A Roadmap for Staten Island, Brooklyn, and America in 2018 and Beyond

The Narrows Agenda™

By Zach Emig

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<td>Updated tax plans to reflect new GOP tax laws; added Marijuana Legalization section.</td>
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Paid for by Zach Emig for Congress
Introduction

The Narrows is the tidal strait between Staten Island and Brooklyn, spanned by the Verrazano Bridge, through which many of our immigrant forbearers passed in their journey to America. New York’s 11th Congressional District also spans this body of water, encompassing all of Staten Island and the southern reaches of Brooklyn from Bay Ridge to Sheepshead Bay. The 11th is a microcosm of America—commuters and stay-at-home moms; quaint neighborhoods and bustling new immigrant hubs; union households, small business owners, and public employees. As such, the 11th suffers the same ills that afflict our nation: paychecks that have stagnated for decades; few and expensive health insurance choices; old, entrenched, out-of-touch political elites from both parties; and an opioid epidemic that has been left to plague our community for way too long.

Look, most Americans don’t expect the government to be everywhere, or to solve all their problems. But we do expect society to follow some basic, fair rules, and when things go awry, it’s up to our democratically elected leaders to level the playing field, to make things right. The Narrows Agenda is the policy roadmap for my 2018 Congressional Campaign—my contract with the voters of Staten Island and Brooklyn—laying out exactly how I’ll make things right. But it’s also a document that others can adopt, to define a better path for restoring America’s goodness, which is the foundation of its greatness.
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IN A NUTSHELL

The Narrows Agenda

As the representative for New York’s 11th Congressional District, I will relentlessly fight for:

1. Money in Your Pocket
2. Health Insurance in Your Wallet
3. Money *Out* of Politics
4. Opioid CEOs in Handcuffs
5. Communities over Corporations

If you’re nodding your head in agreement, great, that’s a good first step. But let’s be honest, we’ve all been burned before by politicians with catchy slogans and easy answers. Over the coming pages, I will lay out the *specific policies* that will make these goals happen.
1. Money in Your Pocket

*Behold! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty!*  
–Book of James 5:4

The Problem:

The single biggest economic, moral, and social catastrophe of the past thirty years is America’s shift from an economy that delivered for workers towards one that delivers for stockholders. The numbers don’t lie: Corporate profits have grown from 3.6% of economic profit (i.e. GDP) in 1987 to 8.5% today. Over that same 30-year span, employee wages have dropped from 46.4% of GDP to 43.6%.
The end result is this horrifying trend: the bottom 75% of American men who entered the workforce in the 1980s will earn less over their lifetime than the same cohort from the 1960s:

Figure 3: Selected Percentiles of Lifetime Income, by Cohort and Gender
This shift did not happen because of the “survival of the fittest” or immigrants or the usual scapegoats that politicians like to point to, but rather because of the accumulation of laws and policies, voted on by politicians of both parties, that cater to corporate needs rather than workers’ needs.

Solutions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solution 1: Strengthen Labor Rights</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In one sentence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>How it works</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Solution 2: $15 Minimum Wage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In one sentence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How it works</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Solution 3: Raise the Overtime Salary Threshold**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In one sentence</th>
<th>Change the overtime salary threshold so that working class employees are properly paid for extra hours.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How it works</td>
<td>The overtime salary threshold should be statutorily increased to $47,476 from $23,660 and indexed for inflation. This change would immediately make overtime pay (defined as time and a half) open to those workers currently making between $23,660 and $47,476 per year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example legislation</td>
<td>The Obama Administration issued this overtime rule on May 2016, but it is tied up in court and unlikely to be supported by the current White House. Congress must step in with legislation to this effect.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Solution 4: Squeeze the CEO-Worker Pay Gap**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In one sentence</th>
<th>Change the tax code to encourage corporations to raise salaries of their lowest paid workers.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How it works</td>
<td>The average American CEO makes over 300 times the average worker these days. That gap used to be “just” 20x in the 1960s. The Republican party recently slashed the corporate tax rate from 35% to 21% without asking for any increased corporate responsibility. I propose returning the corporate tax rate to 30% for any corporation whose bottom 10th percentile worker makes less than 1/20th of the top executive’s annual compensation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>If the 10th percentile worker’s annual pay at a corporation is $36,000 (i.e. 90% of their employees make over $36,000), in order to keep their tax rate at 21%, its board of directors would have to either a) lower the CEO’s compensation to $720,000 per year (i.e. $36,000 x 20 = $720,000), or b) raise the pay at the lower end of their salary base.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example legislation</td>
<td>This is an original Zach Emig for Congress proposal. The new Democratic majority will craft appropriate legislation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Solution 5: Launch the Employee Ownership Age**

