



Jewish United Fund

— EDUCATION —

TOGETHER *for* GOOD

CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRES

US HOUSE DISTRICT 7

Election Day: March 17, 2026

In December 2025 and January 2026, JUF met with candidates for US House 7. JUF invited all known candidates with available contact information to complete a questionnaire and to participate in an introductory meeting with JUF. The questionnaire was sent to every candidate who agreed to meet. **Responses included in this guide are presented exactly as submitted, without edits or alterations.** If you do not see a candidate's questionnaire, they either didn't accept JUF's invitation to schedule a meeting or didn't submit a completed questionnaire.

We hope these questionnaires are valuable resources. JUF does not rate, endorse, or contribute to candidates for elective office.

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Listed in Alphabetical Order)

Richard Boykin
Kina Collins
Melissa Conyers-Ervin
Thomas Fisher
Jason Friedman
La Shawn Ford
Rory Hoskins
Chad Koppie
Jazmin Robinson
Reed Showwalter

Richard Boykin

Security

The federal Nonprofit Security Grant Program is currently funded at \$274.5 million. Do you support increasing it to \$360 million or at least maintaining its current funding level?

Yes, I support increasing the grant dollars. This grant is used to increase physical security of nonprofits vulnerable to terrorist attacks. The Jewish community is under attack and must be protected.

Antisemitism

Antisemitism is surging across the United States. What will you do to help combat antisemitism and bring different communities together?

I would invest in education and awareness in schools and community organizations. I will utilize my voice to speak out against hate and promote unity. I will increase security and hold those accountable who promote hate. I will encourage church leaders to worship at least once a month with Jewish leaders at a synagogue.

Antisemitism is growing at both ends of the political spectrum. How do you plan to address antisemitism on both sides of the aisle.

As leaders it is important that we lower the temperature and implore civility and tolerance. There is no room for hate on either side of the political spectrum.

Israel

Do you support efforts to boycott, divest from, or sanction Israel, Israeli goods, company's services, academics, academic institutions, and cultural activities? Relatedly, do you support boycotting, divesting from or sanctioning U.S. or other companies that do business in or with Israel?

No and No.

Do you support continued U.S. military aid to Israel or additional conditions related to that aid?

I support continued military aid to Israel.

What is your view on the role of Congress in shaping U.S.-Israel relations?

I believe Congress has a role to play in shaping U.S.-Israel relations. It is important that Congress understands what is happening in Israel.

Do you support the concept of a two-state solution whereby the Jewish State of Israel exists safely and securely alongside an independent Palestinian state that doesn't include Hamas or other terrorist organizations?

I do support the concept of a two-state solution where Israel and her residents are safe.

Have you been to Israel? If yes, when and with whom? If no, would you be interested in visiting?

Yes, I had the privilege of joining fellow Illinois Chiefs of Staff on a trip organized by the Jewish Federation of Chicago. I really love Israel.

Health & Human Services

Illinois Medicaid is the largest health insurer in the state, serving approximately 3.4 million people.

The recent changes in H.R. 1 will force Illinois to make difficult funding decisions. What steps would you take to prevent reductions in care that could come from states' tightening eligibility requirements, cutting provider reimbursement levels and/or reducing access to medical care, especially for children, the economically disadvantaged, older adults and people with disabilities?

I will work to repeal this portion of HR 1. The Medicaid and SNAP benefit cuts threaten millions of vulnerable families. I will work to restore funding and repeal billionaire tax cuts.

If elected, will you support and co-sponsor the SSI (Supplemental Security Income) Savings Penalty Elimination Act, which would raise the asset limit for individuals on SSI from \$2,000 to \$10,000 for individuals, and from \$3,000 to \$20,000 for couples?

Yes

Do you support increasing funding for Home and Community-Based Services, a component of Medicaid that helps people with disabilities and older adults live and thrive in the setting of their choice and avoid institutional care?

Yes

What are your views on the mandatory work requirements included in H.R. 1 to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, which is relied upon by nearly 2 million Illinoisans?

I believe the work requirements are a way to reduce the number of beneficiaries. Also, we do not have enough jobs on the west and south sides of Chicago. I do not support.

What steps do you believe need to be undertaken to reduce gun violence?

We have to make sure young people have employment opportunities. A job is the best way to stop a bullet. We need to ensure children can read, write and do basic math. Education is very important to getting a job. Also, we need to open up trade programs. Finally, we must hold people accountable for terrorizing neighborhoods.

Would you have voted to pass the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2026 the law that ended the 2025 government shutdown? Please explain your response.

Yes, too many vulnerable people were being hurt by the government shutdown. This was not the bill to leverage for extending ACA subsidies.

Refugee Services

Do you support the recent Presidential Determination that cut new refugee arrivals from 125,000 to approximately 7,500, with most of the 7,500 slots being held open for White Afrikaners?

No

Despite the cut to new refugee arrivals, refugee support agencies are still supporting tens of thousands of refugees who were lawfully admitted to the United States over the past 5-10 years. What would you do to alleviate the burden that has been placed on refugee support agencies from funding cuts and recessions as well as from the cut to new arrivals?

People who are in the United States deserve to be helped. I will do everything I can to ensure they have access to services. We are a humane country.

Candidate Priorities

What are some of the key priorities you would like to pursue in Congress?

My Peoples Playbook---Lower costs, create more jobs, and make sure every neighborhood is safe.

Any additional information you would like to share with us?

I will fight to ensure Israel and the United States stand together in harmony. A safe and strong Israel is good for America.

Kina Collins

Security

The federal Nonprofit Security Grant Program is currently funded at \$274.5 million. Do you support increasing it to \$360 million or at least maintaining its current funding level?

I do not support increasing the Nonprofit Security Grant Program to \$360 million, nor maintaining it at its current level without significant reforms, especially given the new provision encouraging cooperation with ICE.

Every community deserves to feel safe, particularly those facing rising threats of antisemitism, Islamophobia, and hate-motivated violence. But safety cannot come at the expense of civil rights, nor can it be used as a backdoor to expand policing, surveillance, or collaboration with federal immigration enforcement.

The addition of a provision that pressures nonprofits to cooperate with ICE is deeply troubling and fundamentally unacceptable. No federal safety grant should require or incentivize organizations to participate in the surveillance, detention, or deportation of immigrant communities. This is a profound violation of trust and a dangerous precedent, one that puts immigrant families, mixed-status households, and vulnerable communities at risk.

Beyond the ICE provision, the program in its current structure too often funnels money into security strategies that militarize community institutions rather than support community-led, trauma-informed, and prevention-based approaches to safety.

Before any discussion of increased funding, we must reform this program to ensure it cannot be weaponized to target immigrants or expand policing under the guise of protection. Instead, federal dollars should strengthen cross-cultural solidarity, hate-prevention efforts, mental-health supports, de-escalation training, and community-driven safety infrastructure.

I will always support ensuring that every community targeted by hate is protected, but I cannot endorse expanding or maintaining a program that ties safety to immigration enforcement and reinforces systems that cause harm.

Antisemitism

Antisemitism is surging across the United States. What will you do to help combat antisemitism and bring different communities together?

Antisemitism is one of the oldest and most persistent forms of hatred, and we are witnessing a dangerous and deeply painful resurgence across the country. This moment demands moral courage, clarity, and a holistic response rooted in justice and solidarity. As a Member of Congress, I will confront antisemitism in all its forms, violent threats, harassment, conspiracy theories, and dehumanizing rhetoric, while also ensuring that the fight against hatred is never weaponized to silence lawful dissent or pit marginalized communities against one another.

My approach centers on three commitments. First, strong enforcement: I will support robust hate-crime prosecution, federal monitoring of extremist threats, and the resources needed to keep Jewish schools, synagogues, and community centers safe. Second, community partnerships: safety is a shared project, and combating antisemitism requires multiracial, interfaith coalitions where Jewish, Muslim, Black, immigrant, and LGBTQ+ communities come together not as political pawns, but as partners in collective liberation. Third, education and healing: we must invest in culturally competent education about antisemitism, the Holocaust, and the many ways hatred takes root, and we must expand mental-health and trauma supports for communities targeted by hate.

We cannot address antisemitism in isolation. It rises alongside Islamophobia, anti-Blackness, xenophobia, and anti-Arab racism. My work in Congress will be to call out all forms of hate with consistency, not convenience, and to build a country where safety is not transactional but transformational.

The North Star is always the same: dignity and belonging for all our communities.

Antisemitism is growing at both ends of the political spectrum. How do you plan to address antisemitism on both sides of the aisle.

Antisemitism is not confined to one ideology, one movement, or one party. It appears across the political spectrum, from far-right white nationalist extremism that openly threatens Jewish communities, to conspiratorial rhetoric that circulates online, to dehumanizing tropes that can surface even in progressive spaces. As a legislator, my responsibility is to name antisemitism clearly wherever it emerges, and to ensure that our response is principled, not selective or politically convenient.

Confronting antisemitism on both sides of the aisle starts with rejecting all forms of collective blame, demonization, and denial of Jewish identity or safety concerns. It means calling out dangerous rhetoric when it appears from political allies, not only opponents. It also means recognizing that many communities, including Palestinian, Arab, Muslim, and Black communities, also experience rising hate. Fighting antisemitism must never be used to marginalize other targeted groups; rather, it should be a foundation for deeper solidarity.

In Congress, I will push for fact-based extremism monitoring, community-driven safety initiatives, and federal resources that support education about antisemitism's history and modern forms. At the same time, we must protect free speech and avoid conflating criticism of governments, any government, with prejudice against a people. We can and must hold that nuance.

The work is rooted in humanity: ensuring our Jewish neighbors can live, worship, and participate in public life without fear, while strengthening multiracial, multifaith coalitions committed to justice.

Israel

Do you support efforts to boycott, divest from, or sanction Israel, Israeli goods, company's services, academics, academic institutions, and cultural activities? Relatedly, do you support boycotting, divesting from or sanctioning U.S. or other companies that do business in or with Israel?

I support the constitutional right of individuals and institutions to engage in boycotts and divestment as a form of political expression, rights upheld in decades of Supreme Court precedent. No American should ever be punished, surveilled, or criminalized for participating in a peaceful boycott. Anti-boycott legislation is a threat to free speech and has historically been used to suppress movements for justice, including civil rights and anti-apartheid work.

At the same time, as a Member of Congress, I evaluate boycotts not as symbolic statements but as policy tools. My priority is advancing human rights, equality, and lasting peace for Israelis and Palestinians.

Because of that, I do not support blanket cultural or academic boycotts that limit exchange, dialogue, or people-to-people engagement. I believe in targeted, accountable measures applied to any government or corporation, including those operating in the region, when there is clear evidence of human-rights violations and when such measures serve a defined strategic purpose.

What I reject is the false choice between uncritical support for any government or punitive restrictions on activism. I am committed to a principled, rights-based foreign policy that values both safety and dignity. Our foreign-policy decisions must be driven by human rights, international law, and the lived experiences of people on the ground, not partisan pressure.

Ultimately, my work is guided by a simple truth: lasting peace requires justice, accountability, and a commitment to the humanity of every person, Israeli and Palestinian alike. I will always defend the right to organize for those principles.

Do you support continued U.S. military aid to Israel or additional conditions related to that aid?

I support continued U.S. engagement and security cooperation with Israel, but I do not support unconditional military aid. When the United States provides billions in assistance, we have both a moral and a strategic obligation to ensure that aid is used in compliance with international humanitarian law, protects civilians, and does not contribute to further destabilization, occupation, or suffering.

Conditioning foreign military aid is not punitive; it is responsible governance. We condition aid to many countries, including Egypt, Pakistan, and others, to ensure alignment with core human-rights and security priorities. Israel should not be exempt from that standard. Conditions should focus on preventing civilian harm, ensuring humanitarian access, prohibiting the use of U.S. weapons in violations of human-rights law, and requiring transparency and monitoring mechanisms.

This moment is heartbreaking for Israelis and Palestinians alike. Israeli families deserve to live free from terrorism and violence. Palestinian families deserve to live free from occupation, displacement, and blockade. American policy must work to secure safety and dignity for both peoples, not entrench inequality or impunity.

As a Member of Congress, I will use my oversight authority to push for diplomacy, de-escalation, and accountability. I will support aid that advances peace, not aid that fuels cycles of trauma and retaliation. Our foreign policy should reflect our highest values: the protection of human life, justice for all communities, and a commitment to a political solution that ends suffering on both sides.

What is your view on the role of Congress in shaping U.S.-Israel relations?

Congress plays a crucial role in shaping U.S.–Israel policy, not as a rubber stamp, but as an accountable, transparent, and principled steward of American resources and values. Our responsibility includes oversight of military assistance, enforcement of human-rights conditions, and ensuring that U.S. actions contribute to long-term peace and stability rather than perpetuating conflict.

Congress must support diplomacy that protects Israeli and Palestinian civilians, upholds international law, and centers a political solution. That means using hearings, reporting requirements, and appropriations authority to demand clarity on how U.S. funds are used; challenging any policies that undermine prospects for peace; and expanding investments in humanitarian aid, civil-society partnerships, and conflict-prevention programs.

I also believe Congress must defend civil liberties here at home. U.S.–Israel debates often become a pretext for suppressing dissent, especially against young people, Muslim, Jewish, Arab, and Black communities engaged in political organizing. A healthy democracy requires that we uphold constitutional rights while engaging seriously with human-rights concerns abroad.

Ultimately, Congress' role is to advance a foreign policy that reflects the belief that all people, Israeli and Palestinian, deserve safety, freedom, and self-determination. That work demands honesty, moral courage, and a willingness to reject false binaries. Our North Star must always be a just and lasting peace.

Do you support the concept of a two-state solution whereby the Jewish State of Israel exists safely and securely alongside an independent Palestinian state that doesn't include Hamas or other terrorist organizations?

I support a two-state solution in which a secure, democratic Jewish State of Israel exists alongside a viable, independent Palestinian state, one free of Hamas and all terrorist organizations, with security guarantees for both peoples. But we must also be clear-eyed: a two-state solution is not simply a slogan. It requires conditions on the ground that make peace possible, and currently, those conditions are under profound strain.

Settlement expansion, displacement, and the erosion of democratic norms undermine Palestinian sovereignty and Israeli security alike. Meanwhile, Palestinian political fragmentation and the destructive role of Hamas create profound obstacles to peace. That is why the United States has a responsibility to use diplomacy, aid conditions, and multilateral partnerships to protect human rights, halt actions that foreclose a political resolution, and empower the civil-society actors in both communities working for peace.

I oppose efforts to impose collective punishment, restrict humanitarian aid, or deny civilians their basic rights. Likewise, I condemn attacks on Israeli civilians and reject any ideology that denies the Jewish people's right to safety or self-determination. These principles must be held together, not selectively deployed.

A true two-state solution demands international pressure, regional cooperation, and meaningful changes on the ground, not just rhetorical commitments. As a Member of Congress, I will work to ensure U.S. policy

aligns with human dignity, ending cycles of violence and creating the conditions for a peace that is lived, not theorized.

Have you been to Israel? If yes, when and with whom? If no, would you be interested in visiting?

Yes, I traveled to Israel for 14 days in 2019 as part of a delegation organized by the Israeli Consulate in Chicago.

Health & Human Services

Illinois Medicaid is the largest health insurer in the state, serving approximately 3.4 million people. The recent changes in H.R. 1 will force Illinois to make difficult funding decisions. What steps would you take to prevent reductions in care that could come from states' tightening eligibility requirements, cutting provider reimbursement levels and/or reducing access to medical care, especially for children, the economically disadvantaged, older adults and people with disabilities?

Medicaid is the lifeline of our health-care system, covering 3.4 million Illinoisans, including children, older adults, people with disabilities, and families who simply cannot afford private insurance. The recent changes in H.R. 1 threaten to push states into cruel choices: cutting eligibility, lowering provider reimbursement, and reducing access to essential care. These are not budget lines; they are people's lives.

