

2020 ELECTION QUESTIONS – CONGRESS / Angie Craig

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

The top priority for any elected official at this time must be supporting efforts to contain and combat the virus that has taken the lives of nearly 200,000 Americans nationwide. I consistently urged my colleagues to act swiftly and aggressively to provide the resources and funding necessary to enact a nationwide testing and contact-tracing plan, provide sufficient personal protective equipment to the millions of employees working on the frontlines, and invest all the resources necessary to develop and distribute effective treatments and vaccines as soon as possible. In the meantime, we must continue to support our families, our small businesses, health care professionals, first responders and our family farmers as they continue to face the threat of COVID-19. Millions of hardworking Americans across the country are struggling right now. It's our job in Congress to do everything we can to support them and rebuild an economy that keeps the American dream alive.

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

Congress's initial willingness to come together on a bipartisan basis and do what it took to help the country persevere in the early days of this crisis was an encouraging sign. The CARES Act provided desperately needed resources state and local governments, for hospital and health systems, extended a lifeline to struggling small businesses around the country, expanded unemployment benefits for the millions of Americans who found themselves out of work as a result of the pandemic, allowed for a massive influx in the production of personal protective equipment, and included thorough oversight measures to prohibit things like stock buybacks and executive pay raises while millions of Americans were struggling. And when Minnesota small businesses told me that they needed more time to access PPP loans, I wrote a bill to extend it an additional five weeks. That same week, it passed the House with overwhelming bipartisan support and was signed by the President.

However, since the early days of this crisis, Congress has once again been defined by its division. And the White House has failed to lead a country in its time of need. The American people deserve a national plan to contain and combat COVID-19 but still don't have one. Nearly 200,000 Americans are dead, cases are on the rise in many parts of the country, and millions of Americans are filling for unemployment benefits each and every week. A public health crisis such as this requires steady, consistent and disciplined leadership that relies on the experts and encourages unity in the face of an existential threat. In that regard, this Administration has failed.

By failing to compromise and come up with real solutions that will deliver results to the American people who are still struggling with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, our Congressional leaders on both sides of the aisle have failed us. Republicans and Democrats alike must settle our differences and come together to craft an economic relief package that delivers aid to those who are out of work, relief to struggling small businesses, support to state and local governments and resources to both our educators and health care providers.

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?

While I am fully supportive of efforts to address systemic racism and reform our criminal justice system, I do not support defunding the police. In fact, I voted twice to increase funding for our local police departments for community oriented policing. Our country needs both a more just law enforcement system *and* our valued police officers to truly keep our communities safe. And I believe that we can accomplish both of those goals if we work together.

The death of George Floyd has had a tremendous impact on our state and sparked a nationwide conversation about the issues of police reform and systemic injustice that impact millions of Americans, both here in Minnesota and across the country. Since George Floyd's death, I spent a great deal of time listening to community members across this district about how we can address these challenges. I joined community members in West St. Paul for a listening session and talked with students in the Black Honor Association at Eastview High School. I talked with sheriffs, police chiefs, mayors, county commissioners and faith leaders. In those conversations, we talked about how we can work together to address systemic racism, including in policing.

In pursuit of that goal, I cosponsored and helped pass the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act - a wide-ranging bill to promote accountability in policing, to change the culture of law enforcement, and to build trust between police officers and our communities. That bill would ban chokeholds and no-knock warrants, prohibit racial and religious profiling, set a national training and accreditation standard, encourage and provide funding for community policing, establish a use-of-force database, and most importantly, hold bad actors accountable in a court of law. Our bill was the single most substantial policing reform bill in Congressional history – and while there is more work to be done, I'm deeply proud to have played a role in helping to pass it.

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.

The President's foreign policy record has been defined by inconsistency. While the President was right to stand up to China for its long record of intellectual property theft, doing so through a trade war caused real pain for our family farmers and acted as a huge drain on Minnesota businesses. In fact, our trade deficit is now the highest that it has been in 12 years. Simply put, we cannot conduct foreign policy through Twitter and we must stand for Democracy – and against authoritarian regimes. In order to maintain our leadership throughout the world, we need a tough foreign policy agenda that protects the United States and at the same time preserves the shared American values of privacy, liberty, and diversity. But we must return to a diplomacy-first mindset and work to restore the strong relationships with our allies. This includes re-joining the Paris Climate Agreement and the World Health Organization. We're at our safest and strongest when we're leading a coalition of countries committed to peace and freedom. That means using diplomatic means to advance our values, putting pressure on countries that don't share our values, and returning to the steady, predictable leadership that America has always shown abroad.

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

The Administration's rules provide the opportunity for insurance companies to sell junk insurance plans that do not comply with the Affordable Care Act's regulations – opening the door for weaker cost and coverage protections for the individuals under their care. I have serious concerns not only about the consequences of these plans for the individuals who choose to purchase them but for their negative impact on the state insurance markets that cover thousands of individuals and small businesses in the Second District. AHPs will allow insurance companies to market cheaper, more ineffective health care plans to young and healthy employees, leaving the Affordable Care Act's marketplace with higher costs and fewer options for the millions of Americans who depend on the individual market.

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?

Education and career skills training are the keys to securing a strong economic future for families in Minnesota. And as the proud wife of a former teacher and mother of four sons – with one in college and one at Rosemount High School – I understand the importance of a great education for all children. I have been a leader in Congress on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) program and successfully secured more federal funding for the program, which will benefit local taxpayers and our students with disabilities. We must stabilize funding for K-12 education and ensure that career training and vocational education is a priority again in this country. College is not right for every child, and students need to be supported to understand that there are other career options. American workers need to have the right skills for the high-

paying, high-growth technical jobs of the 21st Century. We can make sure of this by investing in workforce development initiatives and encouraging public-private partnerships in higher education as well as making vocational education a priority again in our public schools. When schools work with local employers to link training and education to the needs of the regional economy, students and employers win. Our goal should be for each student to receive the training necessary either through college, a technical degree, or apprenticeship program to be ready for a good-paying job. And we must be committed to continuous learning and job re-training as industries and technologies change. This requires a commitment to investing and encouraging partnerships between Minnesota companies and technical colleges.

