



Jewish United Fund

— EDUCATION —

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CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRES

US HOUSE DISTRICT 9

Election Day: March 17, 2026

In December 2025 and January 2026, JUF met with candidates for US House 9. 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.

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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. One of the core functions of our government is to ensure that all people are safe. This program aims to protect nonprofit organizations, but primarily houses of worship at high risk of terror attacks. It is abhorrent that we are at a time where something like this is necessary, but this has become a deeply unfortunate reality. We have seen an extreme uptick in hate crimes against houses of worship, especially Jewish, Muslim, and Black Christians. Jewish people make up around 2% of the American population but are highly disproportionately the targets of hate crimes.

The Nonprofit Security Grant Program is a small but effective initiative that our federal government can continue to implement to prevent violence against our most vulnerable groups. Many feel that their houses of worship are the only place where they can be at ease, and with rising costs around the country, these institutions should not have to bear the extreme cost of security all alone. If elected, I would welcome a \$360 million appropriation to the program in the federal budget, which would include a dedicated NSGP office at the Department of Homeland Security and mandated congressional oversight to ensure the public is informed of the necessity of the program. This will be especially important given DHS's recent illegal actions against immigrants and activists. Oversight is essential to ensuring that this program allocates funds effectively and fairly.

Antisemitism

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

Antisemitism should not be a partisan issue or even an American issue: it is simply a human issue. Jewish people deserve more from Congress and, if elected, I will fight for the rights of Jewish people to practice their faith, maintain their traditions, and live in peace without fear of any repercussions — something that Jewish people have lacked for thousands of years. There are many actions that congressional leaders can do in pursuit of ending the cycle of hatred of the Jewish people. I plan to do all of these and will encourage fellow Members of Congress to do the same.

I will introduce an American Jewish Security Act in Congress, that will mandate the hiring of Jewish Community Liaisons in all federally-funded state investigative agencies, local police departments, schools, and hospitals located in or around significant Jewish population centers, and will make it explicit federal law for the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division and Criminal Division to intervene where discrimination is found.

Many antisemitic hate crimes in the real world are inspired by hateful online posts. Social media has become a breeding ground for hateful ideas and violent rhetoric. Building on my experience monitoring domestic extremism and bigotry in online spaces as a journalist and media analyst, I will work with social media platforms like Meta, X, YouTube, and others to use the power of Congress to strengthen their anti-bias detection systems and strengthen their terms of use. If elected, I will call for and work towards the establishment of a bicameral, bipartisan Congressional-Executive Commission on Countering Digital Hatred that will both monitor antisemitism and establish federal cooperative programs that counter violent extremism. This will replace and expand the work of the House Bipartisan Task Force on Antisemitism.

I will also work with internet service providers and federal law enforcement units like the FBI's National Threat Operations Center to help bridge the gap between industry and the government where it comes to flagging and intercepting violent acts before they occur — many developed nations already monitor public Internet traffic for this purpose, and the U.S. is lagging far behind.

As I have done throughout my campaign, if elected, I will set aside dedicated, recurring, and regular time slots for meetings with community leaders and constituents, both in-person in Washington, D.C., in the Ninth District, and virtually. No one should be left out, and where other politicians have failed to include the Jewish community, I will step up. Congress has the ability to share things with the public at an unrivaled scale. This tool must be used to spread awareness on the threat of antisemitism, its exponential growth, and the

solutions to such. I would also like to regularly host pluralist community events where interfaith interaction is central — Jews of course included. If more Americans came to appreciate their Jewish neighbors as they are, I believe that we can build a strong and united community, one where no one gets left behind.

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

Unfortunately, the rise of the Internet and the rise of antisemitism in recent decades is no coincidence. So many leaders have watched as blatant antisemitism proliferated online, propagated by people of various ideological stripes. This went from bad to worse after Hamas's October 7th attacks when many people in the US and across the world falsely and offensively conflated the actions of the State of Israel with Jewish Americans. While my career as a researcher focused particularly on the far-right, all hate is the same: it is almost always borne of ignorance.

Similar to several other sectors, the federal government needs to step up in its role of protecting people, and it has the means to do so.

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?

Our First Amendment rights — the rights to freedom of speech, religion, assembly, a free press, petitioning our government — are of the utmost importance and must always be upheld. Boycotting and the peaceful exercise of free expression are clear instances of free speech. If elected, I will fight for our fundamental freedoms, which include boycotting, and I will work to undo the harm that has been already done to those expressing their First Amendment rights.

There is more than enough evidence that blanket sanctions only negatively impact the people living under the government of target, and that they only cause a net-negative impact on civilians. However, I do support targeted sanctions on leaders who incite or enact crimes against humanity and violate international law. This includes Benjamin Netanyahu, Itamar Ben-Gvir, Bezalel Smotrich, and others.

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

I believe that unconditional military support for any nation goes against our national interests. Israel has consistently and deliberately violated the tenets of the Leahy Laws, meant to ensure American weapons and aid never end up in the hands of human rights abusers. Unfortunately, those criteria and requirements are routinely waived when it comes to Israel, by politicians in both parties. Until Israel complies with international law and human rights standards, the United States should not provide a single bullet, bomb, or dollar in furtherance of the oppression, occupation, and murder of Palestinian people.

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

Congress must pass legislation to make it the official policy of the United States to support a two-state solution by passing the Two-State Solution Act. Trump and Netanyahu are making the dream of Palestinian self-determination dwindle by the day. For the sake of Israelis and Palestinians, this policy must be codified in law and reflected by the actions of the State Department.

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 think that the best way to achieve peace is ensuring human rights for every person living in Israel and Palestine. There can be no Palestinian state that includes Hamas, PIJ, or similar groups. Similarly, a Palestinian state with close ties to Iran would risk regional conflict and global instability. Similarly, there cannot be an Israeli state that occupies parts of Palestine, permits illegal settlements and attacks across the West Bank, or restricts the freedom of movement and infrastructure of Palestinians.

I am a Palestinian-American, and what I, and Jewish Americans know is that Israel and Palestine have a unified fate. The actions and consequences of each impacts the other and there will be no lasting peace so long as one is committing a wrong. We cannot allow people like Trump and Netanyahu to determine the fate

of Israel and Palestine when they have routinely proven their interests lie not with the protection of human rights, but accumulating power.

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 but would like to travel to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories on a fact-finding mission if elected to Congress.

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 fight tirelessly for Medicaid funding and I understand the necessity of continued funding. It is egregious that in the wealthiest country in the history of the world, our leaders debate the feasibility of ensuring everyone has access to healthcare, which is a human right. I support Medicare for All and will continue to do so if elected to Congress. While the Affordable Care Act was a step in the right direction, it did not address the root causes of healthcare inaccessibility and unaffordability in the United States. We need a systemic overhaul of how we go about providing healthcare; Medicare for All will save lives, improve outcomes, curb predatory behavior by providers and insurers, and reduce costs for all Americans, including children, the economically disadvantaged, older adults and people with disabilities.

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 amount introduced in the Act is a minimum amount of money we must have a limit to SSI savings. Social security continues to be gutted by the Trump administration, and it was far from perfect before then. If elected, I would co-sponsor the SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act, to not only raise the minimums, but introduce permanent inflation indexing. The current law, like many, is extremely outdated and must be amended as soon as possible.

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. So many Americans are suffering because they do not have access to home and community-based healthcare services. I would like to see this implemented with a larger healthcare system overhaul, including the passage and implementation of Medicare for All. Older adults should have the right to choose where they will live without substantial financial burdens that are preventable through smart government investments.

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?

Food is essential to human life, and access to it should be unconditional. I cannot believe that this is a controversial statement. I do not support mandatory work requirements in order to receive SNAP benefits.

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

It is important to reject dangerous right-wing "solutions" to this problem, like arming teachers or building prison-like schools in the name of security. We must address the root of the problem, which is access to guns themselves. If elected, I will only use fact-based, non-biased statistics to discuss crime trends and gun violence, and promote a restorative justice model as a reform to our broken justice system. This also means restoring funding to parts of the federal government responsible for data collection that have been cut by the Trump administration. In short, we need good data to speak clearly about crime, particularly gun violence. Nevertheless, we must ban assault weapons, but also enact comprehensive universal background checks, require waiting periods, institute mandatory gun safety training, close gun show and ghost gun loopholes, and prioritize victims of gun violence above all else.

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 was extremely disappointed in Democrats who caved to Republicans for barely anything in return by voting to reopen the government. There should be no middle ground or capitulation when it comes to essential federal government services.

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. Not only should there not be a limit on refugee arrivals, but the president's preference for white Afrikaners and executive orders surrounding what he views as "white genocide" in South Africa are racist, plain and simple. While not surprising, to see it enacted at the highest level of office is frightening, and a harsh reminder of how this administration caters to racists and advances racist narratives.

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?

The federal government must appropriate a significant amount of funds to refugee support agencies and programs to alleviate the burden that they are facing. We must build institutions that can handle supporting refugees and immigrants, and we have the ability to do so. This is what makes our country great, it is what made our country great, and we should not have to compromise on supporting our diverse communities, especially when they are struggling.

Candidate Priorities

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

Right now, my main priority is fighting back against Trump's authoritarianism and protecting our communities from ICE. We can't start to rebuild the house until we put out the fire. A major reason I decided to run for Congress is that so many Democrats in Congress are sitting back and letting an authoritarian completely dismantle the government and eviscerate workers' rights. Trump and his allies have banded together to break this country. They have an obvious fascist vision, one of a militarized country where only a few dozen rich men have a seat at the table. And the Democratic "strategy" of cowering to this administration is not only morally reprehensible but it also won't work. Fixing this involves a true commitment to democracy, including anti-corruption policy (against individual stock trading and lobbying), ranked-choice voting, and judicial branch reform (term limits, sortition, and a code of ethics).

Beyond this authoritarian administration, we must tackle the decades-long issues of affordability when it comes to housing, healthcare, groceries, and other essential goods. I consider these issues as nothing less than essential to basic existence. Our government has more than enough money and capability to assure that no person living here will go hungry, have to forgo a doctor's appointment, or live paycheck to paycheck. Everyone should be able to afford housing, healthcare, and groceries with money left over to save and spend. We're often told, particularly by the richest and most powerful, that it's too complicated a problem to solve, but it doesn't have to be. We deserve to thrive, not just survive — and every political leader should work towards that goal.

