

**IVI-IPO 2012 CONGRESSIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE – Section 1**

**DATE** 1/10/2012 **DISTRICT:** IL:1 **PARTY:** Democratic

**NAME:** Jordan Sims

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**CAMPAIGN MANAGER:** Rodney R. Sims

**NUMBER OF PETITION SIGNATURES FILED:** 1700 **NUMBER REQUIRED:** 600

A) Elective or appointive public or party offices previously held including dates.

**None**

B) Other elective offices for which you have been a candidate.

**None**

C) What is your primary occupation?

**Unemployed**

D) Briefly list your civic activities of the past ten years.

E) What subjects have you studied and what experience have you had which will be most helpful to you in the office you seek?

**Political Science**

F) What candidates have you supported in past elections? Please be specific in describing your role in each campaign.

**Mike Quigley for Congress as a general volunteer, and Cheryle Jackson for United States Senate as a volunteer to help set up office operations.**

G) Please list all endorsements you have received so far.

**N/A**

H) As concisely as possible, please state why you feel you should be endorsed over the other candidate(s). What goals for the office you seek are most important to you personally?

**Innovation and pragmatism are key in this next chapter of American politics. Those in Washington cannot simply rest on their laurels and believe that the economy will right itself, or that America will retain its dominance because of a strong military presence and a recent history of economic success. We must tackle this country's unemployment problem (one in which I am far too familiar) along with the fiscal crisis. The two are not separate issues; without economic stability businesses will not be confident enough to hire and invest. But I also believe that I am the best candidate for this position because I approach this with a fresh perspective. I understand that there is much infighting, reciprocity, pressure from outside groups, and obligation to one's party, but the people want proper representation. Someone who will listen at all times and educate when necessary.**

**Though my opponents may have good intentions, the whirlwind that is Washington draws many into an insular and egocentric world where constituents become numbers and not members of a larger community. This does not deter me as an amateur but makes me embrace the notion that as a representative one has two obligations; advocating for a community, and honing one's skills as a negotiator. For many in Washington today, it seems as if they have failed on both fronts. I do not intend to do the same.**

**I) What is your campaign budget? How much have you raised to date?**

**N/A. We have raised \$7,300 to date.**

**J) How many people are on your campaign staff? How many volunteers are on your list?**

**Two on staff and some dozen volunteers.**

**IVI-IPO 2012 CONGRESSIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE – Section 2**

<b>Foreign and Military</b>			
	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Should the US wage war without a declaration from Congress?
			Do you support
2.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	closing WHISC (the re-named Army School of the Americas)?
3.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	mandating release of the names of all those who have attended the WHISC?
			Do you support
4.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	normalization of relations with Cuba?
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	the Helms-Burton Act?
6.	ESSAY		What should be Congress' role in formulating foreign policy? ( <b>All essays are attached to the end of this document</b> )
7.	ESSAY		Comment on the necessity & effectiveness of our military deployment in Afghanistan
<b>Energy &amp; Environment</b>			
			Do you Support
8.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Oil drilling in Alaska and other protected wilderness?
9.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cap and trade?
10.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lower National Carbon emissions goals?
11.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clean Diesel Program?
12.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	National Energy Efficiency goals?
13.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Coal Liquification?
14.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Increasing use of Nuclear power for electric generation?
15.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mountaintop coal strip mining?
16.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Increase user fees for grazing, mining and lumbering on Federal lands?
17.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Opening more federal land for lumber exploitation?
18.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Support for Alberta Oil Sand exploitation?
19.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Incentives for business to develop alternative energy systems
20.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tax credits for individuals to implement sustainable and renewable systems in their homes?
21.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you support allowing states to adopt more stringent environmental standards than provided for in Federal law?
<b>Transportation</b>			
			Should the federal government have any funding responsibility for
22.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	infrastructure improvements?
23.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	highways?
24.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	mass transit?
25.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	high-speed rail?
26.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Amtrak?
27.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Air transportation?

28.	ESSAY	Please comment on specific proposals	
<b>Taxes and Economic Policy</b>			
		Do you favor	
29.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	a more progressive income tax?
30.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	a flat tax?
31.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	a national sales tax?
32.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	taxing capital gains at the same rate as earned income?
33.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	taxing dividends at the same rate as earned income?
34.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	reduction/elimination of the estate tax?
35.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	any other changes in our tax structure?
36.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Elimination of mortgage interest deduction?
37.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Elimination of income tax credit for dependent children
38.	ESSAY	What would you do to create jobs, specifically address communities with historically high and lingering unemployment rates	
39.	ESSAY	What changes would you propose for the Social Security System?	
40.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you support repeal of the Commodity Futures Modernization Act?
41.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Will you support "fast track" legislation for trade treaties?