| In one sentence | A simple change in the tax code to encourage corporations to share in their profits and planning. |
How it works

The erosion of salaries highlighted above would not have happened if the workers of America had a seat at the table of corporate governance.

I will reach across the aisle to those Republicans clamoring for a corporate tax break and propose the following: reduce the tax rate from 21% to 10% for corporations for which a super-majority of non-management workers own at least 50% of the corporation’s economic and voting stock shares. This is a powerful tax incentive for companies to put workers on equal terms to investors, and would empower workers to have a say in executive compensation and strategic goals, and to capture some of the economic gains of their collective success.

Example legislation

This is an original Zach Emig for Congress proposal. The new Democratic majority will craft appropriate legislation.

**Solution 6: Tax Cuts for the Bottom, not the Top**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In one sentence</th>
<th>Cut the bottom brackets, raise the top.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How it works</td>
<td>My plan is simple: reduce rates for the bottom two income brackets (income up to $77k), restore higher rates on the top two income brackets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The just-passed Republican tax law takes the opposite approach: blowing up the deficit in order to cut rates for the wealthy while leaving the bottom rate unchanged at 10%.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tax Brackets (Married)</th>
<th>Republican 2017 Tax Law (^{viii})</th>
<th>Zach Emig for Congress Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1 million and up</td>
<td>37% (cut from 39.6%)</td>
<td>49% (restored to Reagan ’81 level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$600,000 - $1 million</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>39.6% (restored to 2017 level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$400,000 - $600,000</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$315,000 - $400,000</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$165,000 - $315,000</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$77,400 - $165,000</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$19,050 to $77,400</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First $19,050</td>
<td>10% (left unchanged)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Solution 7: Bust Up Monopolies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In one sentence</th>
<th>Break up these behemoth companies to foster competition, increase innovation, and improve pay.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Zach Emig for Congress  
### How it works
Amazon, the ecommerce goliath, is buying Whole Foods. Most towns have one cable company. Google, Facebook, and Apple own 90% of our private data. Walmarts have single-handedly decimated the small business corridors of thousands of small towns.

Over the past three decades we as a nation have become complacent to the threat of the corporate monopoly. We’ve adopted the Republican mantra that, as long as a monopolist isn’t raising prices on consumers, it’s all okay. But that ignores the many hidden costs of monopolies: less innovation, more erosion of privacy rights, less bargaining power for workers (you can’t leave a job for greener pastures if the same employer owns all the pastures)\(^\text{x}\). Congress, as part of its oversight role of the FTC, must compel a vigorous response to the monopolization of American commerce.

### Example legislation
Zach Emig for Congress is working on detailed legislative proposals on this topic.

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### Solution 8: Universal Healthcare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In one sentence</th>
<th>Guaranteeing health insurance will free workers to focus on negotiating for higher pay without worry.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How it works</td>
<td>Universal healthcare is right for America financially, economically, socially, medically, and morally. All these points are discussed in the second plank of The Narrows Agenda below. Universal healthcare will also help drive up paychecks, because with an insurance card in their pocket, employees will no longer be tied to their employer for health insurance. Low paying companies who counted on health insurance to retain employees will have to either raise pay, or see their workforce flee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example legislation</td>
<td>Expanded &amp; Improved Medicare For All Act, H.R. 676, 115th Congress (2017).(^\text{x}) The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, H.R. 3590, 111th Congress (2010).(^\text{xi})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Solution 9: Strengthen Social Security