In Congress, I will be committed to fighting for all of my constituents. This includes proactively combatting prejudice, misinformation, and hate crimes. I have been appalled by hate crimes in the Ninth District and across the country, including and especially hate crimes against Jewish people. I will spend a significant amount of time working to foster mutual understanding between communities and combat the root causes of hate. Antisemitism rises at times of political instability and hate perpetuates when people's material needs are not met. As a Member of Congress, I will work to push a legislative agenda that both addresses the root causes of some forms of hate by meeting everyone's essential needs and directly pushing back against dangerous and hateful narratives.

Lastly, it seems that many leaders are forgetting about the ongoing climate crisis, the existential threat to all of us. One of my foremost commitments is dealing with this before it gets even worse. The immense harm

caused by this crisis, both in my district and around the world, will get worse unless we act quickly. From ecosystem collapse, to rising sea levels, to scarce potable water, these are issues that profoundly affect people alive today, and will impact everyone else moving forward. Worst of all, the Trump

administration's subservience to the big oil, agriculture, and chemical lobbies will only accelerate the planet's warming, endangering everyone in the world and their futures in the name of short-term profit. In light of this, we must enact policy that rapidly scales back use of fossil fuels, and reach net-zero as soon as possible.

Any additional information you would like to share with us?

I look forward to meeting with you to discuss these key issues further. We share a strong commitment to protecting the Jewish community in the Ninth District and beyond. As a Palestinian, I have grown up and lived my life with many people assuming that I hate Israelis, Jews, or somehow that I want to wipe Israel off the face of the earth, when none of those things are true. And I know that many Jewish people share a similar type of pain, having grown up and lived with many people believing harmful and inaccurate things about them. I believe that in times of profound crisis and division, we can build opportunities to reconnect and realign in order to pursue common interests. It is in everyone's interest to combat antisemitism and other forms of hate, and I look forward to continuing to earnestly engage with the Jewish community to address these pressing issues.

Phil Andrew

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 at least maintaining the Nonprofit Security Grant Program's current funding level, with openness to increasing investment as we see violence or threats of violence increase. This program provides critical resources to protect nonprofits, including houses of worship and community organizations, from targeted violence and security threats. Ensuring robust funding strengthens public safety, supports vulnerable communities, and upholds the right of all Americans to gather and serve without fear.

Antisemitism

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

Antisemitism is a dangerous threat to our communities and to the values of dignity and equality we all share. I will work to combat it by supporting stronger federal investments in security for houses of worship and nonprofits, expanding education that builds understanding across communities, and ensuring that hate crimes are investigated and prosecuted with urgency. Just as important, I will bring people together by fostering dialogue, building coalitions across faiths and cultures, and promoting policies that strengthen trust and solidarity so that no community feels isolated or unsafe.

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 a threat to our democracy and to the safety of our communities, no matter where it originates. I will confront antisemitism on both sides of the aisle by calling it out clearly, supporting robust enforcement of civil rights laws, and ensuring that federal resources are directed toward protecting vulnerable communities. I will also work to build coalitions across faiths, races, and political perspectives, because combating hate requires unity, dialogue, and a commitment to shared values of dignity and respect.

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 oppose Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) efforts that single out Israel and often target Jewish Americans, contributing to hate and hostility. That includes boycotting, divesting from or sanctioning non-Israeli companies that do business in or with Israel.

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

I unequivocally support continued U.S. military aid to Israel. Maintaining a qualitative military edge (QME) for Israel, supported by strong U.S. capabilities, is critical to peace and deterrence in the Middle East and worldwide. This includes continued support for defensive systems like Iron Dome and further research into advanced technologies that protect civilians and strengthen shared security.

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

Congress plays a vital role in shaping U.S.-Israel relations by ensuring that our partnership is rooted in shared democratic values, mutual security, and a commitment to peace. It is Congress's responsibility to provide oversight of foreign aid, support cooperative defense initiatives, and encourage diplomacy that strengthens stability in the Middle East. Just as importantly, Congress must foster dialogue that builds bridges between communities here at home,

combating antisemitism and ensuring that our foreign policy reflects both our national interests and our moral responsibility to stand with allies against hate and extremism.

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, support, and will work alongside leaders who envision and strive toward long-term solutions that can ensure peace and prosperity for all people in the region — ultimately through a two-state solution in which both Israelis and Palestinians have their national sovereignty and security upheld.

Sustainable peace can only be guaranteed by removing Hamas from power and empowering leaders genuinely committed to peace and responsible self-governance.

The November 2025 UN Security Council resolution, drafted by the U.S., offers a framework for a path forward, providing leadership and a vision for stability and peace. True security demands a clear-eyed vision for peace grounded in both realism and humanity.

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, but would welcome the opportunity to visit at the earliest opportunity. Unique among candidates in the IL-09 Democratic primary, and unlike many in Congress, I worked closely with Israeli intelligence forces on counterterrorism and violence prevention efforts during my time in the FBI to protect the U.S., Israel and the broader Jewish community.

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 back federal actions that stabilize Medicaid financing, protect continuous eligibility for children and families, ensure adequate provider payment, and invest in the safety-net infrastructure so Illinois does not have to tighten eligibility, cut rates, or reduce access. These steps keep vulnerable residents covered, sustain hospitals and clinics, and prevent avoidable health crises. Affordable healthcare is a human right, not a privilege reserved for the wealthy or well-connected.

If elected, will you support and cosponsor 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 this important legislation. The current asset limits of \$2,000 for individuals and \$3,000 for couples are outdated and force people with disabilities and older adults into financial insecurity simply to maintain eligibility for critical benefits. Raising these limits to \$10,000 and \$20,000 respectively will allow families to save responsibly, plan for emergencies, and build a more stable future without fear of losing essential support. This reform is about dignity, fairness, and ensuring that SSI truly serves as a pathway to independence rather than a barrier to financial stability.

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 this vital component of Medicaid. These programs allow people with disabilities and older adults to live with dignity in the setting of their choice, rather than being forced into institutional care. By expanding investment in HCBS, we can strengthen families, reduce the costs associated with institutionalization, and ensure that every individual has the opportunity to thrive in their community with the support they need.

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 am strongly against the mandatory work requirements included in H.R. 1 for SNAP benefits. Nearly 2 million Illinoisans rely on SNAP to put food on the table, and these punitive requirements would only make it harder for families, children, older adults, and people with disabilities to access the nutrition they need. Instead of erecting barriers, Congress should focus on strengthening economic opportunity, supporting workforce development, and ensuring that no one goes hungry simply because they face challenges beyond their control. SNAP is a lifeline, and I will fight to protect it.

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

Reducing gun violence requires a comprehensive, public health approach that treats this crisis with the urgency it deserves. We must invest in evidence-based community violence intervention (CVI) programs, which have been proven to save lives, and restore the upwards of \$180 million in CVI funding that was cut by the Trump administration, along with re-establishing the Office of Violence Prevention that was dismantled.

At the same time, we need better training for healthy and effective policing, and full implementation of consent decrees to ensure accountability and trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve. We must also enact common-sense gun safety measures, including banning assault weapons, requiring safe storage of firearms, and strengthening red flag laws to prevent tragedies before they occur. This is not about partisanship — it's about protecting families, saving lives, and ensuring that every community can thrive free from the fear of gun violence.

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 to pass the Continuing Appropriations Act. While ending the government shutdown was necessary, this bill failed to address the underlying issues that caused the shutdown in the first place and did not provide the long-term stability our communities and federal workforce deserve. I believe Congress must move beyond short-term fixes and instead commit to responsible, forward-looking budgeting that protects essential services, strengthens public trust, and ensures families are not caught in the crossfire of political brinkmanship.

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?

The decision to set the refugee admissions cap at just 7,500 is a dramatic and dangerous reduction at a time of record global displacement. Refugees fleeing persecution should not be turned away, and America's credibility as a humanitarian leader is at stake when we abandon our historic role as a haven for those in need. Jewish organizations across the country, including HIAS, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, and others, have rightly condemned this cap as unprecedented and heartbreaking, citing both Jewish history and our shared moral obligation to "welcome the stranger."

I believe Congress must act to raise refugee admissions to levels that reflect both the scale of global need and our nation's values. That means rejecting discriminatory prioritization, restoring admissions at least to the Biden administration's levels, and ensuring a fair, transparent process that protects vulnerable populations. America's strength has always come from its willingness to open its doors to those seeking safety, and I will fight to uphold that tradition.

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 support agencies are carrying a tremendous burden, continuing to serve tens of thousands of refugees who were lawfully admitted into the U.S. even as federal funding has been cut and new arrivals reduced. To alleviate this strain, I will fight to restore and expand federal funding streams that sustain housing, employment, language, and

trauma-informed services for refugees. I will also work to ensure that agencies have predictable, multi-year funding commitments rather than being forced to operate under constant uncertainty and rescissions. In addition, I will champion partnerships between federal, state, and local governments to strengthen community integration programs, and support policies that recognize the vital role these agencies play in upholding America's humanitarian commitments.

Candidate Priorities

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

In Congress, my priorities will focus on building economic security and opportunity, promoting principled leadership, and advancing gun violence prevention and public safety. I believe in a fair economy where everyone has the opportunity to earn, grow, and contribute. I'll fight for smart policies and collaborative implementation that create sustainable economic growth and good union jobs, support small businesses, innovation, climate resilience, healthcare coverage, and reflect the real cost of living, educating and supporting families in our district.

I believe principled leadership means leading with integrity, transparency, and a commitment to solving problems rather than scoring political points. We've seen the cost of chaos. It's time to stop the bleeding and restore strategic, principled leadership. I will work across the aisle when possible, but I will always stand firm in defending democratic values, protecting vulnerable communities, and ensuring government serves the people.

Finally, as someone deeply committed to reducing gun violence, I will advance comprehensive, evidence-based, and holistic public safety strategies that go beyond slogans and deliver real results—honoring victims with action, not rhetoric. These priorities reflect my commitment to building stronger, safer, and more equitable communities for all.

Any additional information you would like to share with us?

My views on the U.S.–Israel relationship are shaped by deeply personal experiences as a survivor of gun violence who understands the long-term impact of terror and trauma. I am committed to doing everything I can to keep communities safe because I know people and societies thrive when they are secure.