<b>Consumer Rights</b>			
42.	ESSAY		What legislation or regulation would you support to safeguard consumers harmed in the recent sub-prime lending credit crisis?
			Do you support
43.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	federal legislation to cap interest rates on credit cards and other consumer loans?
44.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	federal legislation to regulate ATM fees and service charges on credit cards and other consumer loans?
45.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	allowing states to enact consumer laws which go beyond the protection of federal legislation?
<b>Government and Ethics</b>			
			Do you support
46.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Constitutional amendment to regulate campaign financing?
47.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Constitutional amendment to reverse the Citizens United case?
48.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Would you support increased Congressional oversight of federal contracting?
	ESSAY		Why or why not?
<b>Health &amp; Human Services</b>			
49.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you support "Single Payer" or "Extended Medicare"?
	ESSAY		Why or why not?
50.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you support authorizing Medicare and other government insurance programs to negotiate lower prices for prescription drugs?
51.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Should the FDA approve importation of drugs from countries whose manufacturing and safety standards are equal or superior to those in the US?
52.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you support funding of medically accurate, age appropriate, sex education programs?
53.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you support increased funding for HIV/AIDS research, education, prevention, and services?

			Do you support
54.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	the Human Life Amendment?
55.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	the Freedom of Choice Act?
56.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	parental notification to obtain an abortion?
57.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	a ban on so-called partial birth abortions?
58.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Repeal of the Hyde Amendment?
59.	ESSAY		What other changes would you support in the area of reproductive health?
			Do you favor increased funding for:
60.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	supplemental food programs for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)?
61.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	food stamp allowances?
62.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Head Start?
63.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	school lunch programs?
			Do you support
64.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	reauthorization of TANF in 2012?
65.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	raising TANF benefits to at least equal the poverty level?
66.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reestablishing federal regulation of statewide programs?
67.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	TANF work requirement?
68.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Support the further extension of unemployment benefits?
69.	ESSAY		What are your proposals to help people who do not qualify for TANF or for unemployment benefits?
			Do you support
70.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	increased funding to develop affordable housing?
71.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	restrictions to ensure development of low-income rather than market rate housing?
72.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	adequate funding for the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund out of the premiums paid for Fannie Mae and Ginnie Mae loans?
73.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	protection against housing discrimination for holders of Section 8 housing vouchers?
			Do you favor
74.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	vouchers, tuition tax-credits or other any direct public support for parochial or private schools?
75.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Are the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act the most effective way to advance student achievement?
	ESSAY		If not, what plan would you propose?
<b>Law, Justice, and Correctional System</b>			
			Do you support:
76.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	admissibility of illegally obtained evidence?
77.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	electronic eavesdropping?
78.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	roving wiretaps?
79.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	capital punishment?
80.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	criminal prosecution of juveniles as adults?

81.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	mandatory sentencing?
82.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	criminalization of hate crimes?
83.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Congressional oversight of the NSA?
84.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Real ID program?
85.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	detention of suspects and material witnesses without charges and/or probable cause?
			Do you support
86.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	repeal of the Military Commissions Act?
87.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	a statutory ban on the use of extraordinary rendition and secret prisons?
88.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	creation of a special committee to learn the truth about unlawful and inappropriate activities by government officials in the post-9/11 era?
89.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	repeal of the FISA Amendments Act of 2008?
			Do you support legislation prohibiting racial profiling in law enforcement?
90.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you support legislation prohibiting racial profiling in law enforcement?
			Do you support legislation restricting the sale and possession of assault weapons?
91.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you support legislation restricting the sale and possession of assault weapons?
			Do you support legislation
92.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	mandating background checks of purchasers of weapons at gun shows, through the internet and through print advertisements?
93.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	increasing penalties for illegal resale of weapons?
94.	ESSAY		What restrictions, if any, should Congress enact or repeal regarding the scope of federally funded legal services for the poor?
<b>Civil Liberties and Civil Rights</b>			
			Do you favor
95.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	repeal of the Patriot Act?
96.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	amending the NSL provisions to expand court oversight, require a mandatory showing of a connection to terrorist activity and rescind unconstitutional gag restrictions?
97.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	any other changes to the Patriot Act?
98.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Do you support repeal/revision of the Posse Comitatus Act?
ESSAY		Please explain.	
			Do you support
99.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	prioritizing family reunification as criteria in granting visas and processing citizenship and permanent resident applications?
100.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	halting deportations of immigrants until final determination of residency status has been made and appeals have been exhausted?
101.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prohibiting deportation of undocumented immigrants arrested for misdemeanors or traffic violations?
102.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants currently in the country?
103.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The DREAM Act?
104.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recognizing same sex marital or union status when determining immigration status?
105.	ESSAY		What other immigration reforms do you support?