In Congress, I will fight to protect and expand Medicaid funding so Illinois is not forced to balance its budget on the backs of our most vulnerable residents. That includes increasing federal matching rates during economic instability, protecting continuous coverage for children, restoring postpartum coverage, and prohibiting administrative barriers that strip people of care due to paperwork, not need.

I will also champion investments in community health centers, maternal health, disability services, behavioral health, and home- and community-based supports that keep people safe and independent. Slashing reimbursements would devastate hospitals and clinics that already operate on razor-thin margins, especially in Black, Brown, and rural communities. We cannot allow that.

Health care is a human right. Our federal policy must meet this moment with equity, compassion, and the resources necessary to ensure every Illinoisan can see a doctor, afford medicine, give birth safely, and age with dignity.

If elected, will you support and co-sponsor the SSI (Supplemental Security Income) Savings Penalty Elimination Act, which would raise the asset limit for individuals on SSI from \$2,000 to \$10,000 for individuals, and from \$3,000 to \$20,000 for couples?

Yes, I will support and co-sponsor the SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act, and my support is rooted in a simple truth: poverty is a policy choice. For decades, outdated SSI asset limits have forced people with disabilities and older adults to live one emergency away from crisis. These limits, unchanged since 1989, punish people for saving more than \$2,000, trapping them in cycles of poverty and undermining their stability, autonomy, and dignity.

Raising the asset limits to \$10,000 for individuals and \$20,000 for couples is long overdue. It would allow people on SSI to save for medical equipment, accessible housing, a reliable vehicle, or an unexpected emergency without fear of losing the income that keeps them afloat. It would strengthen family stability by allowing caregivers and disabled people to plan for their futures. And it would reduce reliance on emergency services by enabling people to meet their basic needs.

Economic justice demands that we dismantle policies designed to keep people poor. Supporting this bill is part of that commitment. But it cannot be the end point, we must also expand SSI benefits, streamline enrollment, end punitive marriage penalties, and ensure that people with disabilities have full access to the economic opportunity they deserve.

Stability should not be a luxury reserved for the wealthy. This bill moves us closer to an economy rooted in fairness, where everyone has the ability to save, plan, and live with dignity.

Do you support increasing funding for Home and Community-Based Services, a component of Medicaid that helps people with disabilities and older adults live and thrive in the setting of their choice

and avoid institutional care?

I strongly support increasing funding for Home and Community-Based Services, because HCBS reflects our highest values: dignity, autonomy, and the right to live in the setting of one's choice. For too long, our nation has underinvested in the workforce and infrastructure that make independent living possible for older adults and people with disabilities. This chronic underfunding has left families on years-long waitlists, workers underpaid and undervalued, and individuals forced into institutional care they do not want and do not need.

Expanding HCBS funding allows people to receive the daily support they rely on, bathing, cooking, mobility assistance, and medication management, while remaining connected to their communities, their families, and their lives. It creates stable, quality jobs for home-care workers, who are disproportionately women of color and immigrant women. And it saves money in the long run by reducing costly institutionalization and hospitalizations.

In Congress, I will champion legislation to expand HCBS through Medicaid, raise wages and training standards for direct-care workers, and fund respite care for unpaid family caregivers. We must also ensure states have the flexibility and resources to reduce waitlists and expand culturally competent, disability-led service models.

Everyone deserves the freedom to age in place, to choose their home, and to receive care rooted in dignity, not bureaucracy. HCBS is not an optional add-on to our health-care system; it is a civil rights issue and a moral imperative.

What are your views on the mandatory work requirements included in H.R. 1 to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, which is relied upon by nearly 2 million Illinoisans?

Mandatory work requirements for SNAP are ineffective, punitive, and disconnected from the realities of poverty. Nearly 2 million Illinoisans rely on SNAP to feed their families, including children, seniors, and people with disabilities. Imposing stricter work requirements does nothing to create jobs, but it does take food off the tables of those who need it most.

Poverty is not a result of personal failure; it is the direct outcome of policy choices. Work requirements ignore barriers like lack of child care, unpredictable scheduling, disabilities that go undiagnosed, lack of transportation, and low-wage jobs that fail to provide stable hours. Instead of supporting people toward stability, these rules kick people off benefits because of paperwork failures and administrative red tape, not because they don't want to work.

As a Member of Congress, I will fight to eliminate punitive work requirements and replace them with real investments in economic mobility: affordable child care, paid leave, job training tied to actual jobs, public transportation, and living wages. I will also defend SNAP from budget cuts and ensure benefits reflect the true cost of food across Illinois.

Food is a basic human right. No family should go hungry because of political theater or ideological punishment. Our policies should nourish people, not starve them.

What steps do you believe need to be undertaken to reduce gun violence?

Gun violence is a national trauma, one we feel in Chicago every day. It is not inevitable; it is the predictable outcome of policy failure. Addressing gun violence requires a holistic, public-health approach that centers prevention, community investment, and accountability.

I support universal background checks, closing loopholes for private sales and ghost guns, reinstating the assault weapons ban, limiting high-capacity magazines, and implementing federal red-flag laws with due-process protections. These measures save lives, they are supported by evidence, and by the vast majority of Americans.

But gun violence is not only a matter of firearm regulation. It is intertwined with poverty, housing instability, disinvestment, and the trauma communities carry. That is why I will champion major federal investments in community violence intervention programs, youth employment, mental-health care, safe routes to school, and trauma-informed responses. I will also support federal funding to address the root causes that make violence more likely: segregation, environmental neglect, and lack of economic

opportunity.

We must treat gun violence not as a talking point but as a solvable crisis. Every community, Black, Brown, rural, suburban, deserves to feel safe. Solutions must be comprehensive, compassionate, and centered on the communities most affected.

Would you have voted to pass the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2026 the law that ended the 2025 government shutdown? Please explain your response.

I would not have supported the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2026 as written. Ending a government shutdown is essential; working families, federal workers, small businesses, and vulnerable communities should never be held hostage to political brinkmanship. But a vote to reopen the government cannot come at the expense of our most marginalized neighbors or at the price of codifying harmful policies that deepen inequity. The bill that came before Congress did not simply reopen the government; it advanced austerity measures, expanded punitive work requirements, and locked in funding cuts that disproportionately harm low-income families, older adults, disabled people, and immigrant communities. It continued to invest in militarism while underinvesting in housing, healthcare, education, and the social safety net. A continuing resolution should be a bridge to dignity, not a vehicle for compounding harm.

My moral compass is always the community, the workers who went without pay, the families struggling to afford groceries, the seniors and children who rely on safety-net services. They deserved a clean funding bill free of poison pills and punitive provisions. They deserved a government willing to meet their needs, not one that reopens the doors while closing pathways to opportunity.

So yes, I would have voted no, not because I oppose reopening government, but because I refuse to rubber-stamp legislation that forces working families to shoulder the burden of dysfunction they did not create. Our communities deserve better than the false choice between austerity and shutdowns. They deserve a government that invests in them.

Refugee Services

Do you support the recent Presidential Determination that cut new refugee arrivals from 125,000 to approximately 7,500, with most of the 7,500 slots being held open for White Afrikaners?

I do not support the recent Presidential Determination that slashed refugee arrivals to approximately 7,500 and explicitly prioritized white Afrikaners. This decision is discriminatory, harmful, and fundamentally inconsistent with our nation's moral and humanitarian obligations. The United States should be a beacon for those fleeing war, persecution, and violence, not a country that cherry-picks who is deserving of refuge based on race or geopolitics.

Cutting admissions to a historic low abandons families in crisis and destabilizes global humanitarian systems. It also inflicts real harm at home: refugee resettlement agencies in Illinois and across the country have had their funding slashed and their capacity stretched thin. These agencies are still supporting tens of thousands of refugees who arrived legally in the past five to ten years, yet they are being asked to do more with less.

In Congress, I will fight to restore a robust, non-discriminatory refugee admissions ceiling rooted in international law and humanitarian need. I will champion increased funding for Reception and Placement services, case management, English-language programs, employment assistance, and trauma-informed care. I will also push for multi-year, stable funding so agencies can plan, hire, and build the infrastructure necessary to welcome families with dignity.

Our refugee system is a lifeline and a reflection of our values. We must reject policies that divide people into the "worthy" and "unworthy" and instead embrace an approach grounded in humanity and justice.

Despite the cut to new refugee arrivals, refugee support agencies are still supporting tens of thousands of refugees who were lawfully admitted to the United States over the past 5-10 years. What would you do to alleviate the burden that has been placed on refugee support agencies from funding cuts and recissions as well as from the cut to new arrivals?

Refugee resettlement agencies are the backbone of our humanitarian infrastructure. Even as new arrivals

have been slashed to historic lows, these agencies are still responsible for supporting tens of thousands of refugees who came legally in recent years, families navigating housing, jobs, education, language acquisition, and trauma. Yet they have faced devastating funding cuts, rescissions, and administrative burdens that threaten their survival.

In Congress, I will fight for emergency supplemental funding to stabilize these agencies and restore their long-term capacity. That includes increasing funding for Reception and Placement (R&P), expanding case-management grants, and investing in culturally competent mental-health services. I will also push for flexible, multi-year funding structures that allow agencies to hire and retain staff instead of constantly bracing for budget cuts.

Additionally, I support community sponsorship and public-private partnerships that expand capacity while protecting the central role of professional resettlement organizations. And I will use congressional oversight authority to ensure federal agencies coordinate effectively with state and local partners, rather than offloading responsibilities without resources.

Welcoming refugees is not charity; it is a policy choice rooted in justice, dignity, and global responsibility. Strengthening resettlement agencies ensures that families fleeing persecution can rebuild their lives safely, contribute to our communities, and thrive.

Candidate Priorities

What are some of the key priorities you would like to pursue in Congress?

My priorities in Congress are rooted in justice, equity, and the lived experience of the communities I seek to represent.

Health care as a human right: Expand Medicaid, lower drug costs, invest in maternal health, protect disability rights, and ensure every person has access to physical and mental health care.

Economic justice: Raise wages, strengthen labor protections, make child care affordable, expand affordable housing, and cancel burdensome student debt.

Gun violence prevention: Treat gun violence as a public-health crisis with both regulation and deep community investment.

Immigrant and refugee justice: Restore humane asylum processes, rebuild the refugee program, protect DREAMers, and defend due process.

Climate justice: Create green jobs, clean up environmental racism, modernize infrastructure, and transition to a sustainable, just energy future.

Democracy and civil rights: Protect voting rights, end partisan gerrymandering, and get big money out of politics.

Public safety: Expand community-based safety strategies, violence intervention programs, and the social infrastructure that keeps people safe.

My North Star is always the same: policies that honor people's dignity, expand opportunity, and center the voices of those too often left out of the conversation.

Any additional information you would like to share with us?

I am running for Congress because our communities deserve representation that is bold, honest, and deeply rooted in the lived experiences of everyday people. My candidacy is built on listening to organizers, survivors, caregivers, faith leaders, young people, and those directly impacted by the policies Congress debates from a distance. I believe in co-governing: crafting policy hand-in-hand with the communities most affected.

I bring a commitment to intersectional justice, informed by years of work in gun violence prevention, community organizing, and movement-building. I believe in governing with compassion and clarity, naming structural injustices while fighting for transformative solutions.

I am not beholden to special interests. My allegiance is to the people: working families, immigrants, survivors, seniors, young people, and everyone who has been told to wait their turn. I am running to ensure our government reflects our highest values, equity, dignity, and justice for all.

Melissa Conyears-Ervin

Security

The federal Nonprofit Security Grant Program is currently funded at \$274.5 million. Do you support increasing it to \$360 million or at least maintaining its current funding level?

Yes. I strongly support increasing the Nonprofit Security Grant Program to at least \$360 million and ensuring that synagogues, JCCs, day schools, and other vulnerable institutions have the resources they need to protect their communities. In this time of rising antisemitism and threats to houses of worship of all kinds, security is a basic prerequisite for the freedom to pray, learn, and gather. That commitment to safety and dignity for every community is exactly what I would fight for in Washington.

Antisemitism

Antisemitism is surging across the United States. What will you do to help combat antisemitism and bring different communities together?

As a Black woman who grew up on Chicago's West Side and stood with congregations like Anshe Emet when others in city leadership were silent after October 7, I've seen how much it matters to show up for the Jewish community in moments of fear. I will support robust funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, the Never Again Education Act, and the National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, and use my platform to call out antisemitism clearly wherever it appears. I also want to deepen Black-Jewish interfaith partnerships around safety and economic opportunity, because shared work is what holds when crisis comes.

Antisemitism is growing at both ends of the political spectrum. How do you plan to address antisemitism on both sides of the aisle.

I've spoke out when some Democrats downplayed the horror of October 7 or failed to stand with their Jewish constituents, and I will bring that same honesty to my own party in Washington. I will oppose antisemitism from the far right in the form of white supremacy and conspiracy theories, and from the far left when demonization of Israel and support for BDS cross the line into hatred of Jews. I will work with anyone serious about security funding, education, and civil-rights enforcement and challenge anyone, Democrat or Republican, who excuses antisemitism because it comes from "their side."

Israel

Do you support efforts to boycott, divest from, or sanction Israel, Israeli goods, company's services, academics, academic institutions, and cultural activities? Relatedly, do you support boycotting, divesting from or sanctioning U.S. or other companies that do business in or with Israel?

No. I oppose BDS and other efforts to boycott, divest from, or sanction Israel, Israeli institutions, or companies that do business with Israel. As Treasurer and now as a candidate for Congress, I believe in using economic power to build safe, prosperous, shared communities – not to isolate the world's only Jewish state. I would bring that same approach to Congress.

Do you support continued U.S. military aid to Israel or additional conditions related to that aid?

I strongly support continued, robust U.S. military aid to Israel, including the full implementation of the Obama-era MOU and supplemental packages like those backed by President Biden. Systems like Iron Dome, Iron Beam, David's Sling, and Arrow save lives and advance U.S. security interests as well as Israel's. I do not support new political conditions on this aid that would weaken Israel's ability to defend itself.

What is your view on the role of Congress in shaping U.S.-Israel relations?

Congress has a critical role in keeping the U.S. - Israel relationship strong and rooted in shared democratic

values. That means safeguarding security and economic assistance, advancing regional peace initiatives, and speaking out when others try to turn Israel into a political wedge. After seeing some Chicago leaders refuse to show up for the Jewish community after October 7, I'm running to be the kind of member of Congress who steps up, not back, in those moments.

Do you support the concept of a two-state solution whereby the Jewish State of Israel exists safely and securely alongside an independent Palestinian state that doesn't include Hamas or other terrorist organizations?

Yes. I believe in the possibility of a two-state solution where Israel remains a secure, Jewish democratic state and any future Palestinian state is fully demilitarized, governed by leaders chosen in free and fair elections, and completely free of Hamas, Islamic Jihad, or any terrorist organization. That also means ending Palestinian Authority payments that incentivize terrorism and instead building shared economic opportunity so both peoples can live in safety and dignity. That's the framework I would support and advance in Congress.

Have you been to Israel? If yes, when and with whom? If no, would you be interested in visiting?

Yes. I was fortunate enough to recently travel on an educational trip to Israel with community and policy leaders to see firsthand the security, political, and economic realities on the ground. That experience, combined with my work as Chicago's Treasurer and as a State Representative, deepened my commitment to a strong U.S. - Israel relationship and to working for a future where Israelis and Palestinians can live in safety and peace.

Health & Human Services

Illinois Medicaid is the largest health insurer in the state, serving approximately 3.4 million people. The recent changes in H.R. 1 will force Illinois to make difficult funding decisions. What steps would you take to prevent reductions in care that could come from states' tightening eligibility requirements, cutting provider reimbursement levels and/or reducing access to medical care, especially for children, the economically disadvantaged, older adults and people with disabilities?

As a former State Representative and now Chicago's Treasurer, I've seen up close how Medicaid is the backbone of care for children, low-income families, seniors, and people with disabilities – including in my own family as a caregiver to my disabled sister. I would oppose any version of H.R. 1 or related proposals that cap or block-grant Medicaid, shift unreasonable costs to Illinois, or restrict access.