That commitment includes a 21-year career as an FBI agent and hostage negotiator supporting counterterrorism missions in the U.S. and overseas, including leading terrorism and extremist investigations, covert operations to mitigate nuclear proliferation and countering destabilizing intelligence threats.

During my time in the FBI, I was lead U.S. negotiator during the 2008 Mumbai terror attack and siege at the local Chabad House, where Rabbi Gavriel and Rivka Holtzberg were murdered and their then two-year-old son, Moshe, survived and later resettled in Israel.

After leaving the FBI, I founded PAX Group, a global crisis and conflict management consultancy that brings best practices from military intelligence, law enforcement, psychology, and communications to support organizations and community safety. I am proud of the work PAX Group has been doing to deliver meaningful results for our clients including designing a hate crimes curriculum in collaboration with the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center in Skokie.

I currently serve on the Advisory Board of the IIT Chicago-Kent Center for National Security, Human Rights, and the Rule of Law, advising on terrorism prevention, hostage recovery, hate-fueled violence, and the protection of democratic institutions.

Daniel Biss

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 increasing funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program.

Antisemitism

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

Due to my family's story and my Jewish faith, I deeply understand the horrific consequences of antisemitism. I take seriously and categorically condemn the rise of antisemitism targeting Jewish communities—particularly since the October 7th attacks.

I support implementing the Biden Administration's U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, which includes increasing awareness and understanding of antisemitism, including its threat to America, and broadening appreciation of Jewish American heritage, improving safety and security for Jewish communities, reversing the normalization of antisemitism and countering antisemitic discrimination, and building cross-community solidarity and collective action against hate.

As Congress looks at ways to combat the scourge of antisemitism—whether targeting our communal institutions, campuses, or anywhere Jews call home—it must do so in a way that protects the freedom of speech, including legitimate criticism of actions by the Israeli government.

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

We must do everything we can to combat the scourge that is antisemitism. When I was a member of the Illinois State Legislature I worked with anybody, no matter the party, to work on solving our most complicated problems. I will do the same in Congress to attack antisemitism from both the far right of the Republican Party and far left of the Democratic Party.

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 believe BDS is a tactic that has at times been used to advance anti-Semitic ideology, and that it moves us further away from a peaceful solution. In 2015, I voted for Illinois' bipartisan anti-BDS bill, which made Illinois the first state to divest its pension funds from companies that participated in the BDS movement. In 2017, I voted to expand that law to ban investments in companies with illegal ties to Iran. I will continue to oppose BDS as a member of Congress, while also opposing efforts to criminalize free speech or political activity.

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

I recognize the importance of the safety and security of a Jewish homeland in the State of Israel.

As Israel's closest friend and ally, the United States must always be committed to providing for Israel's defense. As a member of Congress, I will support continued aid to Israel in accordance with the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding.

With that said, I have also been outspoken about my disgust at the atrocities perpetrated by the Netanyahu government against civilians in Gaza. Years of experience have taught us that stern words from allies mean nothing to Prime Minister Netanyahu. To have an effect, the U.S. must stop the transfer of the offensive

weapons that facilitate this horror.

I continue to believe Congress must support funding for defensive weapons. In particular, I believe the U.S. must aggressively support and expand funding for the Iron Dome, which is critical for the safety of the people of Israel. I believe all military aid to every nation must be compliant with U.S. law.

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

I recognize the importance of the safety and security of a Jewish homeland in the State of Israel.

As Israel's closest friend and ally, the United States must always be committed to providing for Israel's defense. As a member of Congress, I will support continued aid to Israel in accordance with the 2016 Memorandum of Understanding.

With that said, I have also been outspoken about my disgust at the atrocities perpetrated by the Netanyahu government against civilians in Gaza. Years of experience have taught us that stern words from allies mean nothing to Prime Minister Netanyahu. To have an effect, the U.S. must stop the transfer of the offensive weapons that facilitate this horror.

I continue to believe Congress must support funding for defensive weapons. In particular, I believe the U.S. must aggressively support and expand funding for the Iron Dome, which is critical for the safety of the people of Israel. I believe all military aid to every nation must be compliant with U.S. 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?

Yes.

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

I am the descendant of Holocaust survivors who moved to Israel in 1948, settling in Herzliya, and the son of an Israeli citizen. My parents still have an apartment at the same Herzliya address where my mother grew up, and much of my extended family live in Israel today.

I grew up with two passports, spending every summer in Israel, and speaking Hebrew. I also spent a semester in Israel immediately after college, studying linguistics at Tel Aviv University and mathematics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem after spending a month studying Hebrew at the Ulpan Akiva in Netanya.

For many American elected officials, even those who care deeply about Israel and the Jewish people, the question of peace and security in the Middle East is a relatively abstract one. For me, this issue has always been and will always be deeply personal.

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 candidate and elected official I will always make it a priority to educate the public about the effects of these Medicaid cuts; and as mayor of Evanston, I will partner with non-profits, foundations, as well as the City government to help our residents access the resources they need notwithstanding these devastating cuts. When I am elected to Congress, hopefully in a House Democratic majority, we must place the repeal of these catastrophic cuts at the top of our priority list and deprive the Trump Administration of any victories until they are repealed.

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 oppose these requirements.

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

I'll fight for common-sense gun laws that focus on protecting lives, not guns. That means standing up to the NRA and pushing forward solutions the vast majority of Americans already support, which include passing universal background checks, an assault weapons ban, red flag laws, and requiring safe storage. I also believe we must push for a full repeal of the Second Amendment. It is a grossly corrupted and outdated law that we should repeal to allow all levels of government to impose responsible gun safety laws without constitutional threats.

Our national obsession with guns is claiming innocent lives every day. It's time for sensible gun policy that protects families and encourages responsible ownership while holding gun manufacturers responsible.

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 the law that ended the 2025 government shutdown. Throughout the shutdown, Democrats showed that we have the backbone to actually fight for what we believe in: lower costs, accessible healthcare, and a Congress that can be a check on Trump's chaos. Vague Republican promises are not enough — so I opposed the deal, which failed to deliver real progress on healthcare.

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 recissions as well as from the cut to new arrivals?

It's time for a humane, forward-looking immigration and refugee policy that upholds human dignity, acknowledges America's role in driving migration, and lives up to the promise of the American Dream. That means undoing the cruelty of the Trump era — but also going further: fixing our outdated visa system, honoring our promises to DREAMers, modernizing quotas, and cutting absurd wait times for legal entry.

We must build an asylum system that ensures a reasonable and speedy system, and create a path that provides immigrants a full path to citizenship. I am the son of an immigrant — and the grandson of immigrants who fled the horrors of the Holocaust. I know that America was built by immigrants — and is stronger because of it. I'll fight for an immigration system grounded in decency, the rule of law, and common sense.

Candidate Priorities

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

Climate action, economic security for working families, and political reform.

Patricia Brown

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 raising it to \$360 million or less if feasible, but ongoing government issues in the Middle East, South America, and the 2023 Israel-Hamas war make reductions unlikely.

Antisemitism

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

I appear additional online security measures are needed to combat issues promoted online, and sponsoring forums to discuss the issues and maybe annual television address pointing out the issues, addressing the issues and concerns with different communities and ethnic groups.

With bring different communities together, however, I think first, Israel is going to have to admit its wrongs with the destruction of an entire country (no hospitals, schools, residential areas, and historical sites all demolished, thousands of innocent children, killed and injured for life). This is something I believe needs to be done now, and NOT 20 to 50 years from now, as these apologies appears to come, later, than earlier.

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

Per article read, this happened after October 2023. That's why antisemitism has grown at both ends of the political spectrum, due to the USA support of Israel war and the sever destruction of Gaza, and situation the Palestinians people are facing. However, can we, as a society, really be honest as to why there's this increase in antisemitism? And deal with it and address straight forward? Doing this is going to be the only way, I think of moving forward, some serious thinkings, some serious discussions of which I would sponsor and bring different ethnic groups, professionals, professors and news and political analyst. A four to six series episode of discussions.

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?

It appears there's no stopping Israel, the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu from taking the Palestinian territory, a plan initiated from 1948. I understand the economic potential of this plan. However, Israel went about accruing the land, the wrong way. I understand Israel's long-standing military and strategic alliance with the USA.

With all of that said, and it all played out in the news. Unfortunately, I support some sort of boycotting Israel in attempts to stop them from the continued bombing and killing of children and people, and start releasing ample humanitarian aid to help the people suffering in Palestinian. However, we know why this is not happening.

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

Israel ranks 15 out of 145 countries, global military power. It appears Israel, currently does not need the military support as prior. Plus, most unfortunately, it appears they abused the USA and its military support with their overboard retaliation initiative due to October 7, 2023, attacks. Attacks, which I believe, could have been prevented if they wanted to prevent the attacks per the surveillance news coverage showed in the news. However, the attack gave Israel the rights to defend itself. Therefore, despite warnings of the possibility of an attack, per information presented in the news. They allow the attacks to happen to provide Cause of Action.

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

Try to work together to find other ways of negotiating conflicts, than war.

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. And honestly believe this could have been accomplished prior to 2023, with fairness, and the right negotiations.

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 Isreal. However, I have had discussions with individuals on the campaign trail who have been to Israel. Would I be interest in visiting Israel, at some point, possibly.

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?

Additionally, work to reduce wasteful spending in Medicaid via both ends the dept & recipients (ordering excessive MEDICAL supplies).

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, providing measures are implemented to prevent fraud

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, if needed, and providing measures are implemented to prevent fraud. And the agencies implement safety checks for the worker re: home conditions/health issues of clients.

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 agree with work requirements, however, one must acknowledge some individuals may not be able to work and some may be able to work. Work requirement hours, I think should range from 40 to 80 hours, dependent on age and other factors.

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

I would support National Gun violence Awareness commercial, mandatory school assembly, after school programs targeting potential area, produce annual mailing to high crime districts by working with law enforcement and organizations which have programs addressing the issues. (Lake county has a great program/model with the States Attorney's office)

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

Certainly, if possible, it's best to prevent hardship for constituents and resolve disagreements in advance. It seems that combining several bills addressing very different causes is what leads to ongoing, lengthy debates about these issues and concerns.

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?

