

# BlueWaveNJ Congressional Candidate Questionnaire

## General

1. Why are you the best candidate to win the election in the fall?

This election is between me and Tom MacArthur. While Tom MacArthur continues to put partisan and financial interests over those of his constituents, I pledge to continue my record of service and putting people first.

2. What are the three biggest issues you would stress in a general election?

Healthcare costs, mitigating the negative impact of the tax bill on NJ, and fighting corruption in government.

3. **Your district is a historically red district. How will you address the specific concerns of right leaning independents to flip them blue?**

People are worried about the effects of the tax bill on property values and their bottom line. By sticking to these bread-and-butter issues, we can win over the right-leaning voters we need and get out the vote among our base to win.

4. When did you move into the district and, if the answer is recently, how will you deal with that question?

I grew up here in the district while my opponent, Tom MacArthur, moved here when he decided to run in 2014.

5. Turnout is key. What steps are you taking to build grassroots support and energy?

We' ve been holding weekly events in the district with supporters, including an event we had in December with 315+ people attending. This year, turnout is what will get us over the line.

## **Economy & Finance**

1. The GOP tax plan will add \$1.5 trillion to the national debt through substantial tax cuts to corporations and the wealthy. Moreover by virtually eliminating SALT deductions, many NJ residents will face tax increases. What measures will you propose to make our tax system fairer? Conservatives say the budget imbalance could be offset by cuts to social programs like Medicare, Social Security, and Medicaid. Would you agree to cuts in entitlement programs in order to reduce the deficit?

New Jersey is one of the most expensive states to live in, and this tax bill just makes it worse. We need to reinstate SALT deductions and return to a more progressive tax system.

2. New Jersey's unemployment rate is 4.9 percent, which is 20 percent higher than the national average of 4.1 percent. What federal measures would you propose to improve New Jersey's economy and provide more jobs for people in your district?

I' m a supporter of job programs that not only give Americans work, but train them for the jobs of the future. Any jobs bill should include vocational skills training. Furthermore, we must end the expectation that everyone should attend a four-year university and promote community colleges and apprenticeship programs as alternatives.

3. Student loan debt is crippling many young Americans. How will you address this ever growing issue.

We must continue student loan forgiveness, which the Trump

budget is seeking to end. Republicans are making it harder to earn an education in this country, and we must work together to find real solutions that ease this financial burden on our economy.

4. Infrastructure investment is desperately needed in the state, but after the tax cut there is limited funding available. How would you propose to fund projects such as the tunnel and other urgent projects for our state? Trump has suggested privatization of much of the infrastructure, would you support his proposals?

We've seen in places like Chicago and Indiana that privatization increases costs onto consumers in regressive ways. New Jersey taxpayers already pays for more than they get back from the Federal government, and the Federal government must help here.

5. Would you vote for any infrastructure bill that did not guarantee full funding for the Gateway project?

No.

6. **Since 2011, the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau (CFPB) has returned nearly \$12 billion to consumers harmed by financial institutions. The GOP and the Trump administration are doing everything they can to dismantle the CFPB. Will you defend the structure and independent authority of the CFPB as mandated in Dodd Frank, and reject any attempts in Congress to undermine its mandate including: its single directorship; its funding from the Federal Reserve rather than Congress, its rule making and regulatory authority, its enforcement authority with respect to abusive, unfair or illegal activity, its accessible consumer complaint database, and its ability to implement fines to be used to**

## **provide restitution to consumers, fund prevention and education activities and its overall work?**

Yes, I will fight to protect this critical Bureau to ensure we do not experience another preventable financial crisis again.

### **Health Care**

1. What do you see as the most attainable and effective means to attain universal access to affordable health care? What steps would you take to strengthen, build on or move beyond the Affordable Care Act?

First, we must stop the countless efforts to undermine and replace the ACA. We're currently in no position of power to further strengthen the ACA until we take back the House. The first step to strengthen and build upon the ACA is to take back the House this November.

2. Will you use your office to push for Medicare for all—or a similar single payer system

We must fight for affordable health coverage for every American and tackle the price of health care in this country, for example, by giving Medicare more power to negotiate pricing on prescription drugs.

3. What will you do for your constituents who do not qualify for a subsidy under the Affordable Care Act and are seeing their premiums and deductibles increase substantially year over year?

We must address the excise tax set to kick in in year 2020, which taxes people with "Cadillac plans." Some professions require monthly doctor visits, and would be unfairly taxed since they have plans required for their industry.

4. Republicans have been trying to defund Planned Parenthood since 2011. What is your position on a women's right to choose and how big an issue should this be in your race? Please state your specific opinions about restrictions being introduced in Congress and other states.

I'm a strong supporter of a woman's right to choose and oppose restrictions to limit this right.

## **Social Justice**

1. What steps would you propose to reform our criminal justice system and reduce racial injustice?

As someone who has organized to end homelessness and worked with the homeless, I'm a strong proponent of reforming our criminal justice system. From the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless to fighting genocides from the White House Situation Room, equality and justice are the core of why I have chosen to devote my life to public service.

2. **What is your plan to strengthen enforcement of anti-discrimination laws protecting New Jersey's LGBTQ residents?**

*As a former national security official, I was proud to work under the Obama Administration, which committed to strengthening LGBT protections around the world. Protecting human rights is fundamental to my core and drive, and will continue to be an integral part of me as a Member of Congress.*

## **Education**

1. What federal policies would you support to improve our education system?

Standardized testing has created a culture of teaching to the test and we must ensure teachers are given the opportunity to teach with creative, individualized lesson plans. A one-size

fits all system cannot and hasn't worked.