Instead, I support strengthening the federal match, protecting continuous coverage for kids and vulnerable adults, and investing in providers so people can actually get care where they live. Those are the values and priorities I would bring to this fight in Washington.

If elected, will you support and co-sponsor the SSI (Supplemental Security Income) Savings Penalty Elimination Act, which would raise the asset limit for individuals on SSI from \$2,000 to \$10,000 for individuals, and from \$3,000 to \$20,000 for couples?

Yes. I would support and co-sponsor the SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act because current asset limits trap people with disabilities in permanent poverty and punish them for doing exactly what I've spent my career teaching – saving and building a small cushion for emergencies.

As a caregiver to my disabled sister and as Chicago's Treasurer, I've seen how even a few thousand dollars can be the difference between stability and crisis. Fixing this is basic fairness, and it's the kind of common-sense change I would champion in Congress.

Do you support increasing funding for Home and Community-Based Services, a component of Medicaid that helps people with disabilities and older adults live and thrive in the setting of their choice and avoid institutional care?

Yes, I strongly support increasing funding for Home and Community-Based Services so people with disabilities and older adults can live with dignity in their homes and communities instead of being forced into institutional care.

As someone who has seen in my own family how essential community-based supports are, I know these services keep people safer, healthier, and more connected while also saving taxpayer dollars over time. In Congress, I'll fight to increase federal HCBS funding and strengthen Medicaid so more people can choose to live at home, not in institutions.

What are your views on the mandatory work requirements included in H.R. 1 to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, which is relied upon by nearly 2 million Illinoisans?

I oppose the mandatory work requirements in H.R. 1, which would make it harder for nearly 2 million Illinoisans to keep food on the table. The evidence shows these policies don't create better jobs; they just push people off SNAP and deepen poverty and hunger.

In Congress, I'll oppose punitive work requirements for SNAP and instead support policies that raise wages, expand job training, and keep families fed while they work or search for work.

What steps do you believe need to be undertaken to reduce gun violence?

My husband and I are raising my daughter on the West Side of Chicago, where I grew up. In the neighborhoods I'm from, gun violence is a reality that has taken far too many of our loved ones.

We need universal background checks, to get weapons of war off our streets, and to stop the flow of illegal guns and straw purchases. We also have to invest in jobs, mental health, and youth programs in the neighborhoods most impacted. That's the safety-and-opportunity approach I'd fight for in Congress.

Would you have voted to pass the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2026 the law that ended the 2025 government shutdown? Please explain your response.

No. I could not support a deal that reopened the government while effectively cutting Affordable Care Act support by allowing enhanced ACA subsidies to expire, driving up premiums and risking coverage losses for working families in IL-7.

I would have held out for an agreement that protects both federal services – like SNAP benefits – and affordable health care, and I'm not going to vote for a bill that forces my constituents to pay more for less care.

Refugee Services

Do you support the recent Presidential Determination that cut new refugee arrivals from 125,000 to approximately 7,500, with most of the 7,500 slots being held open for White Afrikaners?

No. Slashing the cap and effectively prioritizing one relatively privileged group over the world's most vulnerable refugees is the opposite of the values I was raised with and the diversity I hope to represent in this district. In Congress, I would fight to restore a robust, non-discriminatory refugee admissions program.

Despite the cut to new refugee arrivals, refugee support agencies are still supporting tens of thousands of refugees who were lawfully admitted to the United States over the past 5-10 years. What would you do to alleviate the burden that has been placed on refugee support agencies from funding cuts and recessions as well as from the cut to new arrivals?

In Chicago, I've seen resettlement agencies stretched thin trying to help families with housing, jobs, and language classes even as federal dollars are pulled back. I would work to restore and increase funding for the Office of Refugee Resettlement, provide more flexible multi-year grants, and better link these agencies with schools, health systems, and employers so they're not carrying this burden alone.

Candidate Priorities

What are some of the key priorities you would like to pursue in Congress?

1. Building sustainable wealth in working class Black communities through cutting costs,

homeownership, entrepreneurship, and financial empowerment.

2. Expanding healthcare access, strengthening behavioral health services, and protecting Medicaid and Medicare.

3. Tackling gun violence, investing in prevention, and holding systems accountable so every neighborhood can be safe and strong.

Thomas Fisher

Security

The federal Nonprofit Security Grant Program is currently funded at \$274.5 million. Do you support increasing it to \$360 million or at least maintaining its current funding level?

I do support maintaining the current funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program. This program is a tool for protecting nonprofits that face heightened risk of attack—from synagogues, mosques, and churches to JCCs, social service providers, and nonprofit medical and healthcare facilities. Importantly, NSGP is open to a broad range of 501(c)(3) organizations helping them strengthen their facilities, improve security, and protect staff and patients at a time of rising hate motivated violence.

As someone who's spent his life in healthcare settings, I've seen violence directed at doctors and nurses.

After a patient was shot in the waiting room by a bullet fired in the street came through the window, we've hardened our glass, reinforced doors and added metal detectors. However our security is unobtrusive to remain welcoming to our community institution. Our safety will not come from hardening our facility, it depends on strong social services, mental health support and community led initiatives. I support expanding the goal of SNGP to address the root causes of violence that include strengthening communities and protecting civil liberties.

Security funding must never become a vehicle for political litmus tests or for pressuring nonprofits to compromise their values. No organization should be forced to cooperate with ICE, give up constitutionally protected protest rights, or accept any conditions that undermine civil liberties in order to stay safe.

We can protect communities targeted by extremist violence and interpersonal violence while also upholding free expression and civil rights. Strengthening NSGP, expanding its targets and ensuring it remains accessible, fair, and free of coercive conditions—is part of that work.

Antisemitism

Antisemitism is surging across the United States. What will you do to help combat antisemitism and bring different communities together?

I will confront antisemitism wherever it appears. Combating antisemitism requires calling out the most dangerous actors, far right, white nationalism, Christian nationalism. It also means strengthening the ties between our communities. In Chicago, I have worked alongside Jewish, Black, Muslim, and immigrant leaders who know that our safety is linked, and that none of us can face rising extremism alone. I will support security funding for targeted institutions and use my platform to bring communities together before misinformation and fear drive us apart.

I believe deeply in building a multiracial, multi-faith democracy where everyone can live without fear. That means standing with Jewish communities against antisemitism. This is about protecting people's lives, honoring our shared humanity, and building the coalitions we need to confront hate.

Antisemitism is growing at both ends of the political spectrum. How do you plan to address antisemitism on both sides of the aisle.

Antisemitism must be confronted wherever it appears. The data shows that the most lethal and coordinated antisemitic movements have emerged from the far right, white nationalism, Christian nationalism, and conspiracy driven politics that target Jews and other minorities. Those forces have produced synagogue shootings, threats to Jewish institutions, and a broader climate of fear. There remains opportunity to engage rising antisemitism on the far left which cannot be ignored or taken for granted. Wherever it comes from – hate must always be confronted. In Congress, I will challenge antisemitism across the spectrum, while being clear eyed on the data that reveals the primary organized threats. I will work with Jewish, Black, Muslim, Arab, and other communities to build a shared, principled front against all forms of hate.

Israel

Do you support efforts to boycott, divest from, or sanction Israel, Israeli goods, company's services, academics, academic institutions, and cultural activities? Relatedly, do you support boycotting, divesting from or sanctioning U.S. or other companies that do business in or with Israel?

I support the right of peaceful political expression protected by the First Amendment that can include boycotts, divestment, and sanctions. I am against protesting an American or Israeli company simply because they are American or Israeli, or because they do business in Israel or America. That said, I support the long American tradition of peacefully protesting companies, whether American or international, if they are directly complicit in violations of human rights, American or international law. This crosses a line if companies are protested simply for their identity or affiliation. I am against protests that aim to erase Israel's existence or deny Jewish self-determination, even as I insist that U.S. policy and corporate behavior align with human rights, America, and international law. Nonviolent demonstrations have a long history in movements for justice, from the civil rights movement to campaigns against apartheid – Americans have always peacefully made their voices heard.

Do you support continued U.S. military aid to Israel or additional conditions related to that aid?

I believe continued U.S. security assistance must align with U.S. and international laws. I have spent my life treating people in crisis, healing the sick and injured. I know violence must be condemned, that we all have a shared humanity and all want to flourish. In Congress, I would push to guide U.S. policy toward de-escalation, diplomacy, and accountability. That includes rigorous enforcement of existing U.S. laws governing arms transfers and human rights. America should help create the conditions for a just peace and enduring security for both Israelis and Palestinians.

What is your view on the role of Congress in shaping U.S.-Israel relations?

Congress has a responsibility to ensure that U.S.–Israel relations advance peace, human rights, and long term security for both Israelis and Palestinians. That is a serious charge that requires leadership, partnership, oversight and making sure our policies do not undermine prospects for a political solution.

Congress must commit to Israel's security and sovereignty while also ensuring Palestinian rights, and self-determination. We should promote diplomatic initiatives, oppose annexation and settlement expansion, defend the rights of civilians, and ensure that U.S. engagement helps bring us closer to a just peace.

Do you support the concept of a two-state solution whereby the Jewish State of Israel exists safely and securely alongside an independent Palestinian state that doesn't include Hamas or other terrorist organizations?

I do. I support a political resolution that guarantees equal rights, safety, and self-determination for both Israelis and Palestinians. A two-state solution where Israel is secure and sovereign and Palestinians have an independent, viable state is one possible path to that goal. What matters most to me are the core principles: an end to occupation, full civil and political rights, security for civilians on both sides, and no role for terrorist organizations like Hamas in governance.

I am open to any framework that the parties themselves negotiate and that meets these standards of equality, safety, and dignity. The U.S. role should be to support a rights based, negotiated outcome instead of entrenching a status quo that denies Palestinians their basic freedoms and leaves Israelis living with perpetual insecurity.

Have you been to Israel? If yes, when and with whom? If no, would you be interested in visiting?

I have not yet visited Israel. I would welcome the opportunity to visit the region, including both Israel and Palestinian communities, to listen and learn directly from people on the ground, Israeli Jews, Palestinian citizens of Israel, Palestinians in the occupied territories, peace activists, and those working on human rights and reconciliation. Any policymaker shaping U.S. policy in this area should be committed to understanding the lived realities of people on all sides of the conflict, and I would approach such a visit in that spirit.

Health & Human Services

Illinois Medicaid is the largest health insurer in the state, serving approximately 3.4 million people. The recent changes in H.R. 1 will force Illinois to make difficult funding decisions. What steps would you take to prevent reductions in care that could come from states' tightening eligibility requirements, cutting provider reimbursement levels and/or reducing access to medical care, especially for children, the economically disadvantaged, older adults and people with disabilities?

In my 24 years in the emergency department I've seen what happens when Medicaid is squeezed. Children show up having missed vaccine appointments, adults come in with untreated chronic illnesses, people with disabilities lose the support that keeps them safe at home, and hospitals that anchor whole neighborhoods start to wobble. Cutting eligibility or reimbursement doesn't solve problems, it just shifts costs to people and shortens lives.

In Congress, I would work to pair strong protections with new tools and funding. First, I will oppose any effort to ratchet down eligibility or impose barriers like work requirements, churn inducing red tape, or penalties when people work more hours, get married, or move in with family. People shouldn't lose their doctor because they took a promotion or chose to share a home. I will push for multi-year continuous eligibility for children and longer continuous coverage options for adults, so families aren't falling on and off the rolls every few months. And I will fight to raise and stabilize provider reimbursement that aligns high value care in primary care and mental health, bolstering safety net providers, so that having a Medicaid card actually means you can get in to see someone.

Second, I want to use the federal tools we already have much more creatively. The recent reconciliation law set up a \$50 billion rural health transformation fund to help offset deep Medicaid cuts and keep rural hospitals afloat. Already discretion exists in the law to help bolster our safety net, we must use it. Moving forward I would champion an "Urban Safety Net and Health Equity Fund" built on similar lines, targeted dollars to protect community hospitals, FQHCs, and mental health providers in places like the West Side and South Side of Chicago, where Medicaid is the backbone of care. States would apply for these funds only if they commit to maintaining eligibility and access in high need communities.

Finally, I believe Section 1115 waivers should be used to build up care. I will support waivers that let Illinois and other states continue to add services—like supportive housing, mobile crisis teams, peer support, and expanded Home and Community-Based Services for people with disabilities—while explicitly prohibiting waivers that lock people out of coverage or cap enrollment. Used the right way, 1115 waivers can help us invest in the social and community supports that keep people healthy and out of the ER. My bottom line is simple: Medicaid is the largest insurer in Illinois because it serves the people with the greatest need. My job in Congress will be to make sure we protect that lifeline and modernize it so that coverage is stable, care is accessible, and progress is never punished.

If elected, will you support and co-sponsor the SSI (Supplemental Security Income) Savings Penalty Elimination Act, which would raise the asset limit for individuals on SSI from \$2,000 to \$10,000 for individuals, and from \$3,000 to \$20,000 for couples?

Yes, I will support and co-sponsor the SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act. The current limits are not just outdated, they are harmful. SSI forces millions of disabled people to live far below the poverty line, and no one can build a stable life on roughly \$700 a month. The asset limits punish people for saving a little money, preparing for emergencies, or forming households with the people they love. That is not dignity, and it is not how a modern social safety net should function.

In the emergency room, I see the consequences of these rules every day. People skip medication, ration food, or delay care because one unexpected expense can jeopardize both their health and their benefits. Programs that were meant to promote independence often end up trapping people in deeper poverty, and too often I see the results when they arrive in the ER after things have spiraled.

Raising the asset limits is an important first step, but SSI needs a full modernization. We should raise benefit levels above the poverty line, eliminate punitive asset rules, update income rules so people can work without risking their coverage, and hire enough staff to end the years long delays in applications and appeals. SSI should offer people a foundation they can build on, not a ceiling they can never rise above.

I will fight for an SSI system that reflects dignity, independence, and the real conditions of people's lives,

not outdated assumptions that keep people poor.

Do you support increasing funding for Home and Community-Based Services, a component of Medicaid that helps people with disabilities and older adults live and thrive in the setting of their choice and avoid institutional care?

Yes, I strongly support increasing funding for Home and Community-Based Services. Every week in the emergency room, I care for older adults and people with disabilities whose health, stability and independence depend on whether they can receive the support they need at home. HCBS is what allows people to stay connected to their communities and maintain control over their daily lives. The alternative is too often institutional care that is more expensive, more isolating, and clinically worse for people in the long run.

HCBS is also a civil rights issue. For decades, people with disabilities have fought for the right to live in the least restrictive setting possible. Underfunding HCBS violates that principle and pushes people into institutions not because they need the care those institutions provide, but because the federal government refuses to invest in the supports that make real independence possible. Increased HCBS funding would help eliminate waiting lists, expand access to personal assistance services, strengthen the workforce that delivers this care, and prevent family caregivers from having to shoulder impossible burdens.

Expanding HCBS improves quality of life, reduces costs, and honors people's right to live where they choose. It is both a smart investment and a moral one, and I will work to make it a central part of our healthcare system.

What are your views on the mandatory work requirements included in H.R. 1 to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, which is relied upon by nearly 2 million Illinoisans?

I oppose mandatory work requirements for SNAP. These rules do not reduce poverty, they increase hunger. In the ER, I see the impact of food insecurity on everything from diabetes to mental health to childhood development. When families lose access to nutrition assistance, their health deteriorates, and destabilises their entire lives. It is cruel and counterproductive to layer work requirements on top of a program that is already highly targeted, deeply effective and high value.

Mandatory work requirements also fail to understand the realities of people's lives. Most SNAP recipients are children, older adults, or people with disabilities. Many others work in jobs with unstable hours, unreliable schedules, or seasonal gaps in income. Punishing people for circumstances beyond their control does nothing to help them find steady employment. It simply takes food off their tables.

SNAP is one of the most successful anti-poverty programs in the country. It lifts millions of people out of hunger, stabilizes families during hard times, and supports local economies. The better path is to strengthen SNAP, expand access, and pair it with policies that create good jobs and raise wages, not policies that stigmatize and punish people who are struggling.