There are reports in the news indicating that issues in South Africa have caused some individuals to be concerned and leave. Furthermore, there are ongoing conflicts in regions such as the Middle East, Europe, Asia, and now South America. However, once security concerns are addressed, refugee limits are expected to be lifted. If emergencies arise where more refugees need entry, the president has the authority to make decisions on such matters at that time.

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?

If not already established, implement an auditing process to ensure that funds are used and distributed properly within agencies and effectively support refugees.

In addition, collaborate with organizations, corporations, and philanthropists to gain their support. Consider also developing work programs for refugees as part of SNAP requirements.

Candidate Priorities

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

Key priorities I would pursue in congress are a Homeowner Protection Bill aims to safeguard owners without mortgages by stopping forced sales of their primary homes due to unpaid property taxes. Also supports affordable housing solutions/communities, reforms for better education, and a foundation that helps working families with expenses such as sports and music—concern addressed while on campaign trail. In addition, encouraging a new outlook on life, humanity, and coexistence; promote global peace initiatives over conflict of war, recognizing that there is too much killing in this world, lack of respect for the human life.

Any additional information you would like to share with us?

We live in a society filled with diverse people, perspectives, religions, cultures, and viewpoints. During a conversation, someone said to me, "Let's just agree to disagree." Yet, it's important that we also seek common ground to create win-win solutions for everyone involved.

Thank you for allowing me to introduce myself to the JUF community. If elected, I would look forward to working with your organization to help address some of these issues.

Thank you again.

Rocio Cleveland

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 agree to either support increasing it to \$360 million if the funds are available. If not, then I agree to at least maintain its current funding level.

Antisemitism

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

I'm already helping to combat antisemitism and bringing communities together when I hosted a prayer vigil in Woodstock, Illinois after the Hamas attacks. I speak bravely and boldly against antisemitism. In addition, I have open dialogue with people who are antisemitic and try to mentor them and its been a successful endeavor. In addition, I publicly confronted a Congressional candidate for lying to a 12 year old observant Jewish boy to his face. We MUST hold these people accountable publicly and STOP hate from multiplying. Additionally, I will actively encourage constituents and constituency organizations to help propose legislative actions to combat antisemitism. The problem of antisemitism is too large and important, which requires an all hands on deck solutions.

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

I have addressed antisemitism on both ends of the political spectrum and I don't support hatred. I believe we must NOT be cowardice when it comes to our religious freedoms. We are obligated to speak up against hate immediately without fearing these individuals who fester so much hate in their heart. My record has been one where I have called out my own political party when they have gone against my values and/or basic human decency even when it was uncomfortable or provided negative political consequences. I hope my democrat opponents will take the same approach against antisemitism. Anti-semites often use a partisanship as a shield to protect themselves from criticism of their disgusting views. Real change can occur if we call out our own parties when necessary and not make antisemitism a partisan issue.

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?

America and Israel are united. We must continue to work together and keep supporting each other. Scripture tells us to BLESS ISRAEL. I'm strongly opposed to BDS laws.

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

The United States has been a great contributor to Israel by providing continued military aid. Israel receives \$3 billion yearly in the U.S. assistance through the Foreign Military Financing. I believe Israel is good and do not see any need to put conditions on aid that Israel needs for survival.

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

Congress has the authority on crucial aspects of the United States' foreign policy decisions. It ensures Congress plays a key role in decisions related to military conflict abroad.

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?

No, I strongly support a sovereign state of Israel.

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

No, unfortunately I haven't been able to, yet I do look forward to it in the near future.

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?

This system needs to stop providing funding to people who are applying fraudulently and manipulating the system because this is where most of the funding is being spent instead of going to people who are truly in need.

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 support and co-sponsor the Supplemental Security Income Savings Penalty Elimination Act for individuals with a disability, blind or are age 65 or older. These individuals who are facing financial hardships deserve Supplemental Security Income.

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 which will help individuals with disabilities and the elderly to live and thrive in a setting of their choice where they feel at home, safe, and cared for with dignity and respect.

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 newly updated SNAP work rules for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents, requiring 80 hours/month of work, training, or volunteering for 18-64 years old, with key exemptions like caring for a child, disability, or being a student; you must work/train (avg 20 hours/week) or do qualifying education and training activities, or community service to stay eligible for benefits after time limits are reached are excellent requirements to avoid fraudulent claims and abuse of SNAP.

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

The steps I believe should be undertaken to reduce gun violence are all gun owners must be U.S. citizens, take firearm safety courses, and enhance background checks.

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 don't agree with the 2025 government shutdown because our hard earned tax dollars compensate them. The government works for us WE THE PEOPLE.

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?

Yes, I support the recent Presidential Determination that cut new refugee arrivals. I'm all about America First and we must take care of our own American citizens first. For example, parents would feed their own children

first and then others.

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?

First and foremost, I'm all about America First. If refugees were lawfully admitted to the United States over the past 5-10 it's crucial they have no criminal history in their country of origin and in the United States. All refugees must abide by American laws or be deported. Refugees seeking asylum must wait in line just like everyone else has.

Candidate Priorities

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

- 1.Safe Borders
- 2.Support the Iron Dome for America
- 3.Safer Communities
- 4.Stricter Crime Laws
- 5.School Choice
- 6.Ban inappropriate books in schools and libraries
- 7.Antisemitism Laws
- 8.Stricter Child Trafficking Laws
- 9.Stricter Child Pornography Laws

Any additional information you would like to share with us?

The Cleveland Campaign has appointed a National Security Advisor

John Ellison

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?

Talk up and support Israel in every way. To many politicians run away from Israel, that's not the way to go. We cannot make Israel seem bad. It's a way of demonizing. People follow leaders. In the October 2023 raid on the Israel, our large, multicultural, influential Chicagoland Church, flew high over our corner busy property the Israel flag. Many Jews lived in, but some Palestinians threaten us. We were nice to all but explained our position and won many people over. You have to stand with Israel.

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

Stand with Israel. Support their people and leaders. Support their causes.

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

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

Yes

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

Congress has an important role in moving the Israeli issue forward. Congressional leaders must lead.

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?

No, a Palestinian state cannot be trusted.

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

No. Many of my minister friends have and they love it. I want to go.

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?

Illinois Medicaid is very important. We need to fund it. But we need to protect it from illegal immigrants or others that don't qualify.

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?

Absolutely

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 if you are getting free government benefits, you need to work if you are not disabled.

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

We need to support mental health causes and crack down on crime. Crack down on illegal guns.

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, we shouldn't shut down the government. We need to compromise if at all possible.

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?

Yes. Immigration should not be about skin color or race, but good people coming into our country.

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'm not sure, but we do need to balance the budget and need to we wise.

Candidate Priorities

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

Mental health, addictions that affect families, the budget, security, immigration.

Any additional information you would like to share with us?

I have been involved and serving the Chicagoland Community for over 40 years. Our church is 70 percent democrat and 30 percent republican. I am running as a republican and now how to bring people together. I have 2 kids working in Washington DC in the highest levels of government. One was the Chief of Staff for the IRS and now a Senior Advisor to President Trump. My other son manages the front DC office for Florida Congresswomen Kat Cammack. My daughter a Chicagoland police officer, my other daughter a public school teacher, my other son an attorney. We lived in China for 2 years back during Tiananmen Square riots. We taught in Chinese Universities in 1991. We know the issues, very well respected and want to help the people.

Laura Fine

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?

Absolutely. Nonprofits are the backbone of the 9th District, providing essential support to underserved and vulnerable communities. At a time when antisemitism and other forms of hate are at historic highs, it is more important than ever to ensure our nonprofit organizations have the resources they need to protect their staff, volunteers, and the people they serve.

In Springfield, I've been a proud champion of the Illinois Nonprofit Security Grant Program, which has delivered tens of millions of dollars in security funding across our state. In Congress, I will continue this work and strongly support the federal Nonprofit Security Grant Program so our communities remain safe, resilient, and protected.

Antisemitism

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

In my 13 years in Springfield, I've built a reputation as one of the leading voices in the state against antisemitism. As the Senate Co-Chair of the Jewish Caucus, I've worked closely with colleges and universities to strengthen and implement clear policies against antisemitism, ensuring Jewish students feel safe, supported, and protected on campus. I've collaborated with the Simon Wiesenthal Center to organize press conferences on the rise of antisemitism on social media and helped fund two Mobile Museum of Tolerance buses. When Jewish elected officials, including myself, were targets in hate flyers across the North Shore, I stood firm to be a voice for our community.

When I'm in Congress, I will continue the work I started in Springfield. I will invest in antisemitic awareness curricula in schools, regulate social media companies to implement policies that limit extremist content, and I will advocate for federal agencies to have clear, enforceable policies against antisemitism and harassment.

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

Part of being a public servant is coalition building. Like Jews–Muslims, Black, Latino, Asian, LGBTQ people, and other marginalized groups are no strangers to hate. I will work with these groups in Congress, regardless of party, to build trust and deepen understanding. Hate is unacceptable no matter where it comes from, and addressing it requires leadership that holds everyone to the same standard. An attack on one group is and should be seen as an attack on all of us.

Most importantly, we need leaders who speak out with the same clarity every time antisemitism occurs, regardless of the source, and who work to bring people together rather than divide them. Combating antisemitism is not a partisan project; it's a moral obligation we all share.

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 seeks to delegitimize Israel's right to exist. BDS does not promote peace—it undermines it by encouraging economic warfare and the isolation of the Jewish people and the state of Israel in academics, culture and society at large. The movement does not seek a two-state solution; instead, it vilifies one side while ignoring the role of terror organizations like Hamas.

In Illinois, I supported our state's first-in-the-nation 2015 law opposing BDS by prohibiting state investment

in companies that boycott Israel. This is about ensuring that taxpayer dollars do not fuel antisemitism and that our state stands in solidarity with our democratic allies.

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

I fully support the current portfolio of U.S. security assistance to Israel, including the \$3.8 billion annual commitment laid out in the U.S.-Israel Memorandum of Understanding, which includes critical funding for weapons systems that defend Israeli civilians. These programs are vital to the U.S. defense industrial base, support American jobs, and enhance our own national security. I look forward to working on new and creative ways for the US and Illinois to partner with Israel to tackle the challenges of the future.

I do not support additional conditions on aid to Israel, militarily or otherwise. While the US and Israel may not always agree on certain issues, halting or conditioning aid is not the right mechanism to solve our disputes or pressure our key allies.