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In one sentence</th>
<th>Strengthening Social Security will speed up retirements and thus accelerate promotions and raises, up and down the income scale.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How it works</td>
<td>Social Security is one of the moral triumphs of America’s last century, greatly alleviating poverty amongst our elderly. It should be strengthened and expanded in order to encourage more of the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Zach Emig for Congress  
http://www.zachemig2018.com/
| Working elderly who want to retire to do so. Part of the downward pressure on wages over the past decade stems from the lack of promotion opportunities due, in part, to elderly workers staying in the workforce. As the Baby Boom generation retires, younger workers gain opportunities for promotions and raises. A revitalized Social Security payout plan will encourage this natural progression. |


**Solution 10: Harness the Coming Automation Wave**

| In one sentence | When robots take the jobs of people, their employers should be taxed to pay for the replaced workers’ re-training. |

| How it works | Nearly 800,000 Americans drive long-haul trucks for a living, a tough, low paying job. In the next decade, accelerating advancements in autonomous driving technology will likely make those workers replaceablexiii, and the truck drivers, like those that have toiled in many other shrinking industries in the past two hundred years, will find themselves jobless. |

Neither the heartless, law-of-the-jungle approach pushed by some on the right, nor the luddite approach pushed by some on the left, is the right response to this looming challenge. Instead, the solution is simple: a specific, ten-year tax on each autonomous long-haul truck, the revenues from which are dedicated to re-training of laid off truck drivers. As a nation, we get the benefits of this technological advance while cushioning the blow to acutely affected workers. |

| Example legislation | This is an original Zach Emig for Congress proposal. The new Democratic majority will craft appropriate legislation. |

The ten solutions listed above will kickstart a new era of wage growth in Staten Island, Brooklyn, New York, and America. The diagram below helps visualize how these policies would affect the earnings of Staten Island and Brooklyn households: several policies that push wages up from the bottom and several that benefit all income bands. Close to 40% of households in the 11th district make under $50,000 per yearxiv, and these are the families that will benefit the most from The Narrows Agenda.
2. Health Insurance in Your Wallet

The Problem:

There are three fundamental problems with America’s healthcare system:
1. It is one of the expensive systems in the developed world, as a percent of our economy.
2. Though expensive, Americans receive poor medical results compared to the rest of the world.\textsuperscript{xv}
3. Though improved by 2010’s ACA, there are still millions of Americans, typically the working class, who lack health insurance, and thus are one emergency away from medical bankruptcy.

The Solution:

The solution to all three problems above is universal healthcare. Let’s leave to the academics the debate over whether healthcare is \textit{a} right, because it’s indisputable that universal healthcare \textit{is right} for the country. President Reagan recognized this when he signed the EMTALA Act of 1986, which made it illegal for hospitals to refuse treatment for \textit{anyone}, insured or not, rich or poor, citizen or foreigner\textsuperscript{xvi}. Building on President Reagan’s first step, and President Obama’s giant leap, passing universal healthcare is right for America on financial, practical, economic, medical, and social reasons:

\begin{table}[h!]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|}
\hline
\textbf{Universal healthcare: right economically} \\
\textit{Universal healthcare creates as single insurance pool of 360 million people. Any economist will tell you that, ultimately, the larger the pool of insured, the more economically efficient the insurance delivered. Administrative costs related to insurance coding and negotiating with insurers would be reduced. Tens of billions of dollars of wasteful, administrative, and duplicative spending would be saved each year by our nation.} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\begin{table}[h!]
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\begin{tabular}{|l|}
\hline
\textbf{Universal healthcare: right financially} \\
\textit{As mentioned in the first plank of The Narrows Agenda, a universal healthcare card in every American’s wallet will stimulate wage gains. To a non-American, it’s ludicrous that we have to weigh losing health insurance when deciding to leave an abysmal job. Employers should compensate their workers appropriately, and losing the leverage of a health insurance plan will help foster that.} \\
Additionally, under today’s system, the uninsured often end up getting medical treatment in hospital emergency rooms. Besides being a rather poor delivery system for medical care, it’s quite expensive and is born by the other customers of the hospital (i.e. the public). The recent expansion of Medicaid has already started to decrease indebtedness amongst the poor\textsuperscript{xvii}. \\
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\end{tabular}
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\begin{table}[h!]
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\begin{tabular}{|l|}
\hline
\textbf{Universal healthcare: right practically} \\
\end{tabular}
\end{table}
Entrepreneurship and small business ownership are two of our economic bedrocks. Having the security of a healthcare card in their wallet will free future Staten Island and Brooklyn dreamers to take a shot and start new businesses.