I will fight to protect and expand SNAP, and to build a system that recognizes food as a basic human need, not a reward to be earned through bureaucratic hurdles.

What steps do you believe need to be undertaken to reduce gun violence?

Gun violence is a public health crisis I have treated firsthand. Working in the state's busiest trauma center I have cared for patients whose futures were rewritten in an instant, and I have seen the long term trauma these shootings inflict on families and communities. We need universal background checks, a ban on assault weapons and high capacity magazines, and strong red flag protections. I support the RIFL Act, which creates a national framework and the resources states need to fund community violence interventions and implement risk protection orders that allow families and law enforcement to act when someone is in crisis and at risk of harming themselves or others.

We have to confront the root causes that send people into my emergency department in the first place. This means addressing poverty, unstable housing, disinvestment, and a lack of opportunity. It means funding research, supporting schools and youth programs, expanding re-entry and economic pathways, and treating violence as the public health emergency it is. We also need to invest in preventative strategies that identify people at risk of being hurt and have been proven to work. community based violence

interruption programs, trauma recovery services, mental health supports, and cognitive behavioral therapy programs reduce violence, save lives and strengthen neighborhoods .

After more than two decades in the ER, I know real safety comes from prevention, stability, and opportunity, not from punishment and neglect. If we commit to the full range of evidence based solutions we already know work, we can save lives and build safer communities across Chicago and the country.

Would you have voted to pass the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2026 the law that ended the 2025 government shutdown? Please explain your response.

No, I would not have voted for the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2026 until there was a solid, enforceable deal to extend the ACA subsidies that keep health care affordable for working families.

In my Chicago Tribune op-ed, I argued that this shutdown was never just about keeping the lights on in Washington. It was about whether millions of people would see their premiums spike overnight if enhanced ACA subsidies were allowed to expire. I see what that looks like in the emergency room: patients stretching insulin, skipping follow up visits, waiting until a small problem turns into a crisis because they can't afford coverage or care. Letting those subsidies lapse will even more people into that kind of danger.

That's why I said Democrats were right to use every bit of leverage they had, including the shutdown, to force Congress to confront the real stakes. A "clean" continuing resolution that simply reopened the government while leaving those subsidies on the chopping block would have been unacceptable. I would not have rewarded that kind of brinkmanship with my vote.

I would have held out until there was a clear, written agreement to extend the ACA subsidies so that people wouldn't be hit with unaffordable premiums. Only once that deal was nailed down would I support legislation to end the shutdown. Ending the standoff only matters if that fight protects people's health care. My obligation is to the patients who will pay the price, and that means using every tool available to keep their coverage within reach.

Refugee Services

Do you support the recent Presidential Determination that cut new refugee arrivals from 125,000 to approximately 7,500, with most of the 7,500 slots being held open for White Afrikaners?

No. I strongly oppose this decision. Cutting refugee admissions to the lowest level in modern history, and reserving most of those limited slots for a single favored group, is a rejection of the values that define this country. Refugee protection should never be driven by ideology or race. It should be driven by human need and by our commitments under international law.

In the emergency room, I care for people who came to this country seeking safety, stability, and the chance to rebuild their lives. They contribute to our communities, our workforce, they are our neighbors and colleagues. Turning away families fleeing war and persecution while opening the door to a narrow, politically chosen group sends a clear message about whose lives we value. That is unacceptable.

The United States should be leading the world in offering refuge to people in crisis, not abandoning that responsibility. This policy should be reversed, and we should restore refugee admissions to levels that reflect both our capacity and our conscience.

Despite the cut to new refugee arrivals, refugee support agencies are still supporting tens of thousands of refugees who were lawfully admitted to the United States over the past 5-10 years. What would you do to alleviate the burden that has been placed on refugee support agencies from funding cuts and rescissions as well as from the cut to new arrivals?

Refugee support agencies are being asked to do the impossible. Even as the federal government slashes new arrivals, these organizations are still caring for tens of thousands of refugees who came here lawfully in the past decade and who are trying to build stable, healthy lives. The funding cuts and rescissions have left them holding responsibilities without the resources needed to meet them.

When caseworkers are stretched thin, families struggle to find housing, navigate healthcare, or access mental health care after surviving trauma. When agencies cannot keep up, small problems become crises.

These organizations are doing heroic work, but heroism is not a substitute for a functional federal commitment.

In Congress, I will work to restore and expand refugee resettlement funding, and I will push for multi-year grants that allow agencies to plan responsibly instead of scrambling from one short-term cycle to the next. I will support stronger housing assistance, workforce development programs that help newcomers find meaningful employment, and robust medical and mental health support to address the trauma many refugees carry with them.

Chicago has a long history of welcoming refugees and immigrants, and our city is stronger because of it.

We need to give the organizations doing this work the resources, stability, and federal partnership they deserve, so they can continue helping families rebuild their lives with dignity and safety.

Candidate Priorities

What are some of the key priorities you would like to pursue in Congress?

For more than two decades, I've served as an emergency physician on Chicago's South Side, caring for people whose illnesses and injuries reflect system failure. In each shift I see the consequences of policy decisions; patients come to the ER not just with medical emergencies, but due to the fallout of unaffordable housing, byzantine health coverage, poverty wages, closed mental health clinics, and a healthcare system designed for administrators instead of people. I'm running because those stories cannot continue — and because I've spent my career working to change the structures that cause them. The top three issues in this race reflect what I see every day in my practice and in our neighborhoods: Fixing our broken healthcare system.

We must build a healthcare system that puts people first, no matter who we are. Everyone deserves quality, affordable healthcare — not a system that treats patients as inputs to a profit machine. I'll work to build universal coverage. In the meantime doctors should be able to serve their patients absent the paperwork and constraints that stand in the way. I'll fight to lower costs, expand access to preventive and mental health services, reduce administrative burdens that keep clinicians from caring for patients. We must continue to move toward a value based system that rewards better outcomes, not more billing.

Building an economy for working people.

Families are squeezed by the rising cost of groceries, skyrocketing utility bills, and everyday essentials. I see the toll of these impossible choices every day in my emergency department. No one should have to choose between keeping the lights on, putting food on the table, or filling a \$20 prescription. In Congress, I'll work to make sure working people drive our economy. That means investing in job creation, childcare, and small businesses; strengthening labor rights; raising minimum wage; tackling medical and student debt; and bringing resources to neighborhoods long excluded from growth.

Delivering safety through justice and investment.

In more than 20 years taking care of people in the ER, I've never gotten used to caring for young men and women torn apart by gunfire. We've all lost friends to gunfire but nothing haunts me more than telling mothers their child who left the house this morning won't come home. Safety starts long before someone ends up in an emergency room like mine. It starts with stable housing, strong schools, youth programs, and re-entry opportunities that keep people on track and prevent harm before it happens. It includes red flag laws and community violence interventions. After years caring for patients whose pain is rooted in the failures of our public safety policies, I know we need a system built on prevention, fairness, and accountability — not punishment and neglect.

This campaign is about turning the decades of insight I've gained caring for people in the moments that define their lives, where bodies reveal policy failure — into bold, practical solutions that make people's lives better. It's about moving from treating the symptoms to curing the disease.

Jason Friedman

Security

The federal Nonprofit Security Grant Program is currently funded at \$274.5 million. Do you support increasing it to \$360 million or at least maintaining its current funding level?

I strongly support increasing the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) to \$360 million. In an era of increased partisanship, political violence, and antisemitism, even apolitical, non-profit organizations like JUF are a target. If our non-profits cannot carry out their important missions in safety, the most vulnerable in our communities will suffer. In 2024, the federal government increased NSGP's budget by \$180 million to accommodate the growing need for hardened security, and Congress must act to raise the default annual appropriation as well. As a proud Jewish man, husband, and father, I know the importance of my community's safety firsthand.

Antisemitism

Antisemitism is surging across the United States. What will you do to help combat antisemitism and bring different communities together?

For me, this is not just about policy. It is personal. My daughter is a student at Barnard College of Columbia University, a campus that has become the flashpoint for antisemitism. She wears a Star of David necklace to honor her identity and heritage. But now, when she walks through campus, she often feels she has to tuck it into her shirt out of fear.

Illinois' 7th Congressional District is one of the most diverse in the nation. The hate that begins with Jews never ends there. I firmly believe that more interaction between our different cultures and communities will reduce bigotry. I plan on being a Congressman for everyone in the district, ensuring we bring together voices that are usually isolated from one another.

Antisemitism is growing at both ends of the political spectrum. How do you plan to address antisemitism on both sides of the aisle.

The rise of antisemitism in this country is undeniable. It is coming from the far right, the far left, and from institutions that should know better, forming a 'horseshoe.' As a member of Congress, I will support legislation to strengthen federal resources for combating antisemitism, including the Antisemitism Awareness Act that uses the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism as a tool: "Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews.

Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities." Further, I will fight to increase funding for campus security, enforcement of civil rights laws, and efforts to hold social media platforms accountable for allowing hate speech to flourish online.

Israel

Do you support efforts to boycott, divest from, or sanction Israel, Israeli goods, company's services, academics, academic institutions, and cultural activities? Relatedly, do you support boycotting, divesting from or sanctioning U.S. or other companies that do business in or with Israel?

The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement aims to delegitimize Israel and isolate it from the global community. While it claims to promote justice for Palestinians, its true purpose is to deny Israel's right to exist as a Jewish and democratic state. I strongly oppose BDS because it undermines the prospects for peace, fueling division and antisemitism.

Do you support continued U.S. military aid to Israel or additional conditions related to that aid?

I will oppose efforts to place conditions on military aid that weaken Israel's ability to defend itself. I will

also support supplemental aid requests as needed, which include critical resources for both defense and humanitarian needs. Just as importantly, I will work to strengthen regional diplomacy. The Abraham Accords have demonstrated that normalization between Israel and Arab nations is possible. These agreements must be expanded, and the United States must remain an active broker in advancing sustained cooperation across the region.

What is your view on the role of Congress in shaping U.S.-Israel relations?

Congress is responsible for setting the direction of US foreign policy, and must define our close relationship with Israel. As Congressman, I will lead in Congress and make sure that we use Congress's power to pursue peace instead of passing the buck to the executive branch.

Do you support the concept of a two-state solution whereby the Jewish State of Israel exists safely and securely alongside an independent Palestinian state that doesn't include Hamas or other terrorist organizations?

I support a negotiated two-state solution, with Israel and a future Palestinian state existing side by side in peace, security, and self-determination. However, this outcome is only possible when we reject terrorism and recognize the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish and democratic state. Peace is not achieved through slogans or symbolic gestures, but through responsible leadership, mutual recognition, and security for both peoples.

Have you been to Israel? If yes, when and with whom? If no, would you be interested in visiting?

I have been to Israel and the region over a dozen times and have led missions there through my leadership role at the Jewish United Fund, bringing diverse groups of Americans to experience the country firsthand. These journeys have deepened my understanding of Israel's security challenges and its vibrant democracy. They have also reinforced my belief in the importance of a strong U.S.-Israel relationship and the need to combat antisemitism wherever it arises.

Health & Human Services

Illinois Medicaid is the largest health insurer in the state, serving approximately 3.4 million people. The recent changes in H.R. 1 will force Illinois to make difficult funding decisions. What steps would you take to prevent reductions in care that could come from states' tightening eligibility requirements, cutting provider reimbursement levels and/or reducing access to medical care, especially for children, the economically disadvantaged, older adults and people with disabilities?

I will always fight to increase access to quality, affordable healthcare. H.R. 1 severs a critical lifeline for so many children, seniors, and people with disabilities. As Congressman, I will oppose any legislation that defunds Medicaid or shifts more of the burden of care to the states. I will always support plans that increase federal matching funds, create new grant programs, strengthen provider reimbursement, protect children eligibility, and support seniors and those with disabilities. I will further support efforts to break up for-profit medical monopolies that increase costs and close hospitals. No person should be left behind by a healthcare system that puts profit over our health.

If elected, will you support and co-sponsor the SSI (Supplemental Security Income) Savings Penalty Elimination Act, which would raise the asset limit for individuals on SSI from \$2,000 to

\$10,000 for individuals, and from \$3,000 to \$20,000 for couples?

I will strongly support and co-sponsor the Supplemental Security Income Savings Penalty Elimination Act. The outdated limits penalize saving, work, and marriage, reinforcing poverty rather than alleviating it. With the rising costs of emergencies, apartment deposits, and mortgage downpayments, we need to make sure that lower-income households are able to build well-earned savings. Beneficiaries need to be able to plan for the future and for their children.

Do you support increasing funding for Home and Community-Based Services, a component of Medicaid that helps people with disabilities and older adults live and thrive in the setting of their choice and avoid institutional care?

Yes, I support increasing funding for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS). Home and community care allows people with disabilities and older adults to live with dignity. Institutional care is not a cost-effective solution to the growing costs of an aging population.

What are your views on the mandatory work requirements included in H.R. 1 to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, which is relied upon by nearly 2 million Illinoisans?

Any and all new work requirements for social services are misguided and harmful. Instead of ensuring that people earn welfare, they slow down bureaucracy and make critical programs less accessible. The majority of SNAP recipients are children, seniors, and people with disabilities who are unable to work, so new work requirements would only make life harder for those who can least endure it. I only support programs that actually help people find employment, such as job training, low-cost childcare, and low-to-no-cost public transportation.

What steps do you believe need to be undertaken to reduce gun violence?

Despite tight gun control regulations and overall decline in gun violence in recent years, Illinois' 7th District still experiences high rates of gun violence due to its proximity to states with far looser gun control legislation. Further, gun violence in Chicago's neighborhoods is often fueled by cycles of trauma, economic instability, and lack of safe opportunities for young people.

Public safety policies must prioritize violence prevention and gun control in equal parts, ensuring that significant, impactful crime reduction is long lasting and far reaching. As Congressman for Illinois' 7th District, I will ensure that public safety remains a priority and violent crime mitigation is targeted with common sense, pragmatism, and empathy. We must expand red flag laws, make background checks universal, repeal laws that shield gun manufacturers, distributors, and dealers from liability, ban assault weapons and silencers, and adopt safe storage laws. I will also strongly support comprehensive, community-based mental health services, including trauma-informed care, youth engagement through schools, nonprofits, and local governments, and community policing to help heal decades of mistrust and strife between the police and the policed.

Would you have voted to pass the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2026 the law that ended the 2025 government shutdown? Please explain your response.

I would not have voted to pass the bill that ended the 2025 government shutdown. I would never compromise to decrease the benefits going to Illinois' 7th Congressional District. Republicans have repeatedly used government shutdowns to force unpopular policies through Congress, and we cannot allow that to become the norm. When the government closes, federal workers, welfare recipients, and small businesses suffer. Pain is never an acceptable bargaining chip.

Refugee Services

Do you support the recent Presidential Determination that cut new refugee arrivals from 125,000 to approximately 7,500, with most of the 7,500 slots being held open for White Afrikaners?

No, I vehemently oppose the decision to cut new refugee arrivals. Our refugee process must be rooted in empathy and prioritize humanitarian need, not racial preference. Refugees go through a rigorous vetting process before arriving in America and contribute immensely to our communities and economy.

Despite the cut to new refugee arrivals, refugee support agencies are still supporting tens of thousands of refugees who were lawfully admitted to the United States over the past 5-10 years. What would you do to alleviate the burden that has been placed on refugee support agencies from funding cuts and recessions as well as from the cut to new arrivals?

Refugee support agencies are a critical part of the infrastructure supporting some of the most vulnerable populations in Illinois' 7th. Recent cuts to federal funding have crippled these systems, leaving people at risk of homelessness, food insecurity, and medical emergencies. As Congressman, I would support restoring and expanding federal funding on a near-permanent basis and partnering more closely with local and state governments to ensure that communities are not left to shoulder the burden alone.

Candidate Priorities

What are some of the key priorities you would like to pursue in Congress?