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

Israel is more than just a strategic ally, it is a beacon of democracy in one of the world's most volatile regions. Since its founding in 1948 and the immediate recognition by President Harry Truman, the relationship between the United States and Israel has been rooted in shared values: democracy, pluralism, innovation, and a mutual commitment to peace and security.

The U.S. benefits directly from our close relationship with Israel. From economic innovation and water conservation to life-saving medical and cybersecurity technologies, Israel's advancements strengthen our communities here at home. My family has benefited from a medical innovation developed in Israel; a focused ultrasound (FUS), a procedure that reduces and/or eliminates tremors associated with Parkinson's disease.

It is essential that the United States Congress supports Israel's safety and security and the safety of the Jewish people. I am steadfast in my commitment to advocate for policies that reinforce Israel's right to exist as a Jewish and Democratic state, enhance regional stability, and counter the threats posed by

Hamas, Iran, and others.

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 stand with Israel and support its rights of existence, stability, self-defense, and peace, and will advocate for a negotiated two-state solution among Israelis and Palestinians. I believe in a future where Israelis and Palestinians can live side-by-side in peace, dignity, and mutual recognition. A two-state solution that ensures Israel's security and offers Palestinians a sovereign and viable state remains the most realistic and just path forward. But peace cannot be one-sided or built on equivocation.

As the ceasefire continues, leaders from both sides need to resume peace talks and work towards achieving the two-state solution. The leaders of the Palestinian people must continue talks with Israel, which will allow both sides to continue negotiating in full faith.

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

I've been to Israel twice. I became a bat mitzvah in Israel years ago, and I returned to Israel with AJC in 2019. I would always be interested in visiting!

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?

The disheartening and cruel cuts to Medicaid in H.R. 1 will bring great harm to our healthcare system in Illinois. Hospitals in rural or underserved areas across the state will be forced to close or greatly reduce

services. Eligibility changes and administrative burdens will force hundreds of thousands off of Medicaid. In Washington, I would fight to protect Illinoisans from harmful Medicaid cuts. That means voting against legislation that would reduce coverage, pushing for amendments to preserve eligibility and provider payments, and securing additional federal funding so the state doesn't have to slash care. I would also use my oversight role to hold federal agencies accountable, work with hospitals and advocacy groups to highlight the human impact, and build coalitions to defend children, older adults, people with disabilities, and low-income families. Simply put, I will stand up to protect access to care and ensure Medicaid continues to serve those who rely on it most.

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?

Many of our seniors living across the 9th District are living on a fixed income, where they are one emergency away from financial hardship. I would be proud to cosponsor this legislation which will help seniors on SSI in a couple of critical ways. It will give beneficiaries more breathing room to build emergency savings without threatening SSI benefits and support seniors who want to work. It will remove the "marriage penalty," giving greater financial comfort from those who wish to marry. Passing and implementing these changes has the potential to bring over 3 million people over the poverty line, cutting poverty among SSI beneficiaries by more than half.

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?

Absolutely. These services allow older adults and people with disabilities to live independently, stay connected to their communities, and avoid costly and unnecessary institutional care. For too long, HCBS has been underfunded, understaffed, and unable to meet demand. This has led to long waitlists and forced people into settings they do not choose. Strengthening HCBS is both the right thing to do and a smart investment in dignity, autonomy, and quality of life.

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?

During the recent government shutdown, when SNAP funding briefly lapsed, I heard from countless constituents about how these benefits have transformed the lives of their families. These are our friends, our neighbors, and members of our communities. The additional work requirements included in H.R. 1 now threaten the benefits of hundreds of thousands of Illinoisans, and for what? Evidence shows that work requirements do not reliably increase employment. Even more concerning, H.R. 1 broadens these requirements to include veterans, people experiencing homelessness, former foster youth, and adults aged 54 to 64, groups that face unique barriers to stable employment. In Congress, I will work to rescind these new requirements and work to strengthen access to job training and education programs for individuals on SNAP.

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

Illinois has taken bold action to reduce gun violence. Whether banning assault weapons, expanding red flag protections, promoting responsible gun storage, or holding gun manufacturers to higher standards, I've been a committed champion for strong, sensible gun safety measures. It is because of my commitment and contributions that I have received past endorsements from Giffords and the Gun Violence Prevention PAC in my past elections.

Even with our progress, gun violence is still a major challenge, fueled by the steady influx of firearms trafficked from states with looser gun regulations. That's why national solutions must be a priority. I will fight for federal legislation that mirrors the progress we've made in Illinois, along with additional reforms such as a national gun licensing system, mandatory waiting periods, a federal gun buyback program, and increased accountability for the gun industry.

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 have voted NO on the legislation that ended the government shutdown. This "deal" came with no guarantee the Senate will pass the vote to extend the ACA subsidies. Even if the Senate passes legislation,

Speaker Johnson has indicated they would not bring it up for a vote. Holding the line on health care costs should have been the bare minimum.

Now, millions of Americans will see their premiums skyrocket. I would never support a deal that hurts working people and forces families into a cruel choice between rent, groceries, and healthcare.

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 don't support this Presidential directive. First, this undermines our moral standing by politicizing refugee admissions. Second, this skews the refugee program on racial lines while cutting out refugees in conflict zones or including historically persecuted groups. Third, the South African government strongly denies that Afrikaners are subject to widespread prosecution, unnecessarily straining diplomatic relations. In Congress, I will work to restore a higher cap that was present during the Biden Administration (125,000 a year), strengthen the transparency in the refugee selection process, and push for refugee admissions to be based on vulnerability or persecution instead of race or ethnicity based.

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?

In my State Senate District, I have seen firsthand the power of refugee support agencies. A small, but mighty organization called Building Peaceful Bridges assists in integrating families into American society. Families that come from countries where they were persecuted, some that came to America with only the clothes on their backs. This organization supports these families for years, ensuring they are successful. I will work with my colleagues in Congress to restore stable, predictable funding—expanded to meet the growing needs of these organizations. Additionally, I will support investments in mental health support, job training, English language learning, and youth programs that work to fill those gaps left by federal cuts. This will alleviate some of the pressure on our refugee support agencies.

These steps will strengthen the entire resettlement system and ensure that families who have already been welcomed to this country have the support they need to thrive.

Candidate Priorities

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

Lowering Health Care Costs & Holding Insurers Accountable

A highlight of my legislative career has been transforming Illinois from a state with one of the highest rates of cancelled insurance policies into one of the most consumer- friendly states in the nation for health insurance. I've fought to protect patients, rein in abusive practices, and make coverage more transparent and reliable. I'll take that fight nationwide, working to lower prescription drug prices, reduce insurance premiums, and make healthcare more affordable and accessible for every family.

Fighting for the Working Class

Too many families in this country are one missed paycheck away from financial hardship. In addition, prices on goods and services continue to rise, putting families under increasing financial strain. I will sponsor or support legislation to raise the minimum wage, expand access to affordable housing, increase childcare assistance, protect Medicare and Social Security from cuts, and expand utility assistance programs like LIHEAP.

Ensuring a Clean Environment

As the Senate Chair of the Green caucus, I've worked hard to ensure our environment is healthy for generations to come. That is why I've sponsored bills to reduce PFAs and plastics in our bodies and environments. In addition, I've championed historic legislation that will ensure our electricity is run by clean energy, starts to address environmental justice issues, and invests in public transportation.

Any additional information you would like to share with us?

We are at a pivotal moment for our nation's future. Our rights and freedoms are under relentless attack, and too many families are living on the edge—struggling to afford health care, housing, and the basic costs of living.

I know these struggles firsthand. Fifteen years ago, after a devastating accident that nearly cost my husband his life, our insurance company tried to cancel our coverage. They almost broke my family. Instead, I turned that fight into my life's work—taking on Big Insurance and winning. Because of my work, Illinois went from one of the worst states in the country for consumer protections to one of the best.

Families are now protected from the abuses my family endured.

For over a decade, I've been fighting and beating the most powerful special interests in Illinois to get real results. I don't chase headlines—I get bills passed. That's why environmental groups, mental health advocates, and disability rights organizations have all named me legislator of the year.

In addition, I'm proud of the work I've done as the Senate Co-Chair of the Jewish Caucus, where I've secured millions in funding for Jewish organizations and been a leader in the fight against antisemitism. I'm running for Congress to bring that same record of results to Washington—to lower costs for families, protect fundamental freedoms, and make government work again for the people it serves. At a time when trust in politics is fragile, I want to show that Democrats can govern, deliver, and improve people's lives.

Justin 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 raising the Nonprofit Security Grant Program to at least 360 million. Communities that face credible threats, including religious, cultural, and community-based nonprofits, deserve the resources to keep people safe. As a public health and safety professional, I know that prevention saves lives. These grants are a critical tool for protecting vulnerable institutions without burdening them financially.

Antisemitism

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

Antisemitism is rising at a dangerous pace, and it demands an active, principled response. I will support stronger federal tracking of hate crimes, real accountability for violent extremists, and increased resources for community security so that Jewish communities do not face these threats alone. I will also work to strengthen education about the Holocaust and Jewish history, because ignorance and conspiracy theories fuel hate.

Just as important, I will be a bridge builder. Chicago is strongest when our communities stand together. I will bring Jewish, Muslim, Christian, and immigrant communities into shared conversations about safety, dignity, and the values we hold in common. Combating antisemitism is not only about enforcement. It is about building a country where every community feels protected, respected, and truly part of the American story.

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 growing at both ends of the political spectrum, and confronting it requires honesty and courage. I will call it out no matter where it comes from. That means rejecting the far-right conspiracies and white nationalist rhetoric that have fueled violent attacks, and also challenging harmful language or actions on the left when they cross the line into antisemitism. Protecting Jewish communities cannot be a partisan project. It has to be a shared moral responsibility.

In Congress, I will support stronger hate-crime enforcement, better tracking of extremist threats, and more funding for community safety. I will also work to bring people together through education, dialogue, and relationship-building, because long-term safety comes from trust between communities. The goal is the same for everyone. No Jewish person should feel afraid in their own country, and no community should be isolated or blamed. We can confront antisemitism with clarity, compassion, and a commitment to the dignity of every person.

