

## **2018 ELECTION QUESTIONS – SENATE |Karin Housley**

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

I am running for office because I believe Minnesotans need a new voice in the United States Senate. With the partisan gridlock and obstruction plaguing Washington, it has never been more important for Minnesotans to have an independent voice representing them. As a state senator, I have a proven record of working across the aisle and delivering for my constituents, and I want to continue that record of getting things done in the United States Senate. As I travel all around the state, I hear every day the challenges facing hardworking Minnesotans. People want affordable and accessible health care, safe communities, and more of their hard-earned money in their pockets – and I will work with the president and across the aisle to get things done.

### **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 has taken a vastly different approach to foreign policy than his predecessors, but it seems to be working. Take North Korea, for example – President Trump's meeting with the North Korean leader was an historic moment that signaled a breakthrough in our pursuit of security and prosperity abroad, but the North Korean government needs to follow through on its commitment to work with us on full denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. The North Korean government is a brutal regime responsible for depriving its citizens of even the most basic human rights – and significant changes will have to take place before any lasting peace between our two nations is possible. When it comes to Russia, the president needs to fully recognize that Russia is not a friendly nation and its cyberattacks against the United States, and specifically our elections infrastructure, cannot be tolerated. The president must make that very clear as it works in pursuit of peace abroad.

### **Health care: What role should the federal government play in combating the opioid epidemic?**

The opioid epidemic is ravaging communities and tearing families apart across Minnesota. We need to approach the opioid epidemic with compassion and get people the physical and mental health treatment they need to succeed. We also need to look at holding industries accountable, but without raising taxes. Finally, we must work together to stop the over-prescription of opioid medication in the first place – a primary driver of the epidemic. In the Minnesota Senate, I voted for reasonable measures to combat Minnesota's opioid epidemic through a combination of efforts to reduce prescriptions and hold both prescribers and manufacturers accountable for their role in the opioid epidemic.

### **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?**

The federal government should afford most control in education to local communities, as nobody knows better what works for local districts than local school boards.

However, not everyone needs a four-year degree to compete in the global economy. That's why, in the Minnesota Senate, I supported robust investments in programs like vocational training and career and technical education, as well as agricultural education, in our public schools. We need to make sure our students – all students – have every opportunity to train themselves for the future.

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

We need to strike a balance between promoting renewable energy, protecting our environment, and putting too many unnecessary regulations on Minnesota individuals and businesses. I will work to find ways to adapt to challenging climate scenarios and extreme weather events. I support market-based solutions to reduce greenhouse gasses and alternative energy sources to cut down on pollution. I also support a strong investment in farm bill programs like crop insurance to provide our farmers and ag producers with a buffer against our increasingly-uncertain weather patterns.

**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?**

A strong economy is the foundation for a strong Minnesota – but a growing national debt and increasingly wasteful spending threatens the prosperity of future generations. We must be responsible and effective stewards of taxpayer dollars, and that means striving to balance the budget, roll back burdensome regulation, cut taxes to grow our economy, and encourage innovation – working toward an economy that provides an opportunity for all Minnesotans to thrive. That being said, it is critical to millions of Minnesotans that we work to protect Social Security and Medicare, preserving its solvency for future generations. Minnesotans work hard – and when they retire, they deserve the money they've paid into Social Security and Medicare. I do not believe Social Security should not be privatized; instead, we need a bipartisan solution that protects benefits without increasing taxes or raising the age of retirement.

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

If we are producing goods but have no way of transporting them safely and efficiently, nobody benefits. Having a robust, well-maintained, and easily-accessible network of roads and bridges, airports, railways, waterways, and other transportation infrastructure mechanisms should be a top priority. As a state legislator, I voted for the largest investment in our state's infrastructure in decades – and I'll continue that work in the U.S. Senate. We should be exploring and encouraging federal-state partnerships – similar to Minnesota's Corridors of Commerce program. We should be trusting states to identify their specific, most-needed roadways for the safe and efficient traveling of goods, for example, and entering into a partnership with the federal government to front some of the cost.