My priorities in Congress will be improving constituent services, lowering costs for my district, and increasing public safety. My first task in office will be to establish a robust, accessible, and responsive constituent services system with two offices across the district, including the West Side and Downtown. My legislative priorities include implementing solutions that will comprehensively lower the cost of living for my constituents, from the cost of health care to housing to groceries. Finally, I will remain steadfast in my support of public safety, commonsense gun regulation, and violent crime prevention efforts, so that families in Illinois' 7th District can live without the fear of the preventable loss of life.

Any additional information you would like to share with us?

I am a current JUF Board Member and have a long and distinguished history of service to the Foundation. I am the former Chairman of Government Affairs, former chair of the Real Estate Group, and the founder of Young Real Estate Group. I earned JUF's Young Leadership Award and graduated from the Wexner Heritage Program. I led five missions to Israel through JUF and sponsored the construction of the Friedman Chess Center in Be'er Sheva.

La Shawn Ford

Security

The federal Nonprofit Security Grant Program is currently funded at \$274.5 million. Do you support increasing it to \$360 million or at least maintaining its current funding level?

Yes. I support increasing the program to at least \$360 million.

Any institution targeted because of religion, race, or identity deserves federal support. Jewish schools, synagogues, and community centers have been forced to operate in a heightened threat environment, and the federal government cannot ignore that reality. Security funding should grow, not shrink.

Antisemitism

Antisemitism is surging across the United States. What will you do to help combat antisemitism and bring different communities together?

Antisemitism has escalated to levels this country should never tolerate. In Congress, I will: Support stronger federal tracking and prosecution of hate crimes.

Increase funding for community-based cross-cultural education that brings Black, Jewish, Muslim, immigrant, and other communities together.

Hold social media companies accountable for allowing extremist content to spread unchecked.

Partner with local leaders—including rabbis, pastors, imams, and educators—to rebuild trust across communities that feel divided.

Antisemitism is not a Jewish problem. It is an American problem, and every elected official has to treat it that way.

How will you address antisemitism across the political spectrum?

Antisemitism is coming from extremists on both the far right and the far left. I will call it out without hesitation, even when it is politically inconvenient. That includes:

Condemning conspiracies and white nationalist rhetoric. Rejecting rhetoric that denies Israel's right to exist.

Ensuring that both major parties enforce standards for their members and refuse to normalize hate.

Hate cannot be partisan.

Antisemitism is growing at both ends of the political spectrum. How do you plan to address antisemitism on both sides of the aisle.

Antisemitism is not a Jewish problem. It is an American problem, and every elected official has to treat it that way.

Israel

Do you support efforts to boycott, divest from, or sanction Israel, Israeli goods, company's services, academics, academic institutions, and cultural activities? Relatedly, do you support boycotting, divesting from or sanctioning U.S. or other companies that do business in or with Israel?

No. I do not support BDS or any form of boycotts, divestments, or sanctions targeting Israel or Israel-connected companies. These efforts harm economic cooperation, academic exchange, and cultural ties

that ultimately support peace and mutual understanding.

Do you support continued U.S. military aid to Israel or additional conditions related to that aid?

Yes. I support continued U.S. military aid to Israel to help maintain its security, especially against terrorist organizations who openly call for its destruction.

I also believe Congress should ensure that U.S. assistance aligns with humanitarian law and advances long-term regional stability. The U.S. can support Israel's security and press for measures that protect civilian life at the same time.

What is your view on the role of Congress in shaping U.S.-Israel relations?

Congress plays a central role: Setting aid levels

Guiding diplomacy

Approving or rejecting sanctions

Supporting peace and normalization agreements

Providing oversight of U.S. foreign policy and arms transfers

Do you support the concept of a two-state solution whereby the Jewish State of Israel exists safely and securely alongside an independent Palestinian state that doesn't include Hamas or other terrorist organizations?

Yes. A secure Jewish State of Israel and an independent Palestinian state—free of Hamas or any terrorist organization—is the only realistic path to long-term peace.

A two-state solution is not just a diplomatic slogan; it's a strategic necessity.

Have you been to Israel? If yes, when and with whom? If no, would you be interested in visiting?

I have not yet been to Israel, but I am very interested in visiting—particularly with community and interfaith coalitions that can deepen mutual understanding.

Health & Human Services

Illinois Medicaid is the largest health insurer in the state, serving approximately 3.4 million people. The recent changes in H.R. 1 will force Illinois to make difficult funding decisions. What steps would you take to prevent reductions in care that could come from states' tightening eligibility requirements, cutting provider reimbursement levels and/or reducing access to medical care, especially for children, the economically disadvantaged, older adults and people with disabilities?

Cutting Medicaid access for children, people with disabilities, seniors, and low-income families is unacceptable. I will:

Oppose eligibility restrictions that push people off coverage. Fight for full federal funding to protect states from shortfalls.

Support increased provider reimbursement so doctors and hospitals can continue serving Medicaid patients.

Promote community-based models that reduce long-term costs while improving outcomes.

Medicaid is a lifeline for millions of Illinoisans. We cannot allow federal policy to push our most vulnerable neighbors into crisis.

If elected, will you support and co-sponsor the SSI (Supplemental Security Income) Savings Penalty

Elimination Act, which would raise the asset limit for individuals on SSI from \$2,000 to \$10,000 for individuals, and from \$3,000 to \$20,000 for couples?

Yes. The current asset limits are outdated, punitive, and economically nonsensical. Raising these limits helps people with disabilities and older adults build stability rather than forcing them into poverty to maintain benefits.

Do you support increasing funding for Home and Community-Based Services, a component of Medicaid that helps people with disabilities and older adults live and thrive in the setting of their choice and avoid institutional care?

Yes. HCBS allows seniors and people with disabilities to maintain dignity, independence, and connection to their communities. It is morally right and financially smarter than institutional care.

What are your views on the mandatory work requirements included in H.R. 1 to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, which is relied upon by nearly 2 million Illinoisans?

Mandatory work requirements often cut off benefits from people who are already working unstable jobs, caregivers, or individuals with unrecognized barriers. I oppose punitive rules that strip essential food assistance from nearly 2 million Illinois residents. SNAP must remain a nutrition program, not a political bargaining chip.

What steps do you believe need to be undertaken to reduce gun violence?

Gun violence is a public health emergency. Real solutions require:

Universal background checks

A national ban on assault weapons

Funding community-based violence interruption programs Mental health expansion

Mandatory safe storage laws

Holding illegal gun traffickers accountable

Chicago cannot solve this alone; Congress has to act.

Would you have voted to pass the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2026 the law that ended the 2025 government shutdown? Please explain your response.

While I strongly believe that shutdowns are harmful and should always be avoided, I could not support this particular agreement because it included funding reductions and policy concessions that jeopardized core programs serving seniors, children, people with disabilities, and low-income families. I have prioritized strengthening senior programs nutrition assistance, education, and community-based supports. The compromise presented did not adequately protect these vital programs.

I am committed to working toward long-term, bipartisan funding solutions that maintain government stability while upholding our nation's responsibility to care for those most in need.

Refugee Services

Do you support the recent Presidential Determination that cut new refugee arrivals from 125,000 to approximately 7,500, with most of the 7,500 slots being held open for White Afrikaners?

No. The decision is discriminatory and contrary to American values. The refugee system should prioritize vulnerability, not race or nationality. The United States must remain a leader in humanitarian protection.

Despite the cut to new refugee arrivals, refugee support agencies are still supporting tens of thousands of refugees who were lawfully admitted to the United States over the past 5-10 years. What would you

do to alleviate the burden that has been placed on refugee support agencies from funding cuts and recessions as well as from the cut to new arrivals?

I would support:

Restoring robust refugee admission numbers Increasing federal reimbursement rates

Granting multi-year, stable funding instead of volatile grants

Cutting red tape that delays employment authorization

Supporting housing, mental health, and workforce integration programs

Refugee agencies are doing heroic work, often without adequate resources. Congress should fund them at levels that reflect the scope of their mission.

Candidate Priorities

What are some of the key priorities you would like to pursue in Congress?

My agenda is built around economic security, public safety, and justice:

Strengthen Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid—no cuts, ever.

Expand mental health care access, especially for youth and underserved communities. Reduce gun violence through national action and neighborhood-based solutions.

Invest in early childhood, K–12 education, and workforce development so families can break cycles of poverty.

Promote small business growth, particularly for minority-owned businesses.

Support Israel's security while advancing a sustainable peace through diplomatic engagement.

Any additional information you would like to share with us?

I am running for Congress to protect the people who keep getting left behind, seniors, families struggling with the cost of living, people with disabilities, small businesses, and communities living with violence.

I welcome the opportunity to partner with JUF on issues ranging from security funding to community development, refugee support, health care, and combating hate in all its forms.

If follow-up is needed, I would appreciate it

Rory Hoskins

Security

The federal Nonprofit Security Grant Program is currently funded at \$274.5 million. Do you support increasing it to \$360 million or at least maintaining its current funding level?

YES

Antisemitism

Antisemitism is surging across the United States. What will you do to help combat antisemitism and bring different communities together?

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) defines antisemitism as: “a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.” I condemn the rise in antisemitism, the effects of which are being felt everywhere from schools to synagogues to homes, and I was glad to see recent administrations pledge federal resources to combat this hatred in schools and on college campuses.

Antisemitism is growing at both ends of the political spectrum. How do you plan to address antisemitism on both sides of the aisle.

An important part of pushing back against antisemitism on both sides is unequivocally condemning any and all manifestations that arise. I would also support promoting a standard definition of antisemitism, as well as efforts to depoliticize the fight.

Israel

Do you support efforts to boycott, divest from, or sanction Israel, Israeli goods, company's services, academics, academic institutions, and cultural activities? Relatedly, do you support boycotting, divesting from or sanctioning U.S. or other companies that do business in or with Israel?

The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement aims to delegitimize and isolate Israel and at times, by extension, the American Jewish Community as well. It must be wholly rejected. It aims to pressure entities and governments to shun Israel, and indeed, threatens Israel’s very right to self-determination. The BDS movement also undermines Israel’s drive for peace, stability, and prosperity. This must continue to be shunned in all quarters – whether in Chicago, Springfield or Washington, DC.

Do you support continued U.S. military aid to Israel or additional conditions related to that aid?

The United States has an unshakable commitment to Israel, and I strongly support our efforts to reinforce that relationship, including military commitments. A cornerstone of this commitment is the robust support for Israel's missile defense capabilities. The Iron Dome, an integral part of Israel's defense architecture, has proven its effectiveness in intercepting incoming missiles. I also support its modernization to make sure Israel continues to be secure and protected from foreign enemy missile attacks. I will always support investing in defense of Israel against attack by Iran or its proxies and continue to support the overall defense capabilities of the IDF.

I stand firm on the principle of opposing aid conditionality or the withholding of weapons from Israel by the United States. This includes my opposition to the Block the Bombs Act. It is imperative that aid to Israel remains nonpartisan and is solely focused on enhancing Israel's capacity to defend its people and maintain regional stability. This assistance not only enables Israel to defend itself against attacks but also fosters enhanced cooperation with American defense and intelligence partners. The 2016 Memorandum of Understanding is proof positive of the United States’ unshakeable commitment to Israel, and I will support it in Congress without additional conditions for at least of a minimum of 10 years if not longer.

What is your view on the role of Congress in shaping U.S.-Israel relations?

As the war in Gaza winds down, we must reestablish the bipartisan nature of the United States-Israel relationship. We are all aware of the mass demonstrations in the United States, and in other ally nations, against the perceived lack of diligence when it comes to Israel's determination to protect civilian lives. Congress needs to persuade the American people on both sides of the aisle that Israel's authority and power to defend itself is not in conflict with international law.

Do you support the concept of a two-state solution whereby the Jewish State of Israel exists safely and securely alongside an independent Palestinian state that doesn't include Hamas or other terrorist organizations?

The quest for a sustainable resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been a constant hope of Israelis for generations, and the concept of a two-state solution emerges as the beacon of hope. The United States can and must continue to play a pivotal role in facilitating negotiations while safeguarding Israel's territorial integrity and its identity as the homeland for the Jewish people.

I support a two-state solution, with Israel existing in peace and prosperity alongside a sovereign Palestine. This is a position that has been endorsed by American presidents of both parties, and I am hopeful that I will see it happen in the future. I also recognize that the United States must play an active role in Israel preserving its Qualitative Military Edge (QME). While the goal is sustained peace, the constant need for QME underscores the United States' commitment to Israel's ability to defend itself against potential threats.

Supporting a two-state solution must also mean opposing efforts that undermine that goal, both from foreign actors and even within Congress. The global community must hold the Palestinian side accountable for investigating and prosecuting terrorism, and efforts to delegitimize the existence of the nation of Israel. As Presidents from both parties have proven, maintaining a close relationship with Israel helps persuade Israelis to take risks for peace.

As we now have achieved a fragile ceasefire, we should work with NATO and non-NATO Allies to facilitate a stronger peace deal that disarms Hamas, creates a path to a Palestinian state that recognizes Israel and isolates Iranian backed proxy terror groups.

Have you been to Israel? If yes, when and with whom? If no, would you be interested in visiting?

I have not been to Israel yet, but I would be interested in traveling there if and when I have an opportunity.

Health & Human Services

Illinois Medicaid is the largest health insurer in the state, serving approximately 3.4 million people. The recent changes in H.R. 1 will force Illinois to make difficult funding decisions. What steps would you take to prevent reductions in care that could come from states' tightening eligibility requirements, cutting provider reimbursement levels and/or reducing access to medical care, especially for children, the economically disadvantaged, older adults and people with disabilities?

I would support efforts to promote closer partnerships across state agencies and with external stakeholders. I also support building up some additional staffing capacity within HFS, which could allow the state to continue providing similar levels of service. If elected to Congress I would work tirelessly to protect and increase state level funding to ensure that eligible Illinoisans can receive and maintain the coverage and benefits they qualify for, and mitigate as much harm from cuts as possible.

If elected, will you support and co-sponsor the SSI (Supplemental Security Income) Savings Penalty Elimination Act, which would raise the asset limit for individuals on SSI from \$2,000 to \$10,000 for individuals, and from \$3,000 to \$20,000 for couples?

YES

Do you support increasing funding for Home and Community-Based Services, a component of Medicaid that helps people with disabilities and older adults live and thrive in the setting of their choice and avoid institutional care?

YES

What are your views on the mandatory work requirements included in H.R. 1 to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, which is relied upon by nearly 2 million Illinoisans?

I do not support work requirements in order to receive SNAP benefits, because it adds unnecessary and harmful obstacles to accessing life-saving services. These requirements also affect children and our seniors disproportionately.

What steps do you believe need to be undertaken to reduce gun violence?

Illinois has some of the strongest gun control laws in the country, and yet too many people in our communities are victims of gun violence. I support the Trafficking Reduction and Criminal Enforcement (TRACE) Act that was re-introduced by Congressman Quigley, that would help the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to reduce the trafficking of illegal firearms and prevent criminals from obtaining these weapons by enabling the ATF to track the movement of illegal firearms across state lines and to share that data with state and local law enforcement. This bill will also help our law enforcement officers crack down on the gun 'black market,' which funnels firearms to communities like ours, places that have stricter gun laws in place.

Would you have voted to pass the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2026 the law that ended the 2025 government shutdown? Please explain your response.

If I were in Congress I would have followed the guidance of House leadership and voted appropriately, in consultation with my Democratic colleagues.

Refugee Services

Do you support the recent Presidential Determination that cut new refugee arrivals from 125,000 to approximately 7,500, with most of the 7,500 slots being held open for White Afrikaners?

I do not support these recent changes in our immigration policy, and I especially do not support changes that are overtly racist in nature.

Despite the cut to new refugee arrivals, refugee support agencies are still supporting tens of thousands of refugees who were lawfully admitted to the United States over the past 5-10 years. What would you do to alleviate the burden that has been placed on refugee support agencies from funding cuts and recessions as well as from the cut to new arrivals?

I would use my role as a member of Congress to advocate for increased funding for existing programs wherever possible, and encourage direct community engagement and private sector support.

