

2018 ELECTION QUESTIONS – CONGRESS | Tom Emmer

Top priority: If elected, what is your top priority for the 2019 Congress? Why are you running for office?

My goal in Congress has been and will continue to be to prioritize the interests and needs of Minnesota's Sixth Congressional District. I am pleased with the work the 115th Congress has done to build a stronger, more competitive economy that generates new opportunities and confidence for every American. I look forward to continuing those efforts in the 116th Congress.

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.

I agree with many of the steps the President has taken to hold our international partners accountable, while projecting strength through sanctions when dealing with adversaries like Iran and Russia. I strongly support the President's efforts to bring peace and stability to the Korean Peninsula, and am closely monitoring his Administration's work on trade. However, I am concerned with efforts to reduce our foreign assistance spending to inadequate levels because I have witnessed, first-hand, the humanitarian and national security benefits of an effective foreign aid system. Further, I believe this Administration should take steps to lift the embargo on Cuba and improve our economic and societal ties with our neighbor.

Health care: What role should the federal government play in combating the opioid epidemic? The federal government must provide states, localities, first responders, and families with the tools and resources they need to combat this ongoing epidemic. I am proud to say that to date, the U.S. House of Representatives has passed over 50 bills, including the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA), and the 21st Century Cures Act, to help those struggling with addiction. Just recently, I was pleased to support the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act. The federal government must continue to serve as a willing partner to the men and women in our communities who are confronting this crisis on a daily basis.

Education: What role should the federal government play in ensuring that U.S. graduates can compete in the global economy? Are there specific measures that you advocate?

States, local school boards, teachers, and parents must take the lead when it comes to the education of our youth. I have been supportive of legislation like the *Innovations in Mentoring, Training, and Apprenticeships Act* as well as the *STEM Research and Education Effectiveness and Transparency Act* to direct federal resources to local educators, while reviewing existing programs to ensure they are truly preparing future generations for success.

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

I firmly support an all-of-the-above approach to the way we power our nation forward. A mixture of domestic, renewable *and* non-renewable sources of energy are critical to maintaining an advanced but diversified energy supply. I have and will continue to support the development of new technologies to improve energy efficiency while keeping costs low for consumers.

Debt: Federal entitlements are the main drivers of rising U.S. debt. What specific steps can be taken to keep programs such as Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid solvent and still serve those individuals in need?

Promises made must be promises kept. As the trustees of the Social Security and Medicare trust funds continue to signal the looming insolvency of these programs, I look forward to working with my colleagues to stabilize these important lifelines, eliminate fraudulent payments, and create alternative means for individuals to invest and save for retirement and medical expenses.

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

The federal government must serve as a catalyst for investment when it comes to transportation and infrastructure spending. States should be able to rely on a steady and fair stream of federal funding to improve the way people and commerce move. I was pleased to help secure over \$200 million in funding for infrastructure improvements along I-94 from St. Michael to Albertville, \$380,000 to improve Anoka County–Blaine Airport, and \$1.2 million for St. Cloud Regional Airport. I have also introduced the National Intersection and Interchange Safety Construction Program Act to establish dedicated funding specifically focused on improving dangerous intersections and rail grade crossings.

Economy: Assess the impact of the 2017 federal tax reform on the nation's economy. What additional steps do you support to stimulate job growth?

Additional work to complement the important reforms included in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act must be done to ensure the long term growth of our economy. Congress must take steps to ensure we have a well-educated workforce that fills the current employer demand; eliminate burdensome regulations that force business owners to hire compliance officers instead of innovators; revamp the way our capital markets function to create new avenues for entrepreneurs to access seed funding and start-up capital; and ensure our laws – old and new – encourage innovation, rather than stifle it.

Immigration: Congress remains deadlocked on federal immigration reform. What should be the tenets of any immigration reform legislation? Do you support DACA?

Minnesota and the United States have a proud tradition of welcoming immigrants from around the globe. While I support this tradition, any modifications to our immigration system must include the following: secure borders; a thorough but expedient vetting system for new, legal entrants; and an efficient processing and review system for employers seeking to hire additional workers. I do not support the last Administration's unilateral efforts to rewrite our immigration laws through executive action. Any and all changes to our nation's immigration policies must be made by Congress.

Foreign trade: The imposition of tariffs by President Trump has results in retaliation by foreign countries. Do you support the president's actions? Long term, will they help or hurt the U.S. economy?

I support this Administration's efforts to improve upon our existing trade agreements. However, I am concerned about the effect that tariffs will have on American businesses and consumers. As the lead sponsor of the Cuba Trade Act, I have consistently supported efforts to open new markets for U.S. farmers and manufacturers. I have also led delegation efforts in support of

reformed trade agreements like the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS). Trade is crucial to the health and expansion of our economy, and I will continue to support efforts that improve access to new and emerging markets for American businesses and consumers.

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

Like substance abuse, mental illness continues to impact Minnesota families at troubling rate. That is why I have taken a number of steps in Congress to help address this crisis. For starters, I have introduced the Stemming the Tide of Rural Economic Stress and Suicide (STRESS) Act. This legislation provides additional resources to rural areas so that our farmers and ranchers can access the care and support they need when struggling with mental health issues. I also was proud to attend the groundbreaking of a new children's mental health clinic in East Bethel, and became a cosponsor of the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act.

Briefly summarize your personal background and qualifications.

Born in 1961, Tom Emmer grew up in Minnesota and attended St. Thomas Academy. He received his BA in Political Science from the University of Alaska-Fairbanks and his JD from William Mitchell College of Law. Representing Minnesota's Sixth Congressional District, Tom is currently serving his second term in the U.S. House of Representatives and sits on the Financial Services Committee. As a Member of the Republican Deputy Whip Team, the House Republican Steering Committee, and as the recently appointed Deputy Chair for the National Republican Congressional Committee, Tom is influential in defending conservative values by protecting the Republican majority in Congress.