

BlueWaveNJ Congressional Candidate Questionnaire

General

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

I have demonstrated, in part by decisively winning the only open nominating conventions in the race thus far, my appeal to grass roots and party activists in the district, while at the same time mobilizing the national attention and fundraising support needed to mount an effective challenge to Leonard Lance. I also have the experience -- working in our executive branch and with the Congress -- to be an effective leader for our district in the House of Representatives from day one.

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

Repealing and replacing the GOP tax bill, with tax reform that preserves middle class deductions and is fiscally responsible, so that we can fund other local and national priorities such as infrastructure.

Achieving affordable healthcare for all.

Common sense gun safety measures.

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

Throughout my career, I have learned how to communicate progressive ideas to conservative audiences. I want to stress issues that unite us – protecting middle class taxpayers, fiscal

responsibility, patriotism and defending our democracy and our country – to bring together a broad coalition. Trump’s policies have given Democrats an opportunity to own these issues, and I intend to seize that opportunity.

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

I was raised in New Jersey, went to public schools here, and left in my late 20s to serve my country. I’ve come home to serve as well. I intend to stress my local roots and point out that while Lance has lived here all his life and represented this district for a long time, that doesn’t seem to prevent him from voting against his own constituents’ interests.

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

I could not have won the open nominating conventions in Hunterdon, Warren and Morris Counties without strong grassroots support, so this is a test we are already passing. Going forward, I want to tap into the massive grassroots effort that already exists rather than try to reinvent the wheel. Building relationships with existing organizations and leaders is key, and that is what I have been trying to do. Our plan is to work with them and with township level Democratic party leaders and activists to build, precinct by precinct, a volunteer effort built on neighbors talking to neighbors.

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? [L] [SEP]

No, I would not be willing to cut entitlements. True tax reform should look much like what we did in the 80s – slightly lowering marginal rates while eliminating special interest loopholes and deductions to broaden the base.

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? [L] [SEP]

Companies will come to New Jersey and stay here if we provide the good schools, services and infrastructure that make possible a good quality of life, and if we make sure more people can afford to live here. The most important contribution the federal government can make is to get tax policy right (which means not punishing states like New Jersey by eliminating the middle class tax breaks that we depend on) and funding infrastructure investment. This will directly support jobs, and make living, commuting from, and investing in New Jersey more attractive.

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

We should be pursuing aggressive options to make college more affordable – starting with fully subsidizing any student who wishes to attend community college. [L] [SEP] would also support legislation to allow students to borrow – and refinance their loans – at lower rates.

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? [L] [SEP]

Trump's plan provides far too little federal funding to meet our infrastructure needs, places too much of the burden on state governments and private investors (who would pass the costs on to us through tolls and taxes), and places far too little emphasis on projects that are in the public interest. The tax bill makes matter worse – I find it perverse that just one company, Berkshire Hathaway, will be getting a tax windfall of \$29 billion, more than enough to fund the entire Gateway project. The federal government must meet its commitment to fund 50% of the Gateway project, and provide significant funding to jumpstart other projects that are clearly in the public interest.

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

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 [L] [SEP] provide restitution to consumers, fund prevention and education activities and its overall work?

Yes

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? [L] [SEP]

I want to shore up the ACA and make it what it was meant to be. I support adding a Medicare public option to the ACA, as President Obama originally intended, and allowing Medicare to negotiate with pharmaceutical companies for drug prices

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

I am open to any idea that gets us to more affordable, universal coverage. But before replacing our entire health insurance system with something new, I would want to make sure that the replacement was workable and that we knew exactly how to pay for it.

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

I rely on the ACA myself, and am in that category. One reason premiums are going up is that the Republican Congress has been whittling away at the ACA, including by repealing the health insurance mandate – the fewer healthy people pay into the system, the more expensive insurance will become for everyone else. It's essential to fully fund the subsidies and restore the mandate. A public option would also reduce costs by introducing more competition.

4. Republicans have been trying to defund Planned Parenthood since 2011. What is your [L] [SEP] 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 stand firmly with Planned Parenthood and am staunchly pro-choice. I intend to stress that strongly during the campaign, especially as it contrasts with Lance's record. [L] [SEP]

Social Justice

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

We should roll back mandatory minimums and private prisons, decriminalize marijuana, and refocuses our law enforcement on tackling violent crime and not rounding up and deporting non-violent, law-abiding immigrants.

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

We should pass the Employee Non-Discrimination Act immediately and other measures to solidify in law protections for LGBTQIA+ individuals. As a State Department official, I led our global efforts to promote the human rights of LGBTQIA+ people. As a member of Congress, I will stand against the Trump Administration's worst impulses on these issues.

Education

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

I strongly believe that we should enable every child in America to enroll in pre-kindergarten programs, so that they are ready for school, and to help working families balance jobs and childcare. Head Start should be fully funded to meet this goal. We also need to fund and improve the performance of federal programs to help students from disadvantaged communities, including assistance under Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. I would want to partner with leaders like Gov Murphy to see how the federal government can adequately

support state-led education efforts.

[L]
[SEP]

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

Community college should be free to all of those wishing to attend. I support Hillary Clinton's 2016 plan to make college education free to those who cannot afford rising costs.

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

I do not support a voucher system. The government's primary responsibility when it comes to education is to support public schools. I believe there is a place for charter schools in our education system, but stronger oversight is needed to guard against unsavory practices and poor performance.