106.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you support DC statehood?
			Do you support
107.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	federal legislation to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation in housing, employment and education?
108.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act?
109.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	passage of the Respect for Marriage Act?
110.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Would you support legislation allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military?
111.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Do you support prior government restraint of the press?
112.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you support separation of church and state?
			Do you support
113.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	prayer in public schools?
114.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	moment of silence?
			Do you support mandatory drug testing
115.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	in private employment?
116.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	in public employment?
117.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Do you support mandatory AIDS testing for insurance or employment?
118.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you support legislation to redress inequities in pension benefits for women?
119.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you support the Equal Rights Amendment to the US Constitution?
<b>Labor</b>			
120.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Do you support Affirmative Action with specific goals, targets and timetables for federal employment, grants and contracts?
121.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you support legislation to restructure the wage scale of federal employees to correct disparities based on gender by instituting equal pay for jobs of comparable worth?
			Do you support
122.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act?
123.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	a prohibition on permanent replacement of strikers?
124.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	giving federal employees the right to strike?
125.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	the Employee Freedom of Choice Act?
126.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you support a federal living wage law to guarantee that a person working forty hours a week would be able to afford housing, food, utilities, transportation and health care?

## ESSAY RESPONSES

6.) The legislative branch must take a proactive role in countering the overwhelming influence the executive has on foreign policy. The idea that the executive is always the benevolent leader whose actions are based on sound and balanced opinions are inaccurate. Congress, as a body, is responsible for foreign policy oversight. It issues proclamations and resolutions, applies legislative pressure, and (most importantly) funds any diplomatic mission or military operation.

Foreign policy is a collective process, one in which the executive and legislative branches must have a close relationship. This is not to say that Congress is always the arbiter on sound reasoning. At times politics can trump pragmatism, but if Congress exerts an appropriate amount of pressure and uses the bevy of resources at its disposal, then America's foreign policy could be on a more sound footing.

7.) Operation Enduring Freedom's directive was to root out and neutralize al-Qaeda operatives in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, after ten years of fighting al-Qaeda has expanded its presence into northern Africa, Europe, Southeast Asia, and parts of the Middle East. The United States military and coalition forces find themselves in conflict with an insurgent Taliban that is actively attempting to recapture lost ground. While the U.S. and coalition forces were effective in dismantling the Taliban government in 2001 the conflict has come full circle, and outside of Kabul, we see a country in the grips of chaos. One where Afghans can only be allies to themselves since they are torn between coalition forces who preserve their freedoms and Taliban fighters who punish villagers for collusion with the "enemy".

American and coalition troops have made countless sacrifices to hold their ground, but they are now fighting two wars; one against al-Qaeda (and the overall network of terrorists associated with the organization) and the other against the Taliban. A war that runs through two countries, in which one is a reluctant ally. Though the 2014 withdrawal date is said to be set in stone the American people, and especially the American military do not want this incredible loss of life to be all for naught. As we saw in Iraq, the United States cannot be the protector of every nation, but if civil war ensues in Afghanistan we have dealt another blow to a country that has already suffered many times over the last few decades.

28.) Infrastructure spending is the linchpin of economic recovery for many politicians. I agree that our nation's infrastructure is rapidly aging and in need of retooling, but the federal government will not solve this country's unemployment and fiscal crisis by rebuilding a bridge or repaving a highway. These projects replace what already exists and sets the bar too low to usher in any breakthroughs. For example, a high-speed rail project cannot be on par with Europe or Japan. It must be quicker, more energy efficient and rolled out relatively quickly without the safety problems that have plagued China's rail program.

If the federal government is going to fund infrastructure projects there should be a healthy mix of replacement and creation. Until recently, some towns in the United States did not have running water, and there are still shortages in numerous locations. Thus, beyond the usual destroy and rebuild projects, we need to establish a 21<sup>st</sup> century electrical grid, give all access to affordable high speed internet service, and give more people access to potable water. All while curbing costs and maximizing benefits.