I would also co-sponsor pro-immigrant and pro-refugee legislation, such as the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act (H.R. 1061/S.455), the NO BAN Act (H.R. 294/S.398), and the Neighbors Not Enemies Act (H.R. 630/S. 193).

Candidate Priorities

What are some of the key priorities you would like to pursue in Congress?

- Fighting for democracy and the rule of law
- Affordability and economic mobility
- Health equity
- Veterans care and increased resources to VA hospitals
- Meaningful reforms to ICE and our immigration system

Any additional information you would like to share with us?

I serve as Mayor in Forest Park. I am Black. I was born in Galveston, Texas in 1971. I was raised in Texas. Finished undergrad in 1992. Moved to Chicago in 1994. I was the first non-white person elected to ANY office in forest Park when I was elected village commissioner in 2007. I am the only current elected official that is running from the suburbs in this primary. I can communicate with persons from all parts of the 7th District including the affluent, mostly white area, and the poor areas that are mainly African-American.

The suburbs will make up 35% of the primary vote. I serve in an executive role, which has given me opportunities to lead efforts and work that I feel passionate about. I serve as mayor in a diverse town whose demographics mirror the Democratic primary's demographics. I have been elected twice as a Biden delegate (2020 & 2024). No other candidate in this race has been elected twice district wide.

I recently held a press conference in response to ICE agents detaining American citizens in the community where I serve as mayor. The press conference was widely covered. Additionally, Don Lemon interviewed me at ICE detention site located in Broadview, IL. Broadview is less than 3 miles from Forest Park. The interview has gone viral. Last On "No Kings Saturday", I appeared on the Rainbow/ PUSH television broadcast with Congressman Jonathan Jackson. This is a national platform. I interned for Reverend Jackson in the 1990's (I was in my 20s). I have a strong relationship with the Jacksons. (However, I am to the right of Jonathan politically and in how I will conduct myself.) None of the candidates in this primary have shown any leadership in response to ICE abuses. Primary voters will want to see that their representatives will not simply lay down to unconstitutional policing etc. I am occupying that lane so to speak.

As a village commissioner, in 2009, I began this town's Juneteenth tradition. Over the next several years, other communities began marking Juneteenth. I am credited with bringing Juneteenth to its "main stream" place in the west suburbs of Chicago. When Governor JB Pritzker signed the bill to make it a paid holiday in 2021. I was the last speaker in the ceremony and it was my job to prompt the governor to sign the bill. My campaign will highlight this over the next few weeks and certainly during February.

Chad Koppie

Security

The federal Nonprofit Security Grant Program is currently funded at \$274.5 million. Do you support increasing it to \$360 million or at least maintaining its current funding level?

I think it should remain at its current level. Politicians should encourage people to donate to charities who help people, who need that help.

Antisemitism

Antisemitism is surging across the United States. What will you do to help combat antisemitism and bring different communities together?

I want to ensure that federal agencies, who fight those crimes, including FBI agents and U.S. attorneys, will continue to get at least the current amount of funding, so that they can investigate and arrest the law-breakers.

Antisemitism is growing at both ends of the political spectrum. How do you plan to address antisemitism on both sides of the aisle.

I'll remind people, in speeches, that the 1st Amendment includes the freedom of religion. That means that everyone, in the U.S., has the freedom to worship as they please, without being insulted or attacked.

Israel

Do you support efforts to boycott, divest from, or sanction Israel, Israeli goods, company's services, academics, academic institutions, and cultural activities? Relatedly, do you support boycotting, divesting from or sanctioning U.S. or other companies that do business in or with Israel?

No and no. Israel has never harmed the U.S., so no American should support those boycotts.

Do you support continued U.S. military aid to Israel or additional conditions related to that aid?

Yes. Since Hamas killed Americans, on Oct. 7, the U.S. should keep helping Israel until Hamas is defeated.

What is your view on the role of Congress in shaping U.S.-Israel relations?

Congress should keep giving money to Israel, at the current level, to ensure that they'll defeat Hamas.

Do you support the concept of a two-state solution whereby the Jewish State of Israel exists safely and securely alongside an independent Palestinian state that doesn't include Hamas or other terrorist organizations?

Yes, if both sides agree to it, that solution should ensure peace.

Have you been to Israel? If yes, when and with whom? If no, would you be interested in visiting?

No.

Health & Human Services

Illinois Medicaid is the largest health insurer in the state, serving approximately 3.4 million people. The recent changes in H.R. 1 will force Illinois to make difficult funding decisions. What steps would you take to prevent reductions in care that could come from states' tightening eligibility requirements, cutting provider reimbursement levels and/or reducing access to medical care, especially for children,

the economically disadvantaged, older adults and people with disabilities?

I'd vote against tightening eligibility requirements. I support requiring recipients to prove that they have low incomes and need the help. That might eliminate people, who don't need the help, and ensure that people, who need the help, will get it.

If elected, will you support and co-sponsor the SSI (Supplemental Security Income) Savings Penalty Elimination Act, which would raise the asset limit for individuals on SSI from \$2,000 to \$10,000 for individuals, and from \$3,000 to \$20,000 for couples?

No, I'd support a compromise of \$7,000 for individuals and \$11,00 for couples.

Do you support increasing funding for Home and Community-Based Services, a component of Medicaid that helps people with disabilities and older adults live and thrive in the setting of their choice and avoid institutional care?

Yes.

What are your views on the mandatory work requirements included in H.R. 1 to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, which is relied upon by nearly 2 million Illinoisans?

I think it's a great idea.

What steps do you believe need to be undertaken to reduce gun violence?

Fewer states and cities should have gun bans. More law-abiding people would own guns. When criminals think victims might defend themselves, fewer criminals will commit crimes.

Would you have voted to pass the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2026 the law that ended the 2025 government shutdown? Please explain your response.

Yes. Congress should have agreed on an annual budget in the summer. They should have ensured that the shutdown didn't happen.

Refugee Services

Do you support the recent Presidential Determination that cut new refugee arrivals from 125,000 to approximately 7,500, with most of the 7,500 slots being held open for White Afrikaners?

No, I agree with decreasing the number, but it should have been cut to 65,000. The number should have been equally divided amount several regions.

Despite the cut to new refugee arrivals, refugee support agencies are still supporting tens of thousands of refugees who were lawfully admitted to the United States over the past 5-10 years. What would you do to alleviate the burden that has been placed on refugee support agencies from funding cuts and recissions as well as from the cut to new arrivals?

I'd encourage people to donate to private charities who help refugees.

Candidate Priorities

What are some of the key priorities you would like to pursue in Congress?

I want to propose a constitutional amendment that states that each human life begins at conception. If it's ratified, it would ensure that all abortions would be murder, unless it's to save the mother's life. I want to ensure that Congress will greatly cut spending that isn't in the Constitution, including education, health, foreign aid, and grants to state and local governments. Since the federal government would need less money, the same bill would cut tax rates.

Any additional information you would like to share with us?

I'm the only candidate, in my race, who has run for office. I'm a member of the Kane County Regional Board of Schools. I was the board president. In 1998, I was the only Republican, who ran against George Ryan, for governor. I'm an army veteran and a former jumbo jet pilot.

Jazmin Robinson

Security

The federal Nonprofit Security Grant Program is currently funded at \$274.5 million. Do you support increasing it to \$360 million or at least maintaining its current funding level?

I support maintaining funding, but I believe simply increasing the budget for physical security is insufficient without broader reform. We cannot just build higher walls; we must also lower the temperature.

1. Equity in Access: Currently, the grant process favors large institutions with professional grant writers, while leaving smaller, under-resourced groups (like small churches and LGBTQ+ centers) behind. My research shows nearly 50% of applicants are rejected. If elected I would hire a Grant Director and Grant Coordinator to provide Grant writing training and resources to the community which will ensure equity and inclusion for the entire district.

2. Addressing the Root Cause: Physical security (cameras and fences) is a reactive measure, it prepares for an attack. True safety requires prevention. We must simultaneously invest in programs that identify and address the root causes of radicalization, such as online extremism, social isolation, and lack of education. We need to stop the radicalization process at the source so that security fences become less necessary in the future.

3. Alternative Federal Grants: Extensive research, including the Pettigrew & Tropp meta-analysis, confirms that the most effective way to dismantle prejudice is through Intergroup Contact Theory, which necessitates structured interaction in shared environments. To operationalize this, I will partner directly with local stakeholders to aggressively leverage the approximately \$760 million in FY2026 federal appropriations specifically designated for social cohesion and community development. Our strategy focuses on securing grants to build the necessary physical infrastructure for connection, including multi-use community centers, youth engagement programs, and interfaith councils. This approach moves us beyond rhetoric, utilizing federal resources to construct the 'institutional support' systems that data proves are essential for bridging the gap in our segregated district.

Antisemitism

Antisemitism is surging across the United States. What will you do to help combat antisemitism and bring different communities together?

My approach to combating antisemitism is rooted in the conviction that hate is often a byproduct of isolation. When communities lack understanding of a neighbor's culture or faith, they become susceptible to stereotypes and unconscious bias. Therefore, we must move beyond reactive condemnation and focus on proactive, systemic integration.

1. Proactive Education (The Foundation): I propose implementing a robust 'comparative religion' curriculum in public schools. This is not religious instruction—which is unconstitutional—but the academic study of world faiths, including Judaism, Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism. The goal is to produce religiously literate citizens who are immunized against propaganda because they understand the history and values of their neighbors.

2. Structural Integration (The Investment): We must build physical environments that force us out of our silos. Extensive research, including the Pettigrew & Tropp meta-analysis, confirms that the most effective way to dismantle prejudice is through Intergroup Contact Theory, which necessitates structured interaction in shared environments. To operationalize this, I will partner directly with local stakeholders to aggressively leverage the approximately \$760 million in FY2026 federal appropriations specifically

designated for social cohesion. Our strategy focuses on securing grants to build the necessary infrastructure for connection, including multi-use community centers and interfaith councils. This utilizes federal resources to construct the 'institutional support' systems that data proves are essential for bridging the gap in our district.

3. Radical Engagement (The Human Approach): We must recognize that hate is often a 'secondary emotion' masking deeper fears. We see the power of engagement in the work of journalist Deeyah Khan, a Muslim woman who dismantled the views of white supremacists simply by listening to them rather than fighting them. While I will always hold bad actors accountable and strengthen legal protections, I will not ignore the human element. We must facilitate the difficult conversations that de-radicalize our neighbors rather than just isolating them further.

4. Civic Empowerment (The Policy): Finally, the most effective protection for any community is a permanent seat at the table. I will actively recruit members of the Jewish community and other marginalized groups to serve on local task forces and federal advisory boards. We will move beyond "discussing solutions" to co-authoring policy, ensuring that those most targeted by hate are the ones drafting the blueprints for our safety.

Antisemitism is growing at both ends of the political spectrum. How do you plan to address antisemitism on both sides of the aisle.

Antisemitism is not a partisan issue; it is a human issue that infects both the left and the right. My strategy to address this is based on dismantling the ideological echo chambers that allow hate to fester against any minority group.

1. Immunization Through Education (The Long Game): Hate on both ends of the spectrum relies on ignorance. The right often relies on stereotypes, while the left often conflates faith with geopolitics. To combat this, I support a robust 'comparative religion' curriculum in our schools—not as religious instruction, but as civic preparation. When we produce religiously literate citizens who understand the history and values of the Jewish community, as well as Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu neighbors, we immunize the next generation against the propaganda used by political extremists to divide us.

2. Radical Engagement & Socratic Inquiry: We must stop shouting and start dismantling. Whether dealing with the left or the right, I plan to utilize Socratic Inquiry—a method of questioning that forces individuals to examine the contradictions in their own beliefs. We have seen this work with journalist Deeyah Khan, a Muslim woman who de-radicalized white supremacists not by fighting them, but by engaging them until their hate collapsed under the weight of her humanity. I will bring this same energy to Congress: asking the deep, uncomfortable questions that force my colleagues to confront their own biases.

3. The 'Common Ingroup' Mandate: Political polarization thrives on the "Us vs. Them" mentality—a tactic used to target Jewish people, Black and Brown communities, and LGBTQ+ individuals alike. I will counter this using the 'Common Ingroup Identity' model, reminding leaders that the people they are marginalizing are, first and foremost, American citizens. I will facilitate direct, face-to-face dialogues between Jewish groups and other minority leaders with politicians from both parties. It is easy to hate an abstract demographic on Twitter; it is much harder to maintain that hate when you are forced to look a constituent in the eye.

4. Civic Empowerment as Defense: Finally, the most effective way to protect any community is ensuring they have a seat at the table. I will actively encourage members of the Jewish community, along with leaders from all religious and racial minorities, to run for office and will ensure they are included in every relevant policy discussion. When marginalized communities are directly represented in the halls of power, they are no longer abstract targets for political theater, but active architects of our shared future.

Israel

Do you support efforts to boycott, divest from, or sanction Israel, Israeli goods, company's services, academics, academic institutions, and cultural activities? Relatedly, do you support boycotting, divesting from or sanctioning U.S. or other companies that do business in or with Israel?

My approach to this issue is rooted in the belief that the United States must return to a strategy of diplomacy and strict legal compliance, rather than funding endless wars.

1. **Enforcing U.S. Law & Human Rights:** I call for the immediate suspension of offensive military aid to Israel, not as a matter of preference, but as a matter of law. Section 620I of the Foreign Assistance Act explicitly prohibits the U.S. from arming any country that restricts American humanitarian aid, which the data shows is occurring in Gaza. Furthermore, we must enforce the Leahy Laws to stop funding units implicated in gross human rights violations. When the UN and colleagues like Senator Bernie Sanders have identified the situation as genocide, I have a duty to look at the facts and ensure U.S. tax dollars are not subsidizing these atrocities.

2. **Targeted Divestment (Not Broad Boycotts):** I support targeted divestment from companies that supply weapons or profit directly from the construction of illegal settlements. We must stop the flow of capital to the machinery of war. However, I explicitly oppose broad boycotts of Israeli cultural, academic, or civilian institutions. Isolating the people of Israel—many of whom are protesting their own government—cuts off the very dialogue we need to build a future solution. As a proponent of Intergroup Contact Theory, I believe we must keep channels open with the people while holding the government and corporations accountable.

3. **Defense & Diplomacy:** Finally, I distinguish between offensive bombardment and defensive protection. I support continued funding for the Iron Dome, a purely defensive system, to protect civilians. But we must be clear: our goal is safety, not unchecked aggression. The U.S. must use its leverage to force a ceasefire and lead the diplomatic effort toward a lasting peace, rather than writing blank checks for a war with no end.

Do you support continued U.S. military aid to Israel or additional conditions related to that aid?

No, I do not support continued U.S. military aid for offensive weapons. I support aid only for defensive systems that save lives, while demanding an immediate halt to the funding of offensive operations.

1. **Enforcing U.S. Law & Human Rights:** I call for the immediate suspension of all offensive military aid. This is not a preference; it is the law. Section 620I of the Foreign Assistance Act prohibits arming any country that restricts American humanitarian aid, and the Leahy Laws forbid funding units implicated in gross human rights violations. When the United Nations and colleagues like Senator Bernie Sanders have explicitly identified the situation in Gaza as genocide, I have a fiduciary duty to look at the facts. We cannot subsidize these atrocities.

2. **Defeating Hamas & Dismantling Terror:** We must be clear: Hamas is a terrorist organization that committed horrific atrocities on October 7th, and they must be stopped. However, we must ask the hard question: Is the current strategy working? Military history proves you cannot bomb an ideology. The indiscriminate destruction of Gaza has not defeated Hamas; it has only radicalized a new generation of recruits. True security requires dismantling the despair and occupation that allow groups like Hamas to thrive. We stop Hamas by cutting off their recruitment narrative, not by validating it.

3. **The 'Equity of Defense' (The Iron Dome):** I support continued funding for the Iron Dome because I will never vote to let civilians die when we have the technology to save them. However, we must confront the inequality of this conflict. There is no "Iron Dome" that can protect a Palestinian refugee camp from a 2,000-pound American bomb. The only "Defense System" for Gaza is a political one: an immediate, permanent Ceasefire. I will vote to intercept rockets, but I will not vote to send the bombs that make those rockets inevitable.