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

The federal government isn't doing nearly enough to reduce carbon emissions in this country. However, Minnesota has served as a textbook case for how states can take the lead when the federal government has failed. Our state has taken a leading role in producing homegrown energy, providing clean, renewable energy, and reducing our reliance on foreign oil. In Congress, I will continue to fight to maintain a strong Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) and lead the effort to make Minnesota a leader in homegrown energy. We should continue to reward conversion to renewable energy sources in this country from a policy perspective. Renewable energy is growing and creating jobs at a fast pace, and we should continue to do everything possible to reduce carbon emissions and protect the environment.

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

Rebuilding our nation's infrastructure will help to kickstart the American economy and revitalize communities across the country. As a Member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I was able to play a major role in helping to pass a highway bill that recognizes the overdue investments we need to make in our crumbling infrastructure. H.R.2, the Moving Forward Act, would help rebuild our roads, highways, and bridges and increase access to high-speed Internet – especially in rural areas. The Moving Forward Act contained my amendment to increase funding for local township roads and help dedicate more funds to these communities than in prior highway bills. Enactment of this bill will create good-paying construction jobs in the short-term, and stimulate private sector jobs growth. In order to help stimulate private sector investment in infrastructure – like machinery, buildings, and factories – we must incentivize companies to bring their cash outside the United States back home. We've got a lot of work to do in this country to upgrade our infrastructure, and I'll continue serving as a strong advocate for funding these projects. We should prioritize infrastructure investments in the United States, particularly ensuring that Greater Minnesota has access to high-speed Internet to help

communities meet their needs. Rural communities can't build small businesses, utilize educational resources or access health care from the internet if they aren't on a level playing field. We also must address rail issues to ensure producers have reliable access to markets.

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

Washington's failure to pass bipartisan immigration reform is slowing our economy and weakening our nation. I support bipartisan immigration reform that invests in smart border security, provides a path to citizenship for DREAMERS and law-abiding immigrants, and keeps families together. As long as our immigration system is broken, people will continue to work around it. It's clear that too many members of Congress are more interested in scoring points with their base than doing the sensible and commonsense thing for our economy and our country. Industries such as agriculture and technology are starved for workers, and we must support smart immigration policies that help. It's critical that Congress take action to pass an immediate fix to the Deferred Action Childhood Arrivals Program (DACA). These are hardworking Minnesotans who serve in our military, graduate from our schools and contribute to our economy. In addition, the development of a path to citizenship for law-abiding immigrants would allow everyone to contribute and pay taxes, as well as pay into Medicare and Social Security. Many of us are descended from immigrants, and we need immigrants for continued economic growth. The history of and promise of this country is that it will always be open to those who seek a better life, and are willing to work hard and help America grow in the process. In Congress, I will support policies that will continue to make this a reality.

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

I've always said, when the President is doing good work for the people of the Second Congressional District, I'll support him and his Administration. That's why I was proud to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and members of the President's team to get USMCA across the finish line this year. I was thrilled to support an agreement that bolsters our economy, supports farmers and protects American workers without giving a handout to big pharmaceutical companies. However, I've also been clear that when the President is actively undermining the livelihoods of folks in my district, I'll stand up strongly against that. And that's exactly what the President's reckless trade war with China did. I do not believe you can negotiate trade on Twitter. Our nation needs fair trade agreements with strong environmental protections and labor standards. I worked in an international business that generated over half its sales in exports. In Congress, I fought for family farmers and worked toward opening new markets with fair trade agreements. Agriculture is a critical component of and opportunity for economic growth in Minnesota's Second Congressional District. Once you lose access to a market, it can

take years to get it back. To keep that agricultural economy growing, we must help farmers export their products to new markets – not destroy the ones we already have.

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

There's no doubt about it – Washington is broken. The American people have lost faith in a democratic process that has been corrupted by big money and influence. We need to restore confidence in our elected officials and our government. In Washington, I'm fighting to give the power back to hardworking families by making sure their voices are heard and their issues are fought for by popularly elected officials. The very first bill I cosponsored in Congress was H.R. 1, the "For the People Act," a comprehensive bill to reform American's corrupt campaign finance system. And I didn't stop there. Dismayed by Washington's gridlock after I was sworn in amidst the nation's longest shutdown in history, I introduced the "Shutdown to End All Shutdowns Act" to withhold pay from members of Congress and Executive Branch officials while forcing lawmakers and the Administration to remain in Washington until a deal is reached – putting the pressure where it should be: on elected officials, not the millions of Americans who rely on them. I also introduced the HUMBLE Act to permanently bar members of Congress from serving as lobbyists after their time in public service and requiring every sitting Congressperson to sell their individual stocks before being sworn in. A lifetime ban on lobbying will ensure that Congress is no longer a revolving door of influence, and banning individual stock ownership will cut down on conflicts of interest and show that Congress has its priorities straight so that we can advocate for policies that will improve lives and expand economic opportunity for every Minnesotan.

Briefly summarize your personal background and qualifications.

Angie Craig has served as U.S. Representative for Minnesota's Second Congressional District since being elected in 2018. Angie learned the value of hard work and determination from her mother, a single mom who raised three children while earning her teaching degree. Angie worked two jobs to help put herself through college. She and her wife Cheryl have four sons and live in Eagan, Minnesota. Craig is a small business leader, a former executive for a major manufacturer and a former newspaper reporter.