

2020 ELECTION QUESTIONS – CONGRESS / SENATE

U.S. Representative Betty McCollum – Minnesota’s 4th District

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

My top priority is ensuring an effective federal response to the health, economic, and educational crisis resulting from the coronavirus pandemic. The failure of the Trump administration to lead a coordinated federal response to the pandemic has cost thousands of lives and is destroying our economy. We need an effective, responsible, science-based approach to protect the American people and restore trust and confidence in government leadership. Republican failure demands a new president and a new Senate majority to effectively respond to the crisis.

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

The Trump administration’s response has been an absolute failure. Congress must continue to provide aid to families, businesses, non-profits, and local governments. We cannot allow the economy and unemployment to deteriorate further because of political obstacles imposed by the Republicans in the White House and U.S. Senate.

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?

In Congress, I helped to pass the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2020 (H.R. 7120). Congress, state legislatures, as well as mayors and city councils must ensure highly trained, professional law enforcement officers are on the job protecting the public. Systemic reforms are needed and Congress can support the actions of local governments to improve policing. At the same time, policing is a difficult, stressful, and dangerous profession. Law enforcement officials must have the training and mental health support they need to be effective.

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.

Mr. Trump has alienated U.S. allies, diminished our credibility in the world, and allowed dangerous adversaries to directly interfere and influence U.S. elections – including the current presidential election. Under Trump, U.S. global leadership has deteriorated to the

point where our nation is mocked for its response to the coronavirus pandemic. Mr. Trump has made our country weaker, more vulnerable, and less capable of defending our national security than at anytime since World War II.

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

I support strengthening and expanding the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to include a robust public option to ensure high quality, affordable healthcare is accessible to everyone who needs it. This is especially critical as our nation faces the on-going coronavirus pandemic.

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?

Technology, innovation, and creative entrepreneurship is driving the global economy. Science, math, engineering, languages, arts and the ability to work across sectors and cultures are essential to success in the 21st Century. We need every child ready to learn when they start kindergarten and every child – in every grade – ready to learn when they start school every day. Millions of children are living in poverty, experiencing hunger and struggling. The COVID-19 crisis is also an education crisis as every teacher, parent, and student knows. We need a national commitment from all levels of government and the private sector to invest in our children, education excellence, and results based on high standards, the standards by which we are competing globally. This is a matter of economic security for the future, as well as national security if the U.S. is to remain a global leader.

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

No. Climate change is an existential threat and President Trump is a climate change denier. The Trump administration has rolled back emission standards and is promoting the very actions that exacerbate climate change. It is an immoral and moronic policy. Clean, alternative energy deserves increased federal support for technology development, capital investment, and market expansion. We need to incentivize clean energy solutions that create jobs and a sustainable environment and economy.

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

In every corner of the U.S. our infrastructure is deteriorating. The failure to invest in modernizing our national transportation infrastructure undermines job creation, economic

growth, and public safety. I support a massive federal infrastructure investment for transportation, wastewater treatment, and drinking water with state and local governments sharing the cost.

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

The fundamental principals of human rights, civil liberties, and due process must be restored. With regard to immigration detention, family separation, and deportation, the Trump administration has abused human rights, repeatedly violated the law, and caused untold misery and even deaths. Republicans use immigrants as a political weapon to inspire their xenophobic and intolerant voting base. The solution is for Democrats to control the White House, Senate, and House of Representatives and restore the rule of law, due process, and a rights based immigration system in which human rights and the economic needs of the nation are balanced.

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

The Trump trade policy has been one of bullying, belligerence, and lost markets that has hurt farmers and manufacturers. The coronavirus has exposed the vulnerability of dependence on global supply chains. The U.S. will need to focus investing in developing domestic supply chains while reestablishing global relationships that have been damaged or destroyed by Trump policies.

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

The need to address income inequality, racial disparities, and systemic social injustice, including systemic racism, is a thread that runs through all federal policy making. Promoting environmental justice and reducing health disparities and barriers to economic opportunity must be a federal priority.

Briefly summarize your personal background and qualifications.

I have served as a Member of Congress since 2001. I am a member of the House Appropriations Committee and serve as chair of the Interior-Environment subcommittee and the vice-chair of the Defense subcommittee.