4. **The Reconstruction Mandate (Reparations):** The destruction of Gaza—the flattening of homes, schools, and hospitals—was largely accomplished with American-made weapons paid for by American tax dollars. We are not just bystanders; we are co-signers to this destruction. Therefore, I propose diverting the billions we send in offensive military aid into a Gaza Reconstruction Fund. We have a moral debt to the Palestinian people to rebuild what our own weapons helped destroy.

What is your view on the role of Congress in shaping U.S.-Israel relations?

My view is that Congress must stop functioning as a rubber stamp for foreign aid and return to its constitutional role as the Board of Directors for the American taxpayer. We do not dictate the internal politics of other nations, but we have an absolute right to control how our own resources are utilized.

1. The Power of the Purse (Fiduciary Duty): Congress holds the 'Power of the Purse.' My role is not to tell Israel—or any nation—how to govern itself. They are a sovereign nation. However, my duty is to ensure that American tax dollars are not subsidizing actions that violate American laws or values. If a recipient of U.S. aid violates international human rights standards or blocks humanitarian assistance, Congress has a fiduciary obligation to turn off the tap. We don't control their choices, but we control our checkbook.

2. Oversight & Accountability: For too long, Congress has written blank checks without asking to see the receipts. I view the U.S.-Israel relationship through the lens of strict oversight. We must end the practice of 'unconditional aid.' Every dollar we send abroad must be subject to the same rigorous compliance standards we apply to domestic funding. If the funding is fueling conflict rather than securing peace, it is our duty to redirect it.

3. Domestic Strength as Foreign Policy: Finally, I believe that a strong foreign policy begins with a strong domestic foundation. We cannot project stability abroad if we are crumbling at home. As the Representative for District 7, I must weigh every foreign commitment against the urgent needs of my constituents—healthcare, housing, and infrastructure. We cannot afford to fund endless wars overseas while our own communities are fighting for survival.

Do you support the concept of a two-state solution whereby the Jewish State of Israel exists safely and securely alongside an independent Palestinian state that doesn't include Hamas or other terrorist organizations?

Yes. I support a Two-State solution because it is the only path to mutual survival. A Jewish State of Israel must exist safely and securely alongside an independent, demilitarized Palestinian state that is free from Hamas.

1. The "Representation Gap" (People vs. Power): We must distinguish between the 'Extremism of Leaders' and the 'Exhaustion of the People.' The data is clear: the average family in Gaza and the average family in Tel Aviv want the same things—security, the return of their loved ones, and an end to the violence.

In Gaza: Polling shows that war fatigue is real; the majority of Gazans want a political solution, not endless war. They are victims of Hamas's authoritarianism just as they are victims of the blockade.

In Israel: A majority of citizens support ending the war to save the hostages, yet their government continues to pursue a military-only strategy.

My Stance: The United States must stop enabling the "forever war" fantasies of the leadership on both sides and start empowering the moderate majorities who are desperate for peace.

2. Statehood as the Antidote to Terror: You cannot defeat an ideology like Hamas with bombs alone; you defeat it by making it obsolete. Extremism thrives on despair. By helping build a viable, independent Palestinian state, we drain the swamp of resentment that groups like Hamas use to recruit. I support a Palestinian state that is fully sovereign but demilitarized, ensuring it can never be used as a launchpad for terror against Israel.

3. The Physical Obstacle (Settlements): However, we must be honest about the map. A Two-State solution is being physically dismantled by the expansion of illegal settlements. You cannot have an independent state if there is no land left to build it on. To support the people of Israel and Palestine, we must pressure the government of Israel to halt settlement expansion immediately, preserving the possibility of a future border.

Have you been to Israel? If yes, when and with whom? If no, would you be interested in visiting?

No, I have not been to Israel.

1. A Spiritual Connection (The Faith Aspect): As a Roman Catholic, visiting the Holy Land is a pilgrimage I have always hoped to make. To walk the path of my faith and experience the history of the region would be a profound honor. However, my hope is to make that journey when the region is at peace, so that I can experience the holiness of the land rather than the tragedy of war.

2. District 7 First (The Priority): At this current moment, I have no plans to visit. We are operating in a time of crisis here at home—from economic instability to the erosion of our own civil rights. I believe a Representative's place is with their constituents. I cannot justify an overseas trip when the families in my district are struggling to pay rent and put food on the table. My focus, time, and resources belong here, working to solve the problems facing the people who elected me.

Health & Human Services

Illinois Medicaid is the largest health insurer in the state, serving approximately 3.4 million people. The recent changes in H.R. 1 will force Illinois to make difficult funding decisions. What steps would you take to prevent reductions in care that could come from states' tightening eligibility requirements, cutting provider reimbursement levels and/or reducing access to medical care, especially for children, the economically disadvantaged, older adults and people with disabilities?

My approach is two-fold: We must aggressively defend the current safety net using federal compliance levers, while simultaneously building the only fiscally responsible long-term solution: Universal Free High-Quality Healthcare.

1. The 'Stop-Loss' Strategy (Protecting Medicaid): I will firmly oppose any measures in H.R. 1 that tighten eligibility or lower provider reimbursements. These are not 'savings'; they are deferred costs that will bankrupt our emergency rooms later. To prevent these cuts, I will fight to maximize Illinois' Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) and utilize Section 1115 Waivers to allow the state to test new delivery models that save money without cutting care for children, seniors, or the disabled.

2. The 'Charity Care' Compliance Audit: You mentioned the role of nonprofit hospitals, and this is where we find the missing money. Nonprofit hospitals receive billions in tax exemptions in exchange for providing "Charity Care" to low-income families. However, compliance is often loose. I will demand a strict IRS audit of Section 501(r) compliance for all tax-exempt hospitals in District 7. If the state cuts Medicaid, these institutions must step up. We will ensure that if they want to keep their tax-free status, they must strictly adhere to their obligation to provide free or discounted care to those falling through the cracks.

3. The Efficiency Mandate (Universal Free High-Quality Healthcare): Ultimately, constantly defending a fragile system is not a strategy; it is a retreat. The United States is the wealthiest nation in history, yet we treat healthcare like a luxury item. I advocate for Universal Free High-Quality Healthcare not just as a moral imperative, but as an administrative efficiency. By eliminating the overhead of private insurance and consolidating coverage, we stop the cycle of funding crises and ensure that no citizen loses their life simply because the political winds shifted in Washington.

If elected, will you support and co-sponsor the SSI (Supplemental Security Income) Savings Penalty Elimination Act, which would raise the asset limit for individuals on SSI from \$2,000 to \$10,000 for individuals, and from \$3,000 to \$20,000 for couples?

Yes. I will absolutely co-sponsor and vote for the SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act. The current policy is not just outdated; it is an administrative failure that traps Americans in state-enforced poverty.

1. Correcting the 'Inflation Error' (HR Logic): The current asset limit of \$2,000 hasn't been updated since 1989. In my career in HR and Payroll, if we failed to update a compensation band for 35 years, we would lose our workforce. By failing to index this limit to inflation, the government is effectively punishing disabled and elderly Americans for responsible financial behavior. Raising the limit to \$10,000 isn't a 'raise'; it is a long-overdue cost-of-living adjustment.

2. Ending the 'Marriage Penalty': The current system also penalizes love and family. Two individuals can save \$4,000 total, but if they get married, their limit drops to \$3,000. This is a nonsensical 'tax' on marriage. I support this bill because it raises the couple's limit to \$20,000, finally treating married disabled couples with the dignity they deserve.

3. The Universal Healthcare Solution: Finally, this issue exposes the deeper flaw in our safety net: the 'Benefit Cliff.' Currently, many people remain in poverty solely to keep their Medicaid coverage. While this bill fixes the asset limit, the ultimate solution is Universal Healthcare. By guaranteeing healthcare as a human right, separate from income, we remove the fear that saving a rainy-day fund will cost a person their life-saving medical care. We must pass this bill to fix the savings gap, and then pass Universal Healthcare to permanently break the poverty trap.

Do you support increasing funding for Home and Community-Based Services, a component of Medicaid that helps people with disabilities and older adults live and thrive in the setting of their choice and avoid institutional care?

Yes. I strongly support increasing funding for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) because segregation is not a healthcare strategy.

1. Enforcing Civil Rights (The Olmstead Mandate): We must stop treating home care as 'optional charity' and start treating it as a Civil Rights obligation. In the landmark Olmstead v. L.C. decision, the Supreme Court ruled that the unjustified segregation of people with disabilities constitutes discrimination. Yet, states continue to maintain years-long waiting lists for home care while guaranteeing immediate placement in nursing homes. I will fight to eliminate this 'Institutional Bias' by mandating that Medicaid dollars follow the person, not the facility.

2. The Fiscal Efficiency Audit: From a purely administrative perspective, institutionalization is fiscal malpractice. The average cost of a private room in a nursing home can exceed \$100,000 annually, whereas supporting that same individual in their own home often costs significantly less. By expanding HCBS, we are not just saving dignity; we are saving taxpayer dollars by utilizing the most cost-effective care model available.

3. The Workforce Infrastructure (The 'HR' Fix): Finally, we cannot talk about services without talking about the staff. We are facing a crisis with Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), who are often paid poverty wages to do essential, skilled work. You cannot build a home care system if the workers can't afford to pay their own rent. I support increased funding specifically earmarked to raise DSP wages, ensuring we have a stable, professional workforce to care for our most vulnerable neighbors.

What are your views on the mandatory work requirements included in H.R. 1 to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, which is relied upon by nearly 2 million Illinoisans?

I oppose the mandatory work requirements in H.R. 1 because they are an act of cruelty disguised as fiscal responsibility. But I am not waiting to be elected to fight them; I am helping my neighbors survive today.

1. Direct Action (Digital & Door-to-Door Defense):

While others debate policy, I am using my campaign as an educational tool to help constituents survive right now. Through my social media platforms and direct canvassing, I am actively teaching voters about the SNAP Exemption List. We are spreading the word on how to legally bypass these cuts by leveraging loopholes like the 'Unfit for Work' status. Most people don't know that you do not need to be on federal disability to qualify; you often just need a medical professional to verify that you cannot work. I am ensuring my community knows exactly how to secure these exemptions before the cuts even take effect.

2. The Economic Leverage (The Discretionary Bank):

H.R. 1 leaves states with a 'Discretionary Bank' of waivers (exemptions for ~8-12% of the caseload). I know our Governor may be hesitant to use them, but this is not about charity; it is about economics. SNAP benefits are 100% federally funded. Every time the Governor refuses to use a waiver, he is rejecting millions of federal dollars that should be circulating in Illinois grocery stores and local businesses. I will pressure the Governor not just on moral grounds, but on the fact that refusing these waivers is fiscal malpractice that hurts our state's GDP.

3. The Root Cause Solution (The HEAL Act):

Ultimately, we need to stop treating hunger as a motivator. My HEAL Act addresses the real barriers to work:

Childcare: You cannot work if childcare costs more than your paycheck.

Healthcare: Many 'working age' people are suffering from untreated chronic conditions. My universal healthcare plan ensures a workforce that is physically capable of holding a job.

Wages: Most people on SNAP do work. We should be subsidizing wages, not cutting off food.

What steps do you believe need to be undertaken to reduce gun violence?

I believe we cannot meaningfully reduce gun violence until we break the stranglehold that lobbyists and special interest PACs have on our government. We don't have a safety problem; we have a bribery problem.

1. Dismantle the 'Pay-to-Play' Blockade: The single biggest obstacle to gun reform is not public opinion—it is political spending. The vast majority of Americans, including many gun owners, support common-sense safety measures. Yet, these bills die in Congress because politicians fear the millions of dollars in attack ads funded by the gun lobby. I support overturning Citizens United, banning all PACs, and moving toward publicly funded elections so that our representatives answer to voters, not donors.

2. End Corporate Immunity (Repeal the PLCAA): We must treat gun manufacturers like any other industry. Currently, the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA) gives gun makers sweeping immunity from lawsuits—a protection that car makers and pharmaceutical companies do not have. As a specialist in compliance, I believe in accountability. If a manufacturer markets weapons of war to teenagers or looks the other way on straw purchases, they should be liable for the damage they cause. We must repeal the PLCAA and force the industry to prioritize safety over profit.

3. Operationalize Public Health Solutions: Once we break the lobbyist blockade, we must treat gun violence like the public health crisis it is. This means funding the strategies that data proves will save lives:

Universal Background Checks: Closing the 'private sale' loopholes to ensure every transfer is vetted.

Red Flag Laws: Empowering families to temporarily remove firearms from individuals proven to be an imminent danger.

Community Violence Intervention (CVI): Aggressively funding local 'violence interrupters'—community members who de-escalate conflicts before they turn fatal.

Would you have voted to pass the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2026 the law that ended the 2025 government shutdown? Please explain your response.

I would vote 'No.' My vote is not a vote to abandon federal workers; it is a vote to reject a ransom note that guts the American safety net.

1. Why I Vote No:

We must be honest about what the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2026 actually did. It didn't just 'open the government'; it validated the catastrophic cuts from H.R. 1—legislation that strips Medicaid from 360,000 Illinoisans and imposes punishing work requirements on SNAP recipients. I refuse to sign off on a deal that permanently raises healthcare costs for 20 million Americans just to keep the lights on for three months. That is not a compromise; it is capitulation.

2. The 'Stand-Alone' Protection Strategy:

However, I refuse to use federal employees as pawns in this fight. While holding the line against the broader cuts, I would immediately co-sponsor and demand a Discharge Petition on stand-alone legislation like the Pay Our Military Act and the Federal Employee Civil Relief Act. Congress has the power to pay soldiers, veterans' affairs staff, and essential workers without passing the wider poisonous budget. I would force my colleagues to vote on paying workers separately, stripping them of the ability to use federal livelihoods as leverage.

3. Direct Operational Support:

In the interim, a Representative's job is to protect their constituents from the failures of Washington. My office would immediately shift to an emergency operational footing:

Strike Force Organizing: We would partner with credit unions to secure low-interest 'Shutdown Loans' for affected workers.

Mutual Aid Activation: We would coordinate directly with the Greater Chicago Food Depository to set up 'Federal Worker Pop-Ups' in District 7.

Unemployment Assistance: We would deploy case workers to help contractors (who often don't get back pay) navigate state unemployment systems immediately.

Summary: I will not vote to starve the poor in exchange for paying the bills. I will fight to pay the workers and protect the safety net.

Refugee Services

Do you support the recent Presidential Determination that cut new refugee arrivals from 125,000 to approximately 7,500, with most of the 7,500 slots being held open for White Afrikaners?

No. I vehemently oppose this determination because it transforms our refugee program from a humanitarian shield into a tool of racial engineering.

1. The 'Disparate Treatment' Audit: As a Human Resources professional, I look at selection criteria. This policy cuts the total intake by 94% (from 125,000 to 7,500) and then effectively restricts the remaining slots to a single demographic group. In any other sector, this would be a clear violation of non-discrimination laws. The U.S. Refugee Act of 1980 mandates that we admit people based on 'persecution,' not racial preference. We must audit this determination for what it is: state-sponsored discrimination that violates both domestic law and international treaties.

2. Need-Based, Not Race-Based: I believe that any human being fleeing persecution deserves a fair hearing—whether they are a White Afrikaner, a Haitian dissident, or a Sudanese mother. But to prioritize one group over others solely based on race, while slashing the overall numbers, is a betrayal of the Statue of Liberty. We must prioritize admission based on the severity of the threat, not the color of the applicant's skin.

3. The Economic Loss for District 7: Finally, this cut hurts us. Data consistently shows that refugees are engines of economic revitalization. They open small businesses at higher rates than native-born citizens and fill critical labor shortages in healthcare and manufacturing. By slashing these numbers, the Administration is starving communities like District 7 of the vitality and workforce we need to grow. I support restoring the cap to 125,000 to ensure we are doing our part globally and growing our economy.

locally.