**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?**

As a small business owner, I understand the stifling impact high taxes have on job creation and innovation. It's your money, not the government's – and a healthy economy begins when people keep more of their earnings and businesses are free to spur economic growth. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 was a great step toward moving the economy in the right direction, growing American businesses, and bringing overseas dollars back to reinvest in our country.

The tax cut legislation was the largest tax break for individuals, families, and businesses in modern history. With historic unemployment and staggering job growth, we're seeing the positive effects in nearly every sector of the economy. With companies bringing employees and production back to the United States, and with employees benefiting from higher wages and bonuses, the tax cuts are working as intended. We can continue growing our economy by keeping these tax cuts in place and I am hopeful the Senate joins with the House in making the tax cuts permanent. If we do not make the tax cuts permanent, certain provisions and deductions critical to the viability of Minnesota small businesses will expire by 2025. While I do have concerns about the hit on the national debt, I believe that the economic growth we are seeing could make up for it.

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

America was founded by immigrants and immigrants continue to enrich our nation – but in order to continue this legacy, we must modernize and fix our broken immigration system. Securing our borders is the first step toward a workable immigration plan that attracts the best and brightest students and workers, improving our economy and preserving our global competitiveness. We need to establish a bipartisan framework for continuing the DACA program, allowing those already in the country through no fault of their own a viable method for remaining in our country. We need to allocate additional funding for border security, including additional enforcement along the borders and at our ports of entry and funding to streamline the backlog of immigration-related court cases. Our immigration system affects our nation's ability to combat drug and human trafficking, attract workers, enforce our laws, and keep our communities safe. It is critical we have a robust, dedicated agency responsible for protecting our borders and a framework in place to support a strong, dignified, and safe immigration system.

**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 believe in free trade, but it also must be fair trade – and that's essential for a prospering American economy. We can strengthen our economy with a long-term trade solution that balances the need for fair trade practices with protecting and growing international markets. With countries like China relying on cheap labor and dumping cheap steel and aluminum into the U.S., they're killing our industries because they aren't playing fair – and that must change. I believe we must afford the president flexibility and trust in negotiating trade deals that benefit the American worker. The president has shown he is able to get major players to the table, and I'm hopeful he can

follow through in attaining an equitable trade agreement with our important trade partners. We must protect the standards put in place under NAFTA while negotiating a fairer deal – as the president has done with Mexico, Canada, and the United States, in addition to supporting the trade negotiations taking place with the European Union, and exploring bilateral trade agreements with countries proven to have growing markets for American products. Let's enter new markets, enhance existing markets, and demand fair trade.

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

One other issue of importance to me is protecting our elderly and vulnerable neighbors. Since my mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's eight years ago, caring for our elderly has had a special place in my heart. As the chairwoman of the first-ever Senate Aging and Long-Term Care Committee, I'm proud of the work I've done to make sure elderly and vulnerable Minnesotans are forgotten no longer – and I'm looking forward to continuing that work in the United States Senate. As a state senator, I worked across the aisle, and with the administration, to address elder abuse, including statewide listening sessions, dozens of stakeholder meetings, and countless hours of public testimony that led to a workable solution – but was vetoed by the governor. When others gave up or were too divisive to be effective, I was one of the only public officials to persist in efforts to achieve meaningful change for Minnesota seniors. I came to the table each and every time, ready to work together and get something done – and it's that determination that I'll take with me to the United States Senate.

**Briefly summarize your personal background and qualifications.**

I was born and raised in South St. Paul. After graduating from South St. Paul High School in 1982, I attended Augsburg College in Minneapolis for a short time before moving east and graduating with my B.A. in communications from the State University of New York at Buffalo. After college, I worked as a television news producer before eventually hosting my own radio show, authoring an investment book for women, and starting a successful real estate business in the Stillwater area. In 2012, I was elected to serve the St. Croix River Valley in the Minnesota Senate, where I am particularly passionate about issues facing the elderly, veterans, and small businesses. I serve as chairwoman of the Aging and Long-Term Care Committee, vice chair of the Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee, and serve on the Veterans and Military Affairs and the Jobs and Economic Growth committees. I married my high school sweetheart, Phil Housley, in 1985. We make our home along the St. Croix River near Stillwater. We are the parents of four grown children and the proud grandparents of two adorable grandsons.

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