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 use of boycotts, divestment, and targeted sanctions as legitimate, nonviolent tools to hold governments accountable for violations of human rights. That includes the right to boycott Israeli goods, companies, institutions, or U.S. and international companies that enable or profit from occupation, settlement expansion, or military actions that harm civilians. Economic pressure has always been part of the American tradition of democratic action, from the civil rights movement to the struggle against apartheid.

Just as important, I strongly oppose efforts to criminalize or punish people for supporting boycotts. Boycotts are protected free speech. No one should lose a job, be targeted by government, or be labeled antisemitic simply for using peaceful, constitutionally protected means to advocate for human rights.

I do not believe in blanket punishment of ordinary people, but I do believe in using every peaceful tool available to push for accountability, demilitarization, and respect for international law. When taxpayer dollars, weapons, or corporate profits are tied to violations of human rights, targeted economic action is not only appropriate, it is necessary.

The goal is clear. We need real accountability, an end to systems of occupation and discrimination, and a path toward safety and self-determination for both Israelis and Palestinians. Boycotts and targeted sanctions, backed by strong free-speech protections, are legitimate tools to help move the world toward that outcome.

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

I do not support continuing U.S. military aid to Israel without major changes. At a minimum, all U.S. military aid should come with strict, enforceable conditions tied to human rights, international law, and the protection of civilians. In reality, we need to go further. The United States should not be supplying weapons that are used in occupations, blockades, or military operations that produce large-scale civilian harm.

I believe in demilitarizing the conflict, not escalating it. That means ending blank-check military assistance, stopping offensive weapons transfers, and requiring full transparency and accountability for how any U.S. funds or equipment are used. Aid must never be used to support settlement expansion, collective punishment, or actions that undermine a just political solution.

Security cannot come from overwhelming force. It comes from dignity, rights, and a real path to peace for both Israelis and Palestinians. U.S. policy should reflect that by prioritizing diplomacy, humanitarian aid, and human rights, not unconditional military support.

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

Congress has a critical responsibility in shaping U.S. policy toward Israel, and that responsibility goes far beyond rubber-stamping military aid or repeating talking points. Congress must provide real oversight, enforce human rights standards, and ensure that U.S. foreign policy does not enable violence against civilians or violations of international law.

That means using the power of the purse, the power of oversight, and the power to set conditions. It also means rejecting the idea that presidents should have unilateral authority to send weapons or funds without congressional scrutiny. When taxpayer dollars and American-made weapons are involved, Congress has an obligation to ask hard questions and demand accountability.

Congress should also take a leading role in advancing diplomacy, demilitarization, and a just political solution that respects the rights and safety of both Israelis and Palestinians. Long-term peace does not come from unconditional military support. It comes from a foreign policy grounded in human rights, international law, and the understanding that every civilian life has equal value.

In short, Congress must stop treating U.S.-Israel policy as untouchable and start treating it as the serious foreign policy challenge it is. Oversight, accountability, and a commitment to human dignity should guide every decision.

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 any solution that delivers real safety, dignity, and self-determination for both Israelis and Palestinians. The problem is that a two-state solution, as traditionally described, has not been meaningfully pursued or made possible on the ground. Settlement expansion, ongoing occupation, and repeated cycles of violence have made a viable Palestinian state nearly impossible under the current approach.

I support a political resolution that guarantees equal rights, ends occupation, protects all civilians, and removes armed extremist groups from positions of power. Palestinians deserve democratic leadership that represents them and respects human rights. Israelis deserve to live in safety without fear of violence. Those goals require a demilitarized future and an end to systems of discrimination and collective punishment.

Whether that path is two states, one state with equal rights, or another mutually agreed framework should be determined through diplomacy and by the people who live there, not imposed by Washington. What I cannot support is any arrangement that maintains permanent inequality, occupation, or statelessness.

Real peace requires real justice for both peoples.

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 have been close to going more than once, and it is absolutely on my bucket list. One of my closest friends visited and told me it was the best place he had ever been. He talked about the history, the energy, the people, and how every corner of the country felt alive in a way he had never experienced before. Hearing him describe it made me want to experience it for myself.

I would welcome the chance to visit, especially in a setting where I could spend time with both Israeli and Palestinian communities and hear directly from the people who live the realities behind our policies. A trip like that would mean a lot to me, not as a political gesture, but as an opportunity to learn, connect, and understand a place that has shaped so much of our world.

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?

Illinois Medicaid is the backbone of our health system, especially for children, people with disabilities, older adults, and low income families. I will oppose any federal plan, including H.R. 1 style changes, that turns Medicaid into a block grant, caps funding, or shifts the burden onto states in a way that forces cuts to care. As a public health professional, I have seen what happens when people lose coverage or cannot find a provider: conditions get worse, costs go up, and families suffer.

In Congress, I would fight to protect and strengthen Medicaid by: 1) maintaining a strong federal funding guarantee, with enhanced matching funds during economic downturns so states are not pushed to tighten eligibility; 2) prohibiting eligibility rollbacks and barriers that push children, older adults, and disabled people off the rolls; and 3) ensuring reimbursement rates are high enough that providers, especially safety net hospitals and community clinics, can keep their doors open.

I would also support expanding access points for care, including school-based clinics, community health centers, mental health and substance use treatment, and home and community-based services that allow people with disabilities and older adults to live with dignity. Cutting Medicaid is not fiscal responsibility; it is a cost shift that shows up later in emergency rooms, lost work, and preventable suffering. My priority is simple. Protect coverage, protect access, and treat health care for vulnerable people as a promise that Congress must keep, not a line item to be raided.

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 asset limits are outdated, punitive, and keep people with disabilities trapped in poverty. Raising the limits to 10,000 for individuals and 20,000 for couples is a long overdue step that will give people the ability to save for emergencies, pay for unexpected expenses, and live with more stability. As a public health professional, I have seen how financial insecurity directly affects health and independence. Updating these asset limits is a simple, commonsense change that restores dignity and gives people a real chance to build a safer, more secure future.

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 allows people with disabilities and older adults to live where they choose, stay connected to their communities, and avoid being pushed into institutional care simply because that is the only option Medicaid will cover.

When I was in college, I worked in a home for people with disabilities, and I saw firsthand how much it means for someone to live in a supportive, community based environment. That experience stayed with me.

It showed me how much independence, stability, and dignity come from being able to stay in a home setting.

We are already facing a serious shortage of home care and direct support workers. The demand keeps rising as our population ages, but wages and working conditions have not kept pace. Families are being left without the support they need, and too many people are stuck on waitlists or forced into settings they do not want.

We need to expand HCBS funding, raise wages for care workers, invest in training and career pathways, and stabilize the workforce so people can actually receive the services they are promised. Investing in HCBS protects independence, dignity, and quality of life, and it ensures that people can remain safely in their homes and communities.

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 for people receiving SNAP. These requirements are based on stereotypes, not evidence. The reality is that most SNAP recipients who can work already do, and many others are caregivers, students, older adults, or people with disabilities who are simply not recognized by the narrow definitions in the bill.

Work requirements do not reduce poverty, they do not increase employment, and they often cause eligible people to lose food assistance because of paperwork barriers or unstable work hours. For nearly two million Illinoisans, SNAP is the difference between putting food on the table or going hungry. Taking food away from low-income families, children, and seniors does not make anyone more employable. It just makes life harder.

I support policies that actually help people get and keep good jobs, like affordable child care, reliable transportation, fair wages, and stable schedules. Punishing people by cutting off food assistance is not a jobs strategy. It is a recipe for more hunger and more hardship, and I will oppose it.

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

Reducing gun violence requires a real commitment to both safety and opportunity. First, we need stronger federal laws: universal background checks, a national red flag system, closing the gun show and online loopholes, and banning assault weapons and high capacity magazines. These are basic steps supported by most Americans and proven to save lives.

Second, we need to invest in the neighborhoods that carry the heaviest burden of gun violence. That means expanding community based violence interruption programs, supporting trauma recovery services, and funding youth jobs and mentorship programs. Communities know what they need, they just have not been given the resources.

Third, we have to treat gun violence like the public health crisis it is. That includes tracking data, studying the root causes, and supporting hospital-based programs that intervene after the first signs of violence to prevent retaliation.

Finally, we need to stop pretending this problem has one cause or one solution. It is about guns, yes, but it is also about poverty, housing instability, untreated trauma, and lack of opportunity. A real strategy addresses all of it. My goal is straightforward: safer streets, fewer guns in dangerous hands, and more investment in the people and communities most affected by violence.

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. Democrats currently hold very little structural power in the federal government, and throughout this shutdown Republicans refused to negotiate in good faith. They rejected reasonable offers, walked away from bipartisan discussions, and used the threat of harm to working families as leverage. That is not governing, it is hostage taking.

I believe Democrats should not be expected to simply accept whatever deal is handed down, especially when the same Republicans demanding concessions are the ones who vetoed responsible spending packages earlier in the term. Trust has been broken, and until Republicans show they are willing to govern responsibly, a “take it or leave it” shutdown-ending bill is not good enough.

Ending the shutdown matters, but so does protecting the ability of Democrats to influence policy and defend the people who rely on federal programs, health care subsidies, and basic government services. I would have pushed for a stronger agreement that reflects real negotiation, not one-sided demands. The American people deserve a functioning government, but they also deserve a fair process, honest bargaining, and respect for democratic representation.

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 do not support the Presidential Determination that cut refugee admissions from 125,000 to about 7,500, with most of those slots held for White Afrikaners. It is discriminatory, it is morally backwards, and it repeats some of the worst mistakes in our history. During World War II, the United States turned away Jewish refugees fleeing genocide. We live with the shame of that choice to this day. We should learn from that history, not echo it.

The United States has the capacity to welcome far more than 125,000 people. We are a large, wealthy country with the infrastructure, community networks, and moral responsibility to protect people fleeing persecution and war. Cutting admissions by over 90 percent abandons that responsibility.

And our first priority should be the Afghans who risked their lives to support U.S. troops, diplomats, and aid workers. Many of them are still in hiding, still in danger, and still waiting for a safe path here. We made them a promise, and keeping that promise is not optional. It is a matter of honor.

Refugee policy should be rooted in need, vulnerability, and fairness, not racial preferences or political favoritism. I support restoring and expanding the refugee ceiling, rebuilding our resettlement capacity, and ensuring that the United States never again repeats the mistake of turning away people whose lives depend on our willingness to act.