Despite the cut to new refugee arrivals, refugee support agencies are still supporting tens of thousands of refugees who were lawfully admitted to the United States over the past 5-10 years. What would you do to alleviate the burden that has been placed on refugee support agencies from funding cuts and recissions as well as from the cut to new arrivals?

My strategy is simple: I support abolishing ICE and conducting a massive transfer of federal resources from 'Enforcement' to 'Integration.' We cannot claim we lack the funds to support refugees when we are spending billions on a paramilitary force to terrorize them.

1. The 'Redistribution' Solution: To alleviate the financial burden on refugee agencies, I would aggressively cut the bloated budget of ICE and redirect those billions directly to the Office of Refugee Resettlement (HHS). Currently, we prioritize hunting people down over helping them integrate. This is a misallocation of assets. By reallocating these funds, we can fully subsidize the non-profits (like Catholic Charities and local mutual aid groups) that handle housing, job placement, and English language training. We will solve the funding crisis by ending the enforcement crisis.

2. Ending a Rogue Agency: I call for the abolition of ICE because it has morphed into an unaccountable paramilitary force that operates with near-impunity. They have a documented history of racial profiling, conducting warrantless raids, detaining U.S. citizens, and operating what effectively function as concentration camps. An agency that acts above the law and terrorizes our communities has no place in a free society—and it certainly shouldn't be draining taxpayer dollars that could be used for humanitarian aid.

3. Replacing Criminalization with Civil Processing: We must strip immigration enforcement of its military gear and police powers. I advocate replacing ICE with a specialized Civil Regulatory Agency focused strictly on case management and legal processing.

The Goal: Instead of armed agents kicking down doors, the new system will rely on social workers and case managers to provide clear, equitable paths to residency.

The Outcome: This shift not only restores civil liberties but also frees up massive amounts of funding to ensure that refugee support agencies are never forced to turn people away due to budget cuts again.

Candidate Priorities

What are some of the key priorities you would like to pursue in Congress?

My highest priority is to break the corruption that prevents us from solving any other problem. While I am fighting for Universal Free High-Quality Healthcare, Education, Childcare, Public Colleges, and a Living Wage (my H.E.A.L. Act), I know those bills will die in committee unless we first ban all PACs and Lobbyists and move to publicly financed elections to end the 'pay-to-play' culture in Congress.

1. The Evidence of Oligarchy (The Princeton Study): We don't just 'feel' like the system is rigged; the data proves it. A landmark Princeton University study (Gilens & Page) analyzed nearly 1,800 policy changes over 20 years and found a terrifying truth: the preferences of the average American have a "near-zero" impact on public policy. Meanwhile, the preferences of economic elites and business interests have massive influence.

The Reality: Whether 0% or 100% of the public supports a bill, it has the same low chance of passing—unless wealthy interest groups want it.

My Mission: I am running to reverse this trend and restore the statistical relevance of the American voter.

2. The Bipartisan Consensus (Pew Research): The political class wants you to believe that campaign finance reform is a 'fringe' issue. That is a lie. According to a 2023 Pew Research, 72% of Americans believe there should be limits on political spending. It's Not Partisan: This isn't just a Democratic wish

list. The same data shows that 76% of Democrats and 71% of Republicans support these limits.

The Mandate: The American people are united against corruption; it is only the politicians in Washington who are divided.

3. **Exposing the 'Party Dues' Extortion Racket:** Most Americans do not know that both the Democratic and Republican parties effectively charge rent for power.

The Price Tag: To get a seat on a powerful committee (like Ways & Means or Appropriations), a Representative is often required to raise hundreds of thousands—sometimes millions—of dollars in 'party dues' for the DCCC or NRCC.

The Consequence: This is legalized bribery. It forces your Representative to spend 4–6 hours a day 'dialing for dollars' from big money donors to pay their dues, rather than reading legislation or listening to you. If they don't pay up, they lose their seat at the table. This disenfranchises voters by ensuring that committee power is based on fundraising ability, not legislative expertise.

4. **The Mechanics of Capture (How They Buy Your Rep):** We must understand the lifecycle of this corruption:

Step 1: The Buy-In: Campaigns are expensive. PACs, Lobbyists, and the 1% fund candidates early, making politicians reliant on their cash to get elected and pay those 'party dues.'

Step 2: The Return on Investment (ROI): Once elected, these Representatives are expected to deliver for their donors—blocking price caps or passing tax cuts—instead of serving their constituents.

Step 3: The Threat: If a Representative tries to vote with their conscience, special interest groups threaten to fund a primary challenger—a new 'puppet' who will follow orders.

5. **Breaking the Wheel:** I want to ban this entire ecosystem. By prohibiting PAC and Lobbyists money and outlawing the 'party dues' requirement for committee assignments, we return power to the voters. A Representative's influence should come from their ideas and their constituents, not their ability to extort cash for the party machine. We cannot fix healthcare, housing, or gun violence until we fix the system that profits from leaving them broken.

Any additional information you would like to share with us?

Yes. I want to acknowledge that this questionnaire covered incredibly sensitive and heavy topics—from war and foreign aid to systemic corruption and poverty. My intention is not to upset anyone, but to treat these critical issues with the seriousness they deserve.

1. **A Commitment to Honest Dialogue:** I recognize that my approach—rooted in hard data and legal facts—may not align with everyone's views on every single issue. And that is okay. In my career in Human Resources, I learned that the most respectful thing you can do for people is to be transparent with them. I am running to be a Representative who tells you the truth about where I stand and why, rather than offering comfortable talking points just to secure a vote. I believe you deserve that level of honesty.

2. **Democracy Is Not a Spectator Sport:** Beyond these specific policies, I want to stress that democracy does not end at the ballot box. We are living in a moment where our rights are under constant threat. To protect them, we need active participants. I urge everyone reading this to get civically involved—join your local community groups, organize, encourage others to be civically engaged, and peacefully protest whenever our Constitution is violated. We cannot wait for someone else to save us; we are the ones we have been waiting for.

3. A Call for New Leaders: Finally, I want to encourage regular people to run for office. For too long, we have left governance to career politicians and the wealthy. But true change starts when our representatives actually look like and live like the communities they serve. If you do not see your struggles represented in the halls of power, I implore you: run. Be the voice your community needs. Change starts with us.

Reed Showalter

Security

The federal Nonprofit Security Grant Program is currently funded at \$274.5 million. Do you support increasing it to \$360 million or at least maintaining its current funding level?

Yes, I support increasing the federal Nonprofit Security Grant Program, and generally support efforts to improve the security of nonprofits and civil society against attacks, disasters, and emergencies.

Antisemitism

Antisemitism is surging across the United States. What will you do to help combat antisemitism and bring different communities together?

I will push to restore funding to the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Civil Rights Division, and fight to end the corruption in the DOJ that has increased under the current administration.

I also believe combating antisemitism starts with protecting Jewish communities and remaining steadfast in my commitment to justice and safety. I will show up for Jewish communities in moments of fear, and I'll bring leaders together to build strong coalitions that reject hate in all forms.

Antisemitism is growing at both ends of the political spectrum. How do you plan to address antisemitism on both sides of the aisle.

I will call on members of both parties to strengthen federal hate crime laws, and will push to fully fund the DOJ's Civil Rights Division and FBI's hate-crime tracking divisions. I will also push to require transparency and oversight for social media platforms which allow their algorithms to amplify hate content.

I will also use Congress's oversight role to ensure that Members of both parties hold universities and federal agencies accountable for enforcing civil-rights protections, including Title VI, so Jewish students and workers are safe wherever they learn and work.

Israel

Do you support efforts to boycott, divest from, or sanction Israel, Israeli goods, company's services, academics, academic institutions, and cultural activities? Relatedly, do you support boycotting, divesting from or sanctioning U.S. or other companies that do business in or with Israel?

I support Americans' First Amendment right to protest, including the right to use their wallets to speak out against policies or corporations that contradict their values. That absolutely includes boycotts, divestment, or sanctions as forms of political expression. In general, I'm supportive of these tools, because nonviolent economic pressure has a long history in movements for justice and human rights.

That said, I also recognize that some leaders and organizations within the broader BDS movement can be combative in ways that shut down dialogue or create unproductive divisions. I support the underlying principle that people should be able to advocate for human rights through economic choices, but I don't believe any movement is beyond criticism, and I reject rhetoric that targets or alienates Jewish communities.

At a bigger-picture level, I worry that focusing solely on private boycotts can let elected officials off the hook. Real justice and real accountability require systemic reform clear U.S. policy standards on human rights, responsible oversight of military aid, and diplomatic leadership. Boycotts can be one tool, but they can't replace the responsibility of public servants to act. My priority is ensuring that our policies reflect our values and that all people can live with safely and with dignity.

Do you support continued U.S. military aid to Israel or additional conditions related to that aid?

I do not support continued military aid to Israel. American tax dollars should not be used to fund a foreign military that has been found by multiple international organizations, including the United Nations and Amnesty International, to have engaged in war crimes and genocidal acts.

What is your view on the role of Congress in shaping U.S.-Israel relations?

Congress has a critical responsibility to ensure that U.S.-Israel policy aligns with American values, international law, and a commitment to human rights. For too long, Congress has acted as a rubber stamp, especially on military aid, without demanding accountability or insisting that the U.S. support peace and protect civilians.

That means using Congress' oversight authority to ensure that no U.S. dollars are used to violate human rights or perpetuate indefinite occupation. It means reevaluating and, when necessary, opposing unconditional military aid when it undermines long-term security for Israelis and Palestinians alike. And it means insisting on diplomatic

leadership rather than relying on military solutions that only fuel further violence.

At its best, Congress can push U.S. foreign policy away from reflexive, status-quo support and toward a framework that promotes real accountability and lays the groundwork for a just and lasting peace.

Do you support the concept of a two-state solution whereby the Jewish State of Israel exists safely and securely alongside an independent Palestinian state that doesn't include Hamas or other terrorist organizations?

I support a two-state solution, and I also denounce Hamas. It is a terrorist organization that oppresses both the Palestinian people and the people of Israel with violent, hateful attacks.

Have you been to Israel? If yes, when and with whom? If no, would you be interested in visiting?

I have not been to Israel. I am not opposed to visiting one day in a personal capacity. However, I would not be interested in a state-sponsored trip while Prime Minister Netanyahu is in power.

Health & Human Services

Illinois Medicaid is the largest health insurer in the state, serving approximately 3.4 million people. The recent changes in H.R. 1 will force Illinois to make difficult funding decisions. What steps would you take to prevent reductions in care that could come from states' tightening eligibility requirements, cutting provider reimbursement levels and/or reducing access to medical care, especially for children, the economically disadvantaged, older adults and people with disabilities?

I support universal single-payer healthcare, and I believe anything short of that leaves too many people behind. But while we fight for a truly universal system, there are concrete steps we can take right now to move toward a fairer, more affordable, and publicly accountable healthcare system. That includes creating a public pharmacy benefit manager to break the power of middlemen, expanding public drug manufacturing so lifesaving medicines aren't held hostage by monopolies, and ending the corporate ownership of healthcare that puts profits ahead of patients. We can address the challenges older adults face not with piecemeal fixes, but by tackling the broader crisis of healthcare affordability for everyone.

And we must rein in, or ultimately phase out, Medicare Advantage, which drains resources from traditional Medicare while delivering worse outcomes and higher costs.

If elected, will you support and co-sponsor the SSI (Supplemental Security Income) Savings Penalty Elimination Act, which would raise the asset limit for individuals on SSI from \$2,000 to \$10,000 for individuals, and from \$3,000 to \$20,000 for couples?

Yes. Furthermore, I would support raising the limits even higher than \$10,000/\$20,000.

Do you support increasing funding for Home and Community-Based Services, a component of Medicaid that helps people with disabilities and older adults live and thrive in the setting of their choice and avoid institutional care?

Yes, absolutely. We have a responsibility to care for the Americans who helped build this country. Everyone deserves to live their final years in dignity.

What are your views on the mandatory work requirements included in H.R. 1 to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, which is relied upon by nearly 2 million Illinoisans?

It's hard enough for people to find work, and too many Americans are blocked from employment because of disability, criminal records, or other systemic barriers. Programs like work requirements and other bureaucratic hurdles are often weaponized to keep people from accessing benefits they need. Benefits should be available to everyone.

What steps do you believe need to be undertaken to reduce gun violence?

I support reinstating the Clinton era assault rifle ban that expired in 2004 and making it permanent, expanding

Brady laws, and running national background checks. I support a minimum age for purchasing a firearm, and strict protections to prevent those with histories of violent crimes, including domestic violence from owning guns. Beyond this, I support funding local programs like violence interrupters, community organizations, and local opportunity efforts that are proven to improve public safety.

Would you have voted to pass the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2026 the law that ended the 2025 government shutdown? Please explain your response.

I would not have voted to pass the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2026. At a time of unconstitutional cuts to critical programs and an all out assault on essential programs, the Democratic Party had a single point of political power to defend Americans. The shutdown was a miserable but essential fight to protect people from being forced into choices that will cost lives. Passing the Appropriations Act as is resulted in massive increases to healthcare costs, codified cuts to essential infrastructure, and allowed the continued abuse of power used to terrorize immigrants and people of color with illegal deployments of law enforcement.

Refugee Services

Do you support the recent Presidential Determination that cut new refugee arrivals from 125,000 to approximately 7,500, with most of the 7,500 slots being held open for White Afrikaners?

I am categorically against the reduction of our refugee acceptance. We should be working to accept more refugees and improve the immigration process to accept more people. Immigrants have always been America's superpower, and we should embrace them to the maximum extent possible. I oppose immigration restrictions based on ethnicity, skin color, or religion, such as preferential treatment to white Afrikaners.

Despite the cut to new refugee arrivals, refugee support agencies are still supporting tens of thousands of refugees who were lawfully admitted to the United States over the past 5-10 years. What would you do to alleviate the burden that has been placed on refugee support agencies from funding cuts and recessions as well as from the cut to new arrivals?

We need to increase funding and reduce bureaucratic nonsense that plagues the immigration process. Anyone who wants to become an American should be able to become an American. I also would propose a housing public works program which includes a pathway to citizenship for immigrant participants that build houses in the program.

Candidate Priorities

What are some of the key priorities you would like to pursue in Congress?

My priority in Congress would be restoring affordability to our basic necessities, particularly housing, healthcare, and food.

Housing is the most expensive thing in our lives, and home ownership is increasingly out of reach for ordinary families. I will push for the federal government to take direct responsibility: build and sell housing at cost, clamp down on private equity buying up homes just to use as investments, and ban collusive algorithms that allow corporate landlords to drive rents up far beyond what working people can afford.

I support Medicare-for-All, and until that becomes reality, I will fight aggressively to reduce co-pays, deductibles, and out-of-pocket costs. I will challenge the corporate control of medicine, end profiteering practices among pharmaceutical middlemen, expand public manufacture of critical drugs like insulin and cancer treatments, and break up corporate monopolies in healthcare that prioritize profit over people.

And I believe access to nutritious, affordable food is fundamental to human dignity and community health. I will work to reclaim our food system from powerful agribusiness monopolies and return control to local farmers, producers, and communities. That means supporting local food producers, preventing corporate consolidation in agriculture, and establishing public grocery stores to ensure everyone has access to healthy, affordable food. I'll fight junk fees on grocery and food delivery, and push policies that lower the cost of basics, from fertilizers for farmers, to fair prices for consumers.

Any additional information you would like to share with us?

I was born-and-raised in Oak Park and am honored to run for this seat in my home district. I believe that this election presents an opportunity for Illinois' 7th District to have representation that has the energy and know-how to fight for real change and progressive values.

When I look at American politics, I see that we are in a time of crisis, but also a time of tremendous opportunity. I am running for office because I believe that we need to oppose the worst abuses of the Trump Administration, but also because I believe that Democrats need a real and bold answer to what kind of society we are going to build when we take power back.

I believe that my experience in the federal government, in Congress on the House Judiciary Committee, at the Department of Justice, the Federal Trade Commission, and the White House National Economic Council, will make me particularly well-suited to hit the ground running on day one.