Furthermore, budding entrepreneurs will be freed to focus on their business a success, rather than having to spend time and money hiring an HR team to administer employee insurance plans. People start restaurants to make food for hungry customers, not to sift through the fine print on Aetna versus BlueCross Blue Shield.

Employees will no longer dread the annual benefits renewal period and its changing array of plans, terms, and prices.

A nationwide health insurance plan will use its bargaining power to drive down prices on drugs.

No longer will hospitals and doctors be able to play expensive games with in-network and out-of-network designations, a practice they should be ashamed of.

Universal healthcare: right morally

At the end of a police investigation, the victim of a violent crime is not presented with a bill for the costs of the investigation. Our society rightly judges that justice is an important value in and of itself, and our tax dollars will pay for the cops and courts that administer it.

Likewise, if someone is diagnosed with a treatable cancer, it’s in the civic interest that they receive treatment, regardless of their current employment situation. As President Reagan affirmed with his 1986 signature, we as a nation will not abide with the sick and infirm being tossed aside to die, and in 2018 we will give that moral judgement the weight it deserves by enacting universal healthcare and thus ensuring true universal insurance coverage.

3. Money Out of Politics

The Problem:

Most senators and representatives spend a quarter to half their workday calling donors to ask for money. This has several terrible effects on our governance:

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http://www.zachemig2018.com/
1. **Entrenches corporate power**
   There is no clamoring in the public to allow farms to leak pesticides into our waters, mining companies to dump waste in our streams, or cable companies to profit from our private data. Yet against the people’s will and against any ideological coherence, in the first six months of 2017, Congress has passed legislation permitting all three\(^{xx}\). It’s not unrealistic to suspect the millions of dollars of campaign contributions flowing from industry is the driving force for these.

2. **Amplifies the voice of the rich**
   The pool of Americans that can write $2,000 checks for candidates is quite small, and is made up mostly by the top 2% of earners. When our representatives spend half their time talking to those people, their outlook is naturally skewed towards the concerns of the wealthy few.

3. **Rewards useless skills**
   Look, I admit fundraising is a talent. Dialing for dollars is not easy, and there are skills and techniques to it. Unfortunately, those skills and techniques are useless for governing, but our current campaign finance system rewards them.

4. **Prioritizes donors over voters**
   After the Sandy Hook massacre, public opinion polls showed upwards of 60% of Americans in favor of tighter firearm safety laws\(^{xxi}\). Fear of outside interest group money (*cough*, NRA, *cough*) drying up ensured that no legislation made it through Congress.

5. **Discourages potential candidates**
   America is a vast nation of many varied talents. The specter of fundraising has the unfortunate effect of filtering out a lot of talented potential candidates who aren’t independently wealthy or well connected. We are the worse off for the loss of their voices in the halls of power.

**The Solutions:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Solution 1: Realtime Federal Campaign Matching Funds</th>
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<tr>
<td>How it works</td>
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Zach Emig for Congress  
1. All campaigns that meet a certain threshold of viability (through donations and/or signatures) report their weekly contributions to the FEC.
2. The FEC then publicly “tops up” the trailing campaigns so that their total contributions were 90% of the top funded campaign on a weekly basis.
3. Thus, none of the campaigns need to worry about being more than 10% off their competitors’ funding on a week-by-week basis.

Example
For example, if Samantha’s campaign raised $150,000 by July 30 but Rondelle’s campaign only raised $55,000, the FEC would top up Rondelle’s campaign by $80,000 to a total of $135,000, which is 90% of Samantha’s tally.

Benefits
1. Greatly diminishes the transactional nature of campaign donations, since opponents would soon be predominantly caught up.
2. Donor power is demolished overnight.
3. Massively reduces the importance of fundraising to both campaigns and sitting members of Congress.
4. Encourages new candidates from different backgrounds to run for office, since incumbents’ fundraising advantage is diminished.
5. Encourages candidates without personal wealth to run for office.
6. Frees candidates and legislators to focus more on policy and constituent services than donor servicing.

