

2020 ELECTION QUESTIONS – CONGRESS / Quinn Nystrom

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

Living with Type 1 diabetes, I pay nearly \$1,000 out of pocket every month for my healthcare – and that's with good insurance. The price of insulin has gone up nearly 1200% since I was diagnosed as a teenager and I've had enough. It's not just insulin - prescription drug prices are skyrocketing and too many among us can no longer afford their prescriptions or are too afraid of the bill to go to the doctor. It's unacceptable and the COVID-19 pandemic has only made it worse. In Congress, I'll stand up to Big Pharma, fight for more affordable healthcare and lower prescription drug costs, and protect coverage for people with pre-existing conditions.

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 federal government's response to the pandemic has been abysmal. The economy fundamentally will not recover until we beat this virus. We need universal, easy to access, 1-day or immediate testing. We need more PPE for our frontline healthcare workers. We need a coherent plan from the federal government on when certain areas should be closed and when they shouldn't. On the economic side we need to continue the unemployment benefits with \$600 additional per week. We also need support for our cities and states so that they don't have to cut their budgets right in the midst of the greatest economic downturn since the great depression.

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?

Reform is needed on all levels of the criminal justice system. We need broad reforms to crack down on departments with a history of racial profiling and officers with high levels of complaints against them. We need to ensure that law enforcement have the right training and make sure that we're sending the right people to handle each situation. We must address the racial disparities in sentencing and reform the bail bond system. Most

importantly, those in power have to listen to the communities affected by these issues and realize that we will not get anywhere if we don't try to sit down and work together to make change.

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.

My husband, Paul, is a 12- year Army veteran. He served in Iraq and is currently in Army Reserves. So when I think about foreign policy, my first concern is for our troops and our alliances around the globe. America first should not also mean America alone and I'm deeply concerned about how President Trump may have damaged our relationships with our allies.

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

I support healthcare plans that cover everything that patients need to get good, quality care without having to choose between buying groceries and paying for their prescriptions. Association Health Plans do not have to cover basic care like maternity care or offer prescription coverage and can set different premium rates based on age, gender, job, and for thousands of Minnesotans like me, pre-existing conditions. The lack of adequate coverage presents a dangerous risk for workers on these plans who would be forced to pay out of pocket for anything not covered, and could further destabilize the insurance market by enticing cost-conscious small business owners to offer their employees cheaper plans instead of comprehensive ones. We should be working to make ALL healthcare more affordable, not adjusting coverage to fit sky high costs.

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?

Like with the economy, our schools won't go back to normal until we have beaten this virus. Our federal government must ensure that our kids are competing on a level playing field – that everyone has the opportunity to succeed if they work hard and follow the rules. That's the promise of America, and it starts with our kids. I believe strongly that the federal government should fund universal pre-k and provide our schools with the

resources they need so our kids can get the education they deserve. In Congress, I'll work to lower the cost of higher education, including community colleges and technical schools-which provide millions of Americans with skills that help them compete in a growing economy.

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

Climate change is real, yet we insist on acting like it doesn't exist or doesn't matter. The good news is that we don't need to choose between responding to climate change and helping the economy. There are major improvements we can make, and lots of them will create new jobs here in Minnesota. More funding for wind, solar, and energy efficiency improvement programs would create thousands of jobs here while combating climate change.

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

Transportation infrastructure is often costly to build and maintain, yet will pay off long term. Whether it's creating new train lines, funding bus routes, or ensuring that our roads and bridges are properly maintained, the federal government should ensure that the state has the funding it needs so that these projects can move forward in a timely manner.

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

We need comprehensive reform with a pathway to citizenship for contributing members of our society. This isn't amnesty – people must pay their fair share. This would be a major economic win for the United States. Almost all economic studies show that if we were to simplify our immigration system and help people come out of the shadows, the U.S. economy would generate billions of dollars in return.

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

President Trump's foreign policy record has been mixed. The updated USMCA agreement was an improvement upon NAFTA and helped our dairy farmers. Some steel tariffs have helped support our steel industry. However, we've also seen Trump's foreign policy decimate our farmers' overseas export markets, especially in the soybean area. I've spoken to too many farmers who can't make a living farming any longer. We need to end these trade wars, act like a responsible trading partner, and allow our farmers to regain their market share.

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

Getting dark money out of politics. For two years, I worked with a group of volunteers to pass the Alec Smith Emergency Insulin Act in order to make insulin more affordable and accessible. This is a life or death matter to those who need it to survive. On the Minnesota State Senate floor, we were up against teams of large lobbying firms hired by Big Pharma. These corporate lobbyists had the financial power to block this bill by influencing Senate Republican leadership with over \$300,000 in campaign contributions. After the first year, their money was successful in blocking our bill. But we didn't give up the fight. Eventually, with the help of some press and media scrutiny, we were able to put enough pressure on the Senate Republicans to pass the bill.

Even though corporate special interest groups like the ones I fought on the Minnesota State Senate floor have given my opponent's campaign hundreds of thousands of dollars, I have pledged to never take contributions from corporate political action committees in my campaign. I've seen firsthand the damage corporate money does to getting things done for people and would make it a top priority in Congress to reform our broken campaign finance system.

Briefly summarize your personal background and qualifications.

I'm a 4th generation resident of Crow Wing County. Minnesota is my home. When I was a teenager, my brother Will and I were diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. I promised Will that I would find a cure and I've been working for people with diabetes ever since. I went

door to door raising money for research and advocacy, then became the National Youth Advocate for the American Diabetes Association. I've lobbied Congress and State Legislatures across the country to take action and fought for years to lower the price of insulin and protect people with pre-existing conditions like mine. Most recently I spearheaded the effort to pass the Alec Smith Affordable Insulin Act here in Minnesota.

At 28, I became the youngest member of the Baxter City Council. I worked with my conservative colleagues to manage the city budget, worked with the police to combat sex trafficking, and worked with our local hospitals to expand mental healthcare options. In Congress, I'll do the same, working across the aisle to get things done. We must expand access to affordable healthcare, lower prescription drug costs, and make our economy work again for all Minnesotans.