2. **The GOP higher-ed plan would end student loan forgiveness. What specific policies would you advocate to ensure that every family in America can afford to send their kids to college?**

First, not everyone needs to go to college. We must end the stigma of community colleges and vocational training programs, especially in working class communities. We also must stop Republican attempts to undermine the problem of student loans and prevent the elimination of loan forgiveness.

3. **What is your position on funding for school vouchers and school testing? What do you believe is the future role of charter schools in our country?**

My public school education here in New Jersey is what allowed me to become a Rhodes Scholar. We must put our public schools first, and voucher programs for *private* charter schools are problematic because they create a system where taxpayers invest away from public schools into private schools.

## **Environment**

1. **In NJ there are multiple underfunded or completely ignored Superfund sites. How will you deal with this issue as your district's representative?**

There is a superfund site right here in our district. We must ensure the safe removal of superfund sites from places like the Atlantic coast of New Jersey, as sea levels rise and storms increase in severity. It's a catastrophe waiting to happen.

2. **Numerically, how would you rank climate change as an important issue facing our nation? What issues do you believe are more**

**important? What will you do in Congress to address the impact of climate change?**

As a national security official, I recognize climate change as a fundamental national security issue of our time. New Jersey, and my district in particular, is already seeing stronger storms, more flooding, and knows climate change is real. However, our current Representative is doing absolutely nothing about it. I need to win this election and work with our scientists and the Pentagon to ensure we have a science-based approach to tackling climate change.

**3. What if anything do you believe we should be doing to promote environmental justice?**

Climate change disproportionately affects people of color and the poor. Climate change is not just an environmental and national security issue, it is also an economic justice issue. This is all the more reason to tackle the issue and acknowledge its existence.

**4. What is your position on fracking? Should the regulation of fracking be solely at a state level?**

We must tackle climate change and seek renewable sources of energy, both for our environment and for the long term health of our economy. Fracking has a similar short-term boost that coal did, but once it's gone, the jobs leave as well. We need to invest in jobs that are built to last.

## **Immigration**

**1. Between 700,000 and 800,000 DACA recipients wait in limbo as legislation is tied to billions of dollars for the border wall. How would you protect them and address the border security issues being tied to the proposed legislation in Congress? Would you**

support a broader Dream Act that includes a path to citizenship for all the undocumented that entered the US as children?

As the child of first-generation immigrants, I understand the virtues of immigration to this country, as well as the human elements. I understand the hard work, the drive, and the passion for this country in the immigrant spirit. Our laws must respect and acknowledge this humanity.

**2. In his State of the Union Address, Trump outlined the ways he wants to roll back legal immigration, including ending the visa lottery system and limiting family reunification policies to spouses and children, as a compromise for providing a path to citizenship for up to an estimated 1.8 million undocumented immigrants brought here as children. What would your response be to Trump's proposal? Do you think we need immigration reform and, if so, what would you propose?**

We must protect Dreamers and offer pathways to citizenship. Our immigration laws must reflect the values of this country's founding and the immigrant spirit that lifted us to where we are.

**3. There has been a recent severe increase in attacks on immigration advocates by ICE. What would you do to help protect their right to defend immigrants?**

I've sat down with immigration lawyers and advocates about this issue. Advocates have the right to free speech and to advocate on behalf of their clients. This is the crux of American constitutional norms.

## **Additional**

**1. Do you believe that the Second Amendment only applies to**

**state militias or does it restrict the fight to regulate guns?  
What specific federal legislation should be passed to  
reduce gun violence?**

As a counterterrorism and national security official, I've used and understand the power of military-grade weapons. I support commonsense gun safety measures like expanded background checks and barring people with mental illness from purchasing a firearm, a measure that my opponent, Tom MacArthur, didn't support.

**2. Please share your thoughts on marijuana legalization.**

I support the legalization of marijuana for medical purposes.

**3. What is your position on clean elections and getting money out of politics?**

I'm proud to not accept a dime of corporate PAC money and to be one of the first candidates endorsed by End Citizens United. I believe this issue, along with ending partisan gerrymandering, should be front and center.

**4. What specific legislation, if any, would you support with regard to clean elections and getting money out of politics?**

I support non-partisan redistricting committees (like in Iowa and California) and support reversing Citizens United.

**5. Do you believe that Congressional Democrats have been too cooperative or not cooperative enough with the administration and Congressional Republicans?**

Congressional Democrats hold no majority and are unable to get any legislation based on our values through the legislative process. They have no choice but to try to pick up more seats.

6. There is a substantial possibility that impeachment will be the most dominant issue for the next Congress. Do you currently support the impeachment of President Trump?

After President Trump's election, I started an organization called Rise Stronger to resist this President. President Trump's rhetoric is dangerous and his temperament has turned the White House into chaos.

7. Under what circumstances would you support his impeachment? What evidence would you need to see to support his impeachment?

Proof of aiding Russia and colluding with foreign powers to influence our elections, I believe, are appropriate grounds.

8. Would you support any change in Democratic leadership in the House? Do you believe that younger members of Congress should have a greater role?

We need new leadership in Washington from young leaders who look out for the interests of America's future.

9. Would you support a federal law (as proposed by Senator Markey) to overturn the recent FCC repeal of net neutrality rules?

Yes. Net neutrality protects the free and open nature of the internet as we know it. We must do everything we can to ensure that this commodity is protected and treated as such.