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 carrying an enormous burden right now. Even though new admissions were cut, these agencies are still responsible for helping tens of thousands of refugees who arrived over the past decade rebuild their lives. That includes helping people find housing, learn English, access medical care, enroll their children in school, and find stable work. Instead of investing in that work, the federal government has cut funding, rescinded grants, and destabilized the entire resettlement system. I would take several steps to fix that.

First, I would restore and expand federal funding for the Office of Refugee Resettlement and the network of nonprofit agencies doing this work on the ground. These organizations need multi-year, dependable support that reflects the real cost of long-term integration.

Second, I would modernize the funding model. Resettlement agencies rely on per capita payments tied to new arrivals, so when admissions drop, funding collapses even though agencies still have thousands of clients to serve. We need a hybrid system that includes sustained baseline funding so agencies can keep staff, maintain housing partnerships, and provide ongoing case management regardless of the arrival numbers.

Third, I would prioritize support for Afghan allies and other high need groups who require extended services. Many families arrived with significant trauma from war, displacement, and sudden evacuation. Mental health programs for refugees are severely underfunded, and I would make expanding trauma informed care, counseling services, and community based mental health support a central part of resettlement policy.

Finally, I would work with cities, states, and community organizations to expand partnerships that strengthen housing access, workforce training, education, and long-term community support. Refugee resettlement is not just a federal responsibility. It is a national project that requires coordination and investment at every level.

The bottom line is simple. If we expect refugee agencies to uphold our moral and legal commitments, then

Congress has to give them the tools, funding, and stability they need. Right now, they are being asked to do the impossible. I intend to change that.

Candidate Priorities

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

My priorities come directly from what working families in Illinois are facing every day. First, I want to pass a 32 hour, four day work week. People are exhausted, childcare is expensive, and burnout is at an all time high. Giving people more time back is one of the most impactful things Congress can do to improve health, productivity, and family stability.

Second, I want to take serious, job creating climate action. I do not just have talking points, I have an actual plan to fight climate change, cut carbon emissions, drive energy costs down, and build a carbon negative, storm resilient future that creates union jobs and protects the communities already feeling the impacts. Climate policy must be a working class policy.

Third, I want to strengthen the labor movement. Unions built the middle class, and rebuilding union power is essential to raising wages, improving safety, and giving workers a real voice. I support modernizing labor law, expanding sectoral bargaining, protecting the right to organize, and ensuring federal funds go to jobs with strong labor standards.

Fourth, I will fight to protect and expand Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare. These programs are lifelines. I will oppose any effort to cut them, privatize them, or raise the retirement age.

Fifth, I want to strengthen our democracy. That means protecting voting rights, ending partisan gerrymandering, reducing the influence of big money, and ensuring real oversight of presidential power. Our system works only if people believe it works for them.

And across all of these issues, I bring the perspective of someone who has spent his career protecting people as an Environmental Health and Safety professional, not as a politician. My goal is simple. Make government work again for the people who work hardest

Any additional information you would like to share with us?

I would add that I am running for Congress because I have lived the challenges that so many families in Illinois are facing. I have worked long shifts, raised two boys during difficult transitions, and spent my career protecting people's health and safety on the job. I am not a career politician. I am someone who has seen how policy decisions ripple through real lives, sometimes for the better and too often for the worse.

I also understand that I may not answer every question in exactly the way your organization traditionally prefers. But I appreciate the chance to share my views honestly and directly. These issues matter, and the people impacted by them deserve clarity, not political calculation.

I believe we deserve a government that values people's time, protects their dignity, and invests in their futures. That is the spirit I would bring to Congress every day. I will listen, I will show up, and I will work to make sure working families, refugees, seniors, caregivers, and people with disabilities are never treated as afterthoughts in our political system.

Thank you for your time and for the work you do to support communities across Illinois. I look forward to continuing the conversation and earning your trust.

Paul 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 support maintaining its current funding level. I do see that some of the funding was re-appropriated from the Israel Security Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2024. I am not much in favor of re-appropriations except as a response to underlying events that will have altered the necessity of the appropriation in the first place. With some investigation I would entertain an increase in funding.

Antisemitism

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

Working to combat antisemitism is one of the core reasons I am running for Congress. If a man named Friedman, raised in an interfaith family, wins on the Republican ticket in Chicago and the Illinois Ninth Congressional District, you will believe that I can bring different communities together.

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

First we need to ensure that both sides accept that antisemitism is a huge problem within their party, both on the left and right of the political spectrum. I honestly believe that many people believe antisemitism exists only on the "other" side. Until this undeniable fact is accepted can we move forward.

Once accepted, only education on the history of antisemitism and how we got to this point will combat the ills of hatred toward Judaism.

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?

Here's the thing, I support any individual's right to protest. Protests that arise from mis-information, prejudice, or other less savory means are not bad because of the message being sent by the protesters and can be combatted best by informing the public.

Boycotts, in my opinion, are a means of protest for non-active citizens and not very effective. I support their right to boycott but believe these boycotts against Israel are mis-guided.

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

Yes I support U.S. military aid to Israel with conditions. I would need to know the specifics of the existing conditions to say whether or not I support additional conditions (especially not knowing what those "additional" conditions are).

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

There are three major components of the role of Congress in shaping all foreign relationships:

- 1.) Financial aid;
- 2.) Legislative authority; and
- 3.) Supervision of 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?

Absolutely. A two-state solution was one of the earliest proposals to end the Israel-Palestinian conflict and, after having tried other solutions for several decades, the two-state solution is the only one that remains.

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

No, I have never had the chance. I would visit tomorrow if I had the opportunity. I have many friends who have relocated to Israel to make a life and raise their families.

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?

The least expensive funding decision with the provably greatest return is the investment in our children - health, education, food. I would call for an increase in spending for investments in children's health and children's education. Historically it is known that sufficient spending for education and healthcare is necessary for a prosperous capitalistic democracy.

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?

From what I have read of this Act I would very much be in favor. I would like to read more to see if I would be more energetically in favor to the point of co-sponsor, but all that I have read seems more than appropriate and reasonable.

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?

Absolutely. My first wife is a home health care worker and I understand the increasing need for quality people like her and the types of services she provides.

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 that these work requirements are an undue burden on recipients who have been deemed eligible. I would be more in favor of a quicker cadence in terms of eligibility than mandatory work requirements.

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

First thing is to re-instate the assault weapons ban that expired in 2004. Next is to have an extensive training program to educate the public, especially the youth, about guns. I would be in favor of a mandatory program in late middle school / early high school years requiring students to take apart and put back together a gun, how to clean and maintain a firearm, and how to properly use a handgun. Upon completion of this course, the state or federal government could provide the youth with their first identification card.

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. That shutdown went on for far too long and, from what I could gather, for an indefensible position. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) subsidies simply highlighted the problems with a program that was passed in a partisan nature.

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 agree with cutting the number of refugees. Until I gather more information, we do not set aside enough resources to handle 125,000 refugees. The number cut appears to be much greater than necessary and the I would like to know better the details around the preference for 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 recissions as well as from the cut to new arrivals?

Like I said in the previous response, we do not set aside enough resources to handle the number of refugees. Perhaps the large cut was necessary for us to handle the current refugees and support services in place we have today. With cuts in numbers to nearly 1/16th in size, we should have plenty of resources to re-allocate to existing refugee support services.

Candidate Priorities

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

I suggest that you take a look at the markdown (*.md) pages in the proposals directory of my website - <https://github.com/pfriedman/IL-09/tree/main/proposals>

Any additional information you would like to share with us?

Simply that I would like to thank you for taking the time to know more about my thoughts concerning the issues that you hold dear.

Sam Polan

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 Nonprofit Security Grant Program to at least \$360 million. Synagogues, Jewish schools, and community centers should never have to choose between their mission and their safety. Given the rise in targeted threats across the country, particularly toward Jewish institutions, sustained and increased federal support is essential to ensure that vulnerable communities can worship, gather, and live without fear.

Antisemitism

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

I grew up in a Jewish household on the North Shore, and today I hear from friends who are afraid to show their Jewish identity. That should never happen in America. I will work to expand federal counter-disinformation capabilities to expose and disrupt foreign influence operations, including from the IRGC, that amplify antisemitism. I will support adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism across federal agencies and increase security resources for schools, synagogues, and community institutions. At the same time, I will work with local leaders to build relationships across communities, because fighting antisemitism requires both security and solidarity.

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 wrong no matter where it comes from. I will call it out directly, whether it shows up on the far right or the far left. Addressing it requires moral clarity, consistent standards, and a willingness to confront hate even when it is politically inconvenient. I will push for bipartisan adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism, increase oversight of foreign disinformation campaigns that target Jewish communities, and work with members of both parties to strengthen security protections. Fighting antisemitism is not a partisan project. It is a defense of our shared democratic values.

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 the BDS movement. It isolates Israel, fuels division, and ignores the region's worst human rights abusers. It does not advance peace, understanding, or security. There are far more constructive paths forward that support cooperation and a durable peace.

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

Yes. I support continuing U.S. military aid to Israel without new political conditions. U.S. assistance is a strategic investment in the security of a democratic ally in a volatile region. I have worked directly on integrated missile defense and understand how critical these programs are for protecting Israeli and American lives. Conditioning aid would weaken deterrence and signal hesitation to allies and adversaries alike. Israel must retain the capability to defend itself.

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

Congress plays a critical role in strengthening the U.S.-Israel partnership. This includes ensuring sustained security assistance, supporting cooperation on missile defense, promoting diplomatic efforts like the Abraham Accords, and pushing for strong counter-terrorism and counter-disinformation strategies.

Congress should also promote clear standards for combating antisemitism and protect the safety of Jewish communities at home. Above all, Congress should reaffirm that the U.S. commitment to Israel's security is ironclad and rooted in shared democratic values.

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 that ensures Israel's long-term security and creates a viable path to Palestinian self-governance. This requires credible Palestinian leadership that rejects terrorism and negotiates in good faith. Hamas cannot be part of this process. Any sustainable peace requires security for Israelis and dignity and opportunity for Palestinians.

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

I've been to Israel twice in my life. The first time was when I was a kid. My grandmother took our whole family for a couple of weeks. I don't remember much from that trip.