Example legislation
The closest proximity to the plan I’m proposing is the FEC’s matching fund system at the Presidential level, which lasted from about 1976 until President Obama’s fundraising prowess in the 2008 cycle obliterated it. That system is a relic of the 1970s, and what I’m proposing is a realtime, digital, playing-field-leveler version of it. This is an original Zach Emig for Congress proposal. The new Democratic majority will craft appropriate legislation.

Solution 2: Term Limits for Congress

In one sentence
The closer that legislators are to the lives of the public the better, and term limits are an effective way of keeping politicians from stagnating in office.

How it works
House of Representatives members are limited to five terms (10 years). Senators are limited to two terms (12 years).

Benefits
1. Prevents stagnations of the leadership class—a big reason that most of the public is so disenchanted by both major parties is the longevity of their leadership.
2. Reduces the value to donors of relationships with representatives and senators, since they all have an expiry date.

3. The turnover of new, younger members of Congress brings with it modern ways of thinking.

Example legislation

Absent a constitutional amendment, it is difficult to enforce term limits. However, that doesn’t mean we’re powerless. The Democratic Party caucus in Congress should adopt party rules that limit leadership posts to members who have served fewer than a dozen years. One reason the Republican House leadership team is so much younger than the Democrats’ team is that their rules discourage stagnation in the leadership ranks.

Furthermore, since I believe in leadership by example, I am committing myself to a three-term limit should the New York 11th district voters elect me in 2018.

Why three? Well, I figure that six years is sufficient time to pass most of this agenda; and if I haven’t done so, it’s only fair to give some other young Staten Islander or Brooklynhite a shot at governing. It’s a sink or swim world; enough with all the politicians looking to grow old in DC.

---

Solution 3: Impeach Judges who Equate Corporations as People

In one sentence

It is lunacy to think that corporations are people, and any judge that rules as such should be removed from office.

How it works

The *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision demoralized the vast majority of the public that wants money out of politics.

Most Americans understand at a gut level that the reigning ideology that preaches “corporations are people,” and thus have the same political rights as people, is lunacy. Corporations are legal entities established for business objectives, no more, no less. That five justices have granted them first amendment rights with which they can bend the political process is a travesty.

The good news is that our Constitution provides a method for reigning in the judicial branch: impeachment. It is time for our representatives to start using the constitutional power afforded them and bring impeachment hearings against judges that rule for corporate rights as an extension of corporate personhood.

Example legislation

No legislation is necessary, beyond Article II, Section 4 of the US Constitution. xxiii
4. Opioid CEOs in Handcuffs

The Problem:

91 Americans die from opioid overdoses every single day\textsuperscript{xxiv}. That is way more than the worst terrorist attacks of the past decade, except it’s repeated every single day. And while some elected officials quake in terror at the infrequent attacks, we as a nation have been shamefully nonchalant about addressing the opioid crisis. Our public servants, \textit{regardless of party}, have proven ineffectual at slowing this epidemic.

The root of this epidemic lies with a number of pharmaceutical companies which, over the past two decades, have combined fraudulent marketing practices and lax controls to pump these prescription pills into America’s communities while reaping billions of dollars in profit. Nowadays you cannot even watch a sporting event on TV without seeing commercials for medications to treat, ameliorate, or compensate for the effects of the original opioid epidemic. Pills for pills for pills just shows how impotent we’ve been addressing this crisis.
Let me name a couple names—by no means the only examples, but perhaps the most egregious:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>McKesson Corporation (stock symbol: MCK)</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Profit</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recent fines</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Previous fines</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CEO Pay</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Cardinal Health, Inc. (stock symbol: CAH)</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Profit</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recent fines</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Previous fines</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CEO Pay</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The list of Pharmaceutical companies paying fines for the very conduct that helped foster this epidemic goes on and on. And yet we now suffer more losses, per day, than the crack epidemic of the 1980s. By far. That is the status quo that our current crop of politicians hasn’t changed. When legislators proudly tout passing a few hundred million of funding for opioid treatment, keep in mind that the engