support the thousands of businesses and millions of employees in need of assistance. Efforts to establish programs like the Paycheck Protection Program, though not perfect, were stood-up in record time and provided billions in federal relief to thousands of Minnesota businesses. Looking ahead, additional federal support for key sectors of our economy may be needed, however I remain wary of new, multi-trillion dollar spending packages filled with federal mandates that are not targeted to the areas of specific need, rather seek to serve a political agenda. We must continue to direct spending to our teachers and small business owners while providing employers the legal protections they need to safely re-open and encourage their employees to return to work. The actions of the federal government were needed to steer our economy through this crisis, however federal stimulus should not be looked at as a means to supplant the hard work of American businesses and entrepreneurs.

Police reform: Police reform has become center stage since the George Floyd death and has prompted calls for legislative action at all levels of government. What actions do you support at the federal level?

The death of George Floyd was unacceptable and those responsible must be held accountable. I'm working to bring Minnesota-inspired concepts to the national level to improve the way law enforcement engages in the communities they serve. I introduced the Community OutPost (COP) Outreach and Engagement Act (H.R. 7245) to promote the nationwide use of the Community OutPosts to improve community policing. Modeled after the success of the St. Cloud Police Department's "COP House," this legislation provides federal resources to promote engagement between local law enforcement officers and the community members they serve. I have also introduced the Abby Honold Act (H.R. 4720) to improve the way law enforcement officers interview victims of sexual assault. Introduced after learning of Abby Honold's experience with trauma-informed interview techniques following her sexual assault at the University of

Minnesota, this legislation promotes the inclusion of trauma-informed training to all law enforcement officers and directs the U.S. Department of Justice to invest in these programs nationwide. These are just two examples of ways I am working to improve the relationship between law enforcement and the people they're sworn to protect without defunding, dismantling, or demonizing the thousands of hardworking men and women in blue.

Foreign affairs: How do you grade President Trump's foreign policy record? Which of his initiatives do you support, and which do you oppose? Be specific.

President Trump has led many groundbreaking achievements on foreign policy. I was proud to support the passage of the USMCA trade agreement which will bring thousands of jobs and billions of dollars into the United States. I applauded the President's decision to move the U.S. Embassy in Israel to its capital Jerusalem. This was a historic decision, promised by many past administrations, but fulfilled by President Trump. I have also applauded President Trump's dedication to keeping Americans safe by working to eradicate the Islamic State. He has made historic progress in the global fight against terror, including the deaths of Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi and Qasem Soleimani. President Trump recently brokered a historic peace deal between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, becoming the third Arab nation to normalize relations with Israel, our most important ally in the Middle East. However, similar to the President's historic efforts to open a new chapter in global relations with North Korea, I continue to urge him to take a similar approach with Cuba and chart a new course of engagement with our neighbor 90 miles off of our Florida coast. The Cuban communist regime must be held accountable for their human rights abuses and harboring of U.S. fugitives, however the last 60-years of embargo policy have not resulted in regime change and we should create our own opportunity to find new ways to promote democracy and empower the Cuban people.

Health care: Do you support the expansion of Association Health Plans?

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that approximately four million Americans will be covered by Association Health Plans (AHPs) by 2023. Expanding AHPs allows small businesses owners and individuals to purchase health coverage for their families and employees across state lines and at a much lower cost. This allows for decreased costs, better coverage and protections for those with pre-existing conditions. In addition to AHPs, I have been a long time supporter of the increased use of Health Savings Accounts and have co-sponsored multiple pieces of legislation expanding their use and applications. Using tools like these we will be able to ensure that everyone has access to the best, most affordable coverage available.

Education: COVID-19 has had a profound effect on the demands for and delivery of education. What role should the federal government play in ensuring that U.S. graduates can compete in the global economy?

As a father of seven, I understand that the education system in America should be as diverse and individualized as the students it serves. The best thing we can do for our children is to localize

the control of education as much as possible, make immediate and significant investments to provide reliable broadband access for *all* of our students, and continue to highlight the importance of trade skills and apprenticeship programs. A skilled and competitive workforce is essential to our country's economic growth and our future as a nation.

Energy: Is the United States doing enough to reduce carbon emissions? What can the federal government do to promote homegrown energy?

Minnesotans understand better than most just how delicate the balance is between maintaining our state's abundant natural resources and encouraging economic output and growth. The Sixth Congressional District is home to many different sources of energy, including the Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant. Minnesota is also home to one of the nation's leading solar energy producers, a second-to-none biofuels industry, and is home to innovative new approaches to energy like biomass and biocrude. When it comes to energy production, I will continue to work in Congress to foster an approach that utilizes our abundant and available resources while reducing our dependence on foreign sourced energy. With the great advancements we have made, America will remain a world leader in energy production and exports.

Transportation: What role should the federal government play in funding state and local transportation infrastructure? Be specific.

For starters, we need to bring more of Minnesota taxpayer dollars to the federal government back to our state. I have worked directly with Secretary Chao to help Anoka County secure a \$40 million grant for infrastructure improvements to U.S. highway 10/169. I have also worked with the Administration to bring funding back to Minnesota and the Sixth Congressional District in the form of grants for rural broadband development, \$4.4 million for bus and transit improvements, \$1,160,000 for the St. Cloud Regional Airport, and nearly \$500,000 for the Anoka/Blaine Regional Airport. Bringing our hard earned tax dollars back to our state to invest in our infrastructure is critical. We must also improve the transparency surrounding the grant review and approval process (a delegation effort I joined in December 2019), and streamline the permitting and review process for projects deemed critical in our communities and across our nation.

Immigration: Immigration reform continues to languish at the federal level. What should be the principles of any legislation?

America is both a nation of immigrants and of laws. We need to remain the land of opportunity in order to attract the best and brightest minds from around the world. We also must be a home to those who would seek to legally immigrate here for the promise of a better life. However, we must also have a secure border and enforce the rule of law to ensure the survival of our nation. Any agreement reached at the federal level must contain a balance between security and opportunity.

Foreign trade: Do you support the president's actions on international trade? Long term, will they help or hurt the U.S. economy?

Trade agreements are critical to driving our nation's economic growth, creating high-paying jobs, and protecting consumers. President Trump took important steps to improve one of our foundational trade agreements with the replacement of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). USMCA presents numerous new opportunities for Minnesota's farmers, producers and manufacturers, is expected to generate more than \$68 billion in new economic activity, and create more than 175,000 new American jobs. I have long been a proponent of establishing new free trade agreements in an effort to expand our export opportunities, and I support efforts that utilize trade as a means to hold actors like China accountable for rampant intellectual property theft and years of unfair trading practices.

Other issues: Are there other issues you want to address?

Addressing our nation's ongoing mental health crisis remains one of my top priorities in Congress. Everyone knows someone who has struggled with some form of mental illness, and concerns about suicide and substance abuse have heightened as we wade through the current COVID pandemic. In Congress, I have introduced the STRESS Act to send funding to States to provide mental health counseling and assistance in rural areas and throughout our agriculture communities. Research has shown an increased prevalence of mental health distress in rural areas and, given the ongoing difficulties our nation's agriculture industry continues to face, families in rural America need support more than ever. I have also introduced legislation to lift arbitrary regulations on the number of beds a healthcare facility may have to treat those suffering with mental illness. The Expanding Access to Inpatient Mental Health Act better enables individuals to get the care they need for the appropriate amount of time it takes to help them overcome their mental illness.

Briefly summarize your personal background and qualifications.

I have served as the Representative of the Sixth Congressional District since 2015. In January of 2019, I was elected Chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee, and currently lead republican campaign efforts to regain a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives. Prior to serving in Congress, I served in the Minnesota House of Representatives, representing district 19B for six years. My wife Jacquie and I have seven children and we live in Delano, Minnesota.