38.) Congress does not create jobs, the American people do. Businesses need incentives to hire, which is tied directly to demand for their products or services. If demand is low, a business has neither an incentive nor reason to hire. Lower taxes, subsidies, and tax credits may mean more money in the pocket at the end of the year, but it is not a sustainable source of income and an unstable

business is one that will quickly falter. Congress' responsibility in the current unemployment crisis is twofold; rectify the abysmal housing market and restore fiscal credibility.

If a person is unable to pay off their mortgage then they also have problems paying utility bills, buying groceries, and gas. There is little room for discretionary spending such as a new pair of shoes or repairing a roof. Banks, along with the government giants of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, ought to modify loans so that homeowners can afford their monthly bills. It not only keeps them in their homes and restores equity to neighborhoods by clamping down on foreclosures, but it gives homeowners more money to spend on products that in turn drives the growth of small and medium sized businesses.

Fiscally, the government must reign in its spending and find new sources of revenue. At this time, any increase in taxes may not be the best idea. Yes, capital gains and dividends should be taxed as earned income, but the tax rate has too many credits built in. If we eliminate the credits; simplify the brackets; and lower everyone's rates, it is not a revenue neutral measure as the country closes the deficit gap by evening the playing field. By injecting more confidence and liquidity into the market, businesses will again begin to hire.

This will not suffice for communities with historically high unemployment rates. As education becomes an increasingly burdensome barrier to employment, government cannot solely assist those who are in need of more training. There are hundreds of federal and state programs where the efficacy is questionable. However, numerous non-profit agencies perform marvelously without the red tape and inefficiency. If we can help these organizations expand their efforts, encourage more minority entrepreneurship, and educate minority business owners in the intricacies of government funding and contracting, then underserved communities begin to serve themselves.

39.) Those who are earning above the \$110,100 threshold must face a payroll tax on the additional income. This alone will inject billions of dollars into the Social Security Trust. Reduced benefits are also a necessity. While we shouldn't disturb the benefits of those who have an acute need (in fact we should increase the benefit with means testing), those in the upper echelons of the income bracket should not receive as sizable a benefit because of other sources of incomes such as, retirement savings, real estate, and investments; thus a more progressive model.

Social Security is a right of today's America, not a privilege to go the way of the omnipresent defined contribution plans. Every American must make a sacrifice.

42.) When subprime lenders and mortgagees enter into a relationship it is fraught with risks. There are ways to mitigate these risks while protecting both parties. By requiring larger down payments for these loans the recipient has more of a stake in the property while still not being priced out of the market. The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (Dodd-Frank) ensures that creditors cannot allow loan originators to steer clients towards high-risks, high-yield mortgages for their compensatory advantage. Lenders must also retain five percent of the assets they securitize, and they must ensure that the client has the ability to pay the minimum amount required on the loan. All of these provisions make sure the lender has a stake in the loan while the consumer is also held to a high standard. Any reasonable safeguard not only protects consumers against predatory lending but also against their own misjudgment.

48.) Waste and inefficiency are the words that come to mind when one thinks of federal contracting. The federal bureaucracy was put in place to counter corruption and make the process more efficient. But cost overruns and regulatory procedures can ruin project timelines and frustrate taxpayers who are saddled with the final bill. America could solve numerous fiscal issues with vigilant oversight and a competitive bidding process.

Then there is the issue of competence. Can a contractor deliver on his promise? Does she provide a decent service or does she take advantage of that contract while delivering subpar results. Of course, independent agencies are trusted to evaluate the work of their contractors but, at times, they fail. Congress' responsibility is to frequently audit each agency and its respective contractors and punish those who fail to do the job as promised. It discourages corrupt practices and it ensures that agencies take the proper steps to avoid being called before the legislature to assuage a bedeviled lawmakers.

49.) I support a social insurance model that would move this country in the direction of a single payer plan because it would force the government to look at expenditures. Costs are key in this fight, and seventeen percent GDP on health care is astronomical.

I also support Extended Medicare since it provides those with disabilities the opportunity to work without the uncertainty that comes with trying to obtain insurance coverage. The additional eight and one-half years of coverage allow an individual to be a productive member of the workforce whilst having the necessary coverage to treat their disability.

59.) I would oppose efforts to block granting Medicaid and hinder a woman's ability to engage in family planning services that can significantly affect her life. Additionally, insurers must cover FDA-approved prescription contraceptives in the same way as any prescription drug. The same applies to pharmacists who refuse to distribute prescription contraceptives to women because of personal beliefs. Contraception is not an obscene act but one that embraces responsibility and choice. Moreover, I would not support any additional funding for abstinence only programs that have shown middling success.