The second time was in 2015 when I was a United States Army Air Defense soldier. I spent a month in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem working with the IDF on air defense interoperability. I was a Patriot Battery operator and our teams worked together to update and refine Israel's ballistic missile defense. It was one of the most meaningful assignments of my military career.

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 for millions of Illinois families. I would oppose federal efforts that push states to cut eligibility, reduce provider reimbursements, or limit access to essential care. Instead, I support increasing federal funding for Medicaid, promoting smoother eligibility systems, and protecting coverage for children, older adults, and people with disabilities. Healthcare should never depend on fluctuating political pressures. It is a fundamental service that the government must safeguard.

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. Raising outdated asset limits is long overdue. Current SSI limits punish savings and trap people in poverty. Increasing them would provide stability and dignity for people with disabilities and older adults. This is a practical and humane reform that strengthens economic security.

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 programs help older adults and people with disabilities live independently and with dignity. Increased funding improves quality of care, reduces institutionalization, and supports caregivers. Investing in HCBS is both cost-effective and consistent with the values of autonomy and community.

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. Nearly two million Illinoisans rely on SNAP to keep food on the table. Work requirements do not solve the underlying issues of low wages, childcare barriers, or inconsistent hours. They simply take food away from vulnerable families. I support policies that expand economic opportunity, not punitive rules that deepen hardship.

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

We need a comprehensive approach that includes universal background checks, safe storage requirements, closing loopholes that allow dangerous individuals to access firearms, and investing in community-based violence interruption programs. Gun violence is a public health crisis. Addressing it requires practical steps that respect responsible gun ownership while reducing preventable tragedies.

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. Government shutdowns endanger national security, disrupt federal services, and harm working families. I would have voted to end the shutdown because governing requires responsibility, not brinksmanship. Even when a funding bill is imperfect, keeping the government functioning is essential for the country and for the people who depend on critical programs.

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. This determination is discriminatory and inconsistent with American values. Our refugee system should prioritize vulnerability, family reunification, and humanitarian need, not racial preference. The United States has a moral and strategic interest in maintaining a robust and fair refugee resettlement 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 rescissions as well as from the cut to new arrivals?

I would work to restore federal funding for refugee resettlement agencies, increase flexible support grants, and strengthen partnerships between federal agencies and local organizations. Refugee agencies continue to support tens of thousands of people who were lawfully admitted in recent years. They need stable resources to provide housing, education, and employment assistance. I would also support rebuilding the national refugee infrastructure to meet current and future humanitarian needs.

Candidate Priorities

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

My priorities are restoring trust in government, strengthening national security, protecting democratic institutions, and improving economic security for working families. I will focus on rebuilding Congress as a functioning institution, defending the rule of law, expanding access to healthcare, and supporting small businesses and innovation. I will also prioritize combating disinformation, supporting Israel's security, addressing the rise in antisemitism, and ensuring that our policies reflect the dignity and safety of every community.

Nick Pyati

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 funding continued security support for non-profits at risk of violence. Providing this support is part of an American commitment to free expression and our freedoms of association and religion.

Antisemitism

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

Antisemitism is surging in America, and we cannot be silent. Hate has no place in our communities.

As a public figure, I have a responsibility to speak out. I'll use my platform to call out antisemitism wherever it appears—left or right, online or in our streets. Leaders must have moral clarity on this. When one community is targeted, our entire democracy is weakened.

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 just a left-right issue or even an American issue. It is a growing international issue and one that requires action from everyone, across the ideological spectrum. As public leaders, members of Congress on both sides of the aisle must commit to standing up against anti-semitism. In Congress I will join any bills or resolutions that effectively combat antisemitism, regardless of which party sponsored the legislation, and I will encourage my caucus to do the same.

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 do not support these efforts, with regard to either Israel or American companies doing business in or with Israel. Like many Americans, I have disagreed with recent actions of the Israeli government, but I believe strongly in the necessity of Israel and the ongoing importance of the American-Israeli relationship for the security and prosperity of both nations. I do not want to jeopardize that relationship through these efforts.

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

Yes, I support continued military aid without formal conditions. I believe it is appropriate for American leaders to negotiate with Israel within the terms of our agreements to achieve our goals, but I do not want to place hard conditions on those agreements.

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

Congress has a critical role in shaping U.S.-Israel relations through foreign aid appropriations, military assistance oversight, and setting the terms of our partnership. Israel is our closest ally in the Middle East, and that relationship is grounded in shared democratic values, mutual security interests, and deep historical ties.

Congress also has a role in bringing a diverse set of American viewpoints to American policy. I believe in maintaining our security commitments to Israel while using our leverage to encourage policies that advance peace, protect Palestinian civilians, and preserve the possibility of a future where Israelis and Palestinians both have security, dignity, and self-determination.

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 absolutely support a two-state solution and believe it is the only long-term option that provides peace, security, and prosperity for all peoples in the region. I do not support any plan that would put Hamas or another terrorist organization in charge of that independent state.

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 have been invited by a close friend with a home there and would like to visit when we can find 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?

In Congress, I'll push to roll back those reductions and fight against any future efforts to cut healthcare benefits in the future. Healthcare is a basic right for all Americans, and poor and unreliable health coverage is a drag on our economy that we can't afford.

However, we won't be able to make this progress while Democrats are in the minority in Congress and out of the White House. Republicans opposed the Affordable Care Act and have been on a fifteen-year mission to roll it back. If we want to protect healthcare, we need to win. That's why my campaign is focused not just on winning a primary but on delivering a platform that can build a winning majority for Democrats.

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, absolutely. The current limits do not reflect current economic reality and unfairly penalize people who should be eligible for support.

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. My parents are currently in an assisted living community close to my house. I'm grateful that they can afford this care, but I know not everyone has the resources or the choice. I support giving all older adults dignity and choice.

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 these requirements. In practice, these expanded requirements will be difficult for many individuals to meet and will likely end up in many being cut from assistance. This is a cruel and unnecessary policy.

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

We have to act on multiple fronts simultaneously. That includes safety checks for owners, including universal background checks and red flag laws. It includes bans on weapons like assault weapons and high-capacity magazines designed for mass casualty events. And it includes investment in violence prevention, like community violence intervention programs and greater funding for mental health services. We don't have to abridge the rights of law-abiding gun owners to pass common-sense measures that make everyone safer.

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 to end the shutdown. Shutdowns are a breakdown in government, and we should try to prevent them. I was affected by a shutdown in 2013 as a federal prosecutor, and know the uncertainty and disruption they can cause for both federal employees and all the Americans that depend on their work. In this case, however, Democrats had a rare bit of leverage with a lawless administration that has ignored Congress and broken the law whenever it liked. They had focus—preserving healthcare subsidies—and the message was getting through to the American people. Caving at that moment meant that Democrats accomplished nothing except an unnecessary shutdown and demonstrated to the nation and the administration that they did not have the fortitude to hold a winning position.

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?

Absolutely not. The current asylum system is a problem that needs to be addressed, but we should move quickly on comprehensive immigration reform to address it. In the absence of that, we are shutting out refugees with legitimate asylum claims, in violation of our international obligations. Reserving the slots for white Afrikaners is a farce.

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 have family members who have worked in refugee support for many years, and I know how hard these cuts are hitting support agencies and, more importantly, the people they support. Part of the answer is simple: we should undo cuts and restore this funding and the critical services it provides. The other part is difficult. As I said in another response, Congress is not going to be able to restore support for immigrants and refugees while Republicans hold either chamber and while President Trump is in office. We have to focus on winning back those offices, and that means persuading more Americans to vote for us with new ideas.

Candidate Priorities

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

My platform, a New American Century, is broad because it is a comprehensive vision for the future rather than an assortment of policies.

I'll highlight priorities in growth and innovation. Innovation, powered by expanded investment in basic research, will help us address critical challenges and will drive economic expansion. We can use that growth in turn to pay for more of the services we want to provide, including the ones described in this questionnaire: healthcare, food assistance, elder care, childcare, and more. Democrats seem to have lost interest in innovation and growth, and we're missing a chance to pursue more ambitious national goals and to inspire more Americans to join us.

Any additional information you would like to share with us?

The Ninth District has the potential to be an incredibly important seat in Congress. While donors and media focus on swing seats, solid Democratic seats like the Ninth District make up most of the party, are where most party leaders come from, and are the place where big primaries lead to real conversations about the future of the Democratic Party. When Americans across the country think about what Democrats stand for and whether they want us in Congress, the White House, or any other seat, representatives in seats like this one will shape their perception—especially because this district is squarely in the American heartland.

I left my job to run for this seat because I'm worried we're going to waste that opportunity. The other candidates in this field are good people who will be reliable Democratic votes in Congress, but we already have a couple hundred of those. We can do better. At this moment, Democrats need to convince the country that we have a plan for the future that they want. I have the experience and plan to do that.

Mark Su

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?

My number one task for congress is eliminating hate, reduce conflicts, unite communities, this including against antisemitism. I'll raise bill in congress to treat Jewish communities fairly, equally with any other communities. I will advocate treat Jewish communities with no any discrimination.

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 advocate American constitution, against any discrimination, and protest Jewish communities.

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

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

Yes, but such military aid should carefully execute under justice condition, such aid should help US people which involved , and it should benefit to world peace.

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

Congress should have lost power to shape U.S. Israel relations, for example congress can raise/pass bill to solve Israel issues.

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

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

I never been Israel, but I am very interested in visiting it.

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'll advocate in congress to against reduce or cutting critical funding for necessary Medicaid, especially for children, old adults, and disable people.

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 think SSI asset limit increase will have some benefit, like reduce government spending on SSI, let more people to work instead depends on SSI. To build a strong economy, it need let more people to work.

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?

SNAP need carefully reviews to necessary people, SNAP should well execute to prevent fraud, misuse, etc

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

Reduce gun violence is a big issue, congress should set bill, regulation to control gun

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, I'll advocate make more people employed

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?

Yes, I support it

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?

This needs well managed

Candidate Priorities

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

Reduce conflicts between two parties, work on common issues, advocate control inflation, solve tax issues, public safety issues, gun control, education issues, health care industry issues

Any additional information you would like to share with us?

My number one goal is uniting both democratic and republican parties, reduce conflicts, work on common issues to reach decisions which benefit majority people, not just benefit specific party people.