

## 2018 Election Questions- Senate | Jerry Trooien

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

Sadly, the Democratic and Republican parties are broken. A truly independent US Senator from Minnesota is now an absolute necessity. America must become more important than a political party. The top priority is to be a strong new voice and force, to confront the two parties and their appeal to the lowest common denominator. They are in a race to the bottom. Only a true independent who will not participate in the make the other party look bad approach can influence the gridlock. Do you really believe independent thinking and action will come from the Democratic or Republican parties? Neither do I. It is hard to get good policy when our politics is bad. An independent Senator would be a major force in the issues of the day including health care, education, foreign affairs, immigration etc.

**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.

Who would not support trying to bring North Korea into participating peacefully with other nations and reduce the threat of a rogue dictator starting a nuclear war? The question is still open as to the results. However, we must support the effort. Iran is not an easy question/issue. Whether the President will be successful in making a better deal than we have is uncertain. A big problem is what our removing ourselves from the deal has done with our allies. Allies are still a very important consideration and it would be foolish to think otherwise. Dropping out of the Paris accord on the environment has shown me no upside and the downside is obvious if we don't take the need for mankind to control its emissions serious. Dropping out of the Pacific trade deal plays more into the hands of China and does not leave us in a good position.

America has hard power with its military. But soft power is real and is crucial. We are losing respect and admiration in too many parts of the world. We have a great resource on foreign affairs in our local son Tom Friedman from St. Louis Park. He is a 3-time Pulitzer prize winner New York Times journalist and he is a smart, thoughtful, tough(strong) guy. It is important to know what he is seeing-thinking. I would also be doing everything I could to understand the way some of our great elder statesman view the world today. This means knowing what people like Colin Powell, Madeleine Albright, James Baker and our former Presidents are thinking.

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

Some 70,000 people died last year from this problem. That is about twice the number in car accidents. It is a big problem. We must continue our role in research. We must keep raising awareness. We must be explicit in talking about health and addiction in school. We must pay heed to people like our former Surgeon General when asked what the greatest health problem in America is answered by saying, “loneliness and isolation.” Loneliness and isolation are the causes of many chronic diseases including opioid problems.

**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?

I strongly encourage people to go to [Jerry2018.com](http://Jerry2018.com) to read my thoughts on education. The approach and views are far more in depth than the other candidates reveal. Assuring we compete will not be a result of some federal program forced on colleges or K-12. Competing globally is achieved when our population and workforce are critical thinkers who are life-long learners. The federal government does and should play an active role in fostering and cooperating in research with education and the private sector.

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

For the sake of the planet we all live on we better keep full focus and attention on the carbon emission problem. We need to do more which certainly means getting other countries of the world to cooperate. Promotion of homegrown energy can come from the bully-pulpit of leaders both government and private sector as well as financial incentives via tax credits, loans or credit enhancement structure. When the open marketplace creates products that people will buy that are environment friendly that is a sign of progress.

**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?

That is no easy task. As Warren Buffett says, “every dollar in American health care has a constituent,” meaning someone is going to fight to protect it one way or

another. If changing health care was easy it would be done by now and we all know it hasn't.

Fixing health care is not primarily shuffling around who pays for it. At the end of the day some American, be it employers, individuals, Medicare, Medicaid etc. is going to foot the bill. The big question is how to slow the growth of cost. From what I have learned the most needed changes to do that are 1) we as a people need to live healthier. Cost for chronic diseases are about \$8 to \$1 for non-chronic patients. Chronic diseases major causes are obesity, smoking, lack of exercise. The short story is if we improve our health habits, even slightly, we will live a fuller life and the cost of health care improves dramatically. It makes sense.

2) switch from a fee for service business model to a model of fixed payment to providers with emphasis on prevention rather than treatment. As of now the basic business model in health care is the more you do the more you get paid. There is no incentive to do prevention when more is done more gets charged.

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

To avoid more money flowing into a state that has senior politicians who can pork barrel money into their own state, federal money should be distributed to states on a pro-rata basis. Exceptions for national security need to be considered.

**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?

Evaluating this is not an easy cause and effect assessment. Having said that, I believe the tax reform act is on balance a needed step forward. We want corporations large and small competing equally with competitive tax rates to other countries. I believe we need to find ways to bring home trillions of dollars that our companies have held off shore for tax reasons. We want them investing it at home. Confidence and mind-set are also critical factors in business expansion and the reform act has seemed to help that.

The biggest stimulate for job growth is an educated work force.

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

We need to make legal immigration easier and illegal immigration not a viable option. Washington should be in close contact with all parts of Minnesota to help provide workers Minnesota needs. The tenets should be rule of law, compassion and remain proud of America still being that shining city on the hill. Yes, I support DACA. Throw these people out now? Come on folks.

**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 do not blanket support or condemn them quite yet. On balance I am skeptical they will work. Business people large and small who have to deal with these things have serious concerns. Not just long term but near term they are concerned where this puts America including with our allies. One of the concerns that is currently unknown is what companies outside America will not want to engage with us for fear of being in a trade dispute? If resolution happens soon with gains for our companies and farmers we will acknowledge it. Our miners and companies on the range are feeling good now but our soybean farmers are not. We will keep a close eye on this.