69.) TANF fails to achieve its ultimate mission, bringing children out of poverty. Essentially the program should give children a stable life that affords them the opportunity to succeed. To do so parents need options. A limited 60-month program that places a 12-month cap on vocational training for only 30% of a state's caseload is an injustice. There is little chance that many recipients will have the opportunity to receive the training to make themselves more marketable employees. Moreover, the block grant formula is not pegged to inflation and the benefit it woefully inadequate.

Yet TANF's strict eligibility requirements keep too many from receiving the benefits of the program. By relaxing the time limit for the work participation requirement and allowing those with mitigating circumstances such as a disability to receive credit for their labor, more families could have access to assistance. Moreover, if childcare were guaranteed to all recipients, then many eligible families would not have as difficult a time finding the work necessary to stay in the program.

Furthermore, for unemployment benefits there are two disparate groups that are affected, those who have never worked (full-time), and those who are near retirement age and ceased looking for work. The latter group has exhausted their benefits and is still without an occupation, while the former has little work experience—since they were in school—and are not eligible for benefits.

Unfortunately, the only way to rectify this situation is through employment. One cannot extend a benefit to an unemployed student simply because they went to school or an individual because they are frustrated of looking for work. This then becomes an issue

where the federal and state governments must work with businesses to drive hiring. That means stabilizing the underlying fiscal calamity and injecting small but potent incentives to hire.

75.) No Child Left Behind (NCLB) cannot accurately gauge any student's achievement; instead, it gives the distant third party (a state board of education, municipal school body, college/university) a sense of the student's competency. But then again how does the state determine whom or what is competent. NCLB's adequate yearly progress requirements have put many school districts in a bind, because it is impossible for any school to be 100% proficient by the 2013-2014 school year. When educators are punished (or conversely rewarded) for teaching students to do well on test it is an injustice to the child. Such rote memorization does little to further prospects of a young person; instead, it puts them in a situation where education and self-improvement is a chore rather than a fulfilling exercise.

The federal government cannot keep throwing money at the states with the expectation that the Department of Education's meddling will improve the station of American education. Funding is a major problem for many school districts but there is no comprehensive national policy that places students first. There are inadequate books, computers, laboratories, and classrooms, even entire buildings are crumbling. Despite this, students strive in the midst of this chaos because there are good teachers and involved parents. A comprehensive policy would move toward a nationally recognized school day complete with a core curriculum. Individual municipalities would still have great leeway in how they teach, but each student would be exposed to a broad range of subjects. Some proponents of the core curriculum believe that such a measure will prepare students for college but the purpose of such an effort is to prepare students for life, and give them an opportunity to explore multifarious subject areas.

This is just a starting point. Teachers still have to work with students individually and push them further.

94.) The Legal Service Corporation (LSC) should be free of a number of restrictions imposed on them by Congress. Notably the LSC cannot provide grants to organizations who engage in class action lawsuits. A law firm may only pursue such a suit if they can, theoretically, net a significant judgment. Yet in the case of a group who is trying to obtain minimal recompense and is more concerned about justice, a LSC grant would benefit a great cause.

Political involvement should not be prohibited. Seeing that many issues relating to the poor tie in directly to politics, a group is unable to have its voice heard because Congress wants to suppress dissent. This involves not only lobbying but also redistricting battles. Something that we here in Illinois are very familiar with.

98.) I do not support the revision or repeal of the Posse Comitatus Act because it establishes a healthy distance between states and military involvement to control domestic disturbances. Only in cases of insurrection does the president have the authority to call up the military to defend the interests of the state and the nation. A repeal or revision would give the federal government more leeway into states' affairs.

105.) This nation cannot continue the scorched earth policy toward illegal immigration; it is too costly and ineffective. Millions of illegal immigrants have established themselves in this country and actively contribute to the national economy. While they are breaking the law, and should be punished, mass deportation is not the answer. Neither is the costly immigration process, which deters

many from seeking permanent residency or citizenship in the United States. If workers display their commitment to work and abide by the law they should have the opportunity to become residents or citizens of the United States.

Immigration reform does not mean closing our borders but enforcing this porous boundary with policies that make sense. Those who come to this country and make vast contributions to the American economy cannot be summarily sent back but embraced and allowed the chance to become “American” pioneers not simply “foreign” ones.