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? [L]
[SEP]

Trump has proposed drastic cuts to the EPA that would imperil our ability to clean Superfund sites. Despite this, EPA has pledged to speed up cleanup efforts - an impossible task as the its budget drops. I will hold the administration's feet to the fire and work to ensure that the EPA is adequately funded.

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? [L] [SEP]

I don't think it's a good idea to numerically rank threats to our country. But I believe that climate change is an existential issue for our country and for humanity. I support President Obama's Clean Power Plan. I would support tax, regulatory and trade policies that encourage the development of clean energy technology in the United States (including the solar power industry, which is a growing source of jobs in the 7th district), and oppose fossil fuel subsidies.

3. What if anything do you believe we should be doing to promote environmental justice? [L] [SEP]

As Assistant Secretary of State, part of my job was supporting environmental activists around the world seeking, often at great risk, to ensure that indigenous communities were represented in decisions that affected the health of their environment. The United States must lead by example. I would support Senator Cory Booker's Environmental Justice Act of 2017, which aims to reduce the disproportionate impact of pollution and environmental hazards on low income and minority communities.

4. What is your position on fracking? Should the regulation of fracking be solely at a state [L] [SEP] level? [L] [SEP]

I don't believe that fracking should be exempt from federal environmental protections under legislation such as the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and the Safe Drinking Water Act.

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? [L]
[SEP]

I would strongly support a broader Dream Act. If necessary, I would be willing to support compromise legislation that provides a clear path to citizenship for Dreamers and some protection for their parents, in exchange for more border security funding.

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? [L]
[SEP]

We should have passed comprehensive immigration reform long ago, based on bipartisan proposals that leaders like Senator Ted Kennedy and John McCain were promoting in the last decade. Threatening to deport young people who have known no country other than America is no way to get immigration reform. Nor is demonizing family reunification, the process by which so many generations of new Americans came to this country, or trying to limit immigration to those who have particular education or skills.

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? [L]
[SEP]

Under the Trump administration, ICE has begun to behave on many fronts in ways that are not consistent with American values, our laws and our Constitution – targeting for deportation law abiding families who have lived here for years, contributed to their communities, and committed no crimes; asserting that Americans living within 100 miles of a border lose their 4th Amendment rights; and singling out the most outspoken immigration advocates for enforcement measures. Congress is

failing in its oversight role here – if elected, I would work to ensure that DHS leadership are held accountable for these abuses, and withhold funding till changes are made.

Additional

1. Do you believe that the Second Amendment only applies to state militias or does it restrict the right to regulate guns? What specific federal legislation should be passed to reduce gun violence?

I support a ban on semiautomatic rifles and large capacity magazines, universal background checks, limits on ammunition sales, and red flag laws, among other common sense gun safety measures. The courts have made clear that all these steps would be consistent with the 2nd Amendment.

2. Please share your thoughts on marijuana legalization.

I support it. I want police officers in my community focused on violent crime and property crime, not on going after recreational marijuana users. I also think we are doing far too little to address the actual crisis of drug addiction in our country, including opiate abuse. In states that have decriminalized marijuana, including for medical use, doctors are prescribing fewer opiates.

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

I support campaign finance reform and am proud to be the only candidate in this race to be endorsed by End Citizens United. I have pledged not to take a penny from corporate PACs in my campaign. This will offer a strong contrast with Leonard Lance, who gets most of his campaign funds from such PACs.

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

I would support legislation like the DISCLOSE Act, Democracy for All Amendment, The Keeping Our Campaigns Honest (KOCH) Act, Get Foreign Money out of US Elections Act, and The Honest Ads Act

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

I'm all for cooperation in principle, but the experience of the past year suggests that trying to make deals with Donald Trump is a fool's errand. I do believe that there is room for compromise among Democrats and moderate Republicans in the Congress – much of what I've achieved working with the Congress over the years has involved achieving bipartisan agreement on a particular issue. And I see no way to govern the country in the last two years of the Trump administration unless Congress can operate in that way. But Democrats have to take back at least the House of Representatives if we're going to have the leverage to forge principled compromises.

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?

In the last month of the Obama administration I personally worked to ensure that evidence of Russian interference and potential Trump collusion was preserved and delivered to the Congress so that investigations could begin. But at a time when the basic norms and institutions of our country are under attack, I also believe that we as Democrats must stand not only for doing the right thing, but for doing it in the right way. We should insist on the steps that are needed to

protect our democracy from further interference, and I have laid out what I think must be done there:

<https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/01/11/russia-whistleblower-running-congress-216269>

We should protect Robert Mueller's investigation and the independence of the Justice Department and the FBI. And then we should act based on what the investigators find. If the right answer is impeachment, we will only get it if it is seen as the patriotic, not the partisan, thing to do. I fear that Democratic candidates demanding impeachment now will make it harder to achieve that consensus down the road, should it prove necessary to do so.

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

I would want to see a clear finding from the Mueller investigation that senior officials of the Trump campaign were complicit in Russian interference, for example, if they advised on the content and timing of the release of information the Russians stole from Americans. The investigators may find other evidence of actions that rise to the level of impeachment – but I would need to review that evidence and not make a judgment in advance.

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?

I will not have an opinion on any leadership race until I know who the candidates are, and I've had a chance to consult with my constituents. In general, I would support giving younger leaders a greater role.

9. Would you support a federal law (as proposed by Senator

Markey) to overturn the recent ^[L]_[SEP]FCC repeal of net neutrality rules? ^[L]_[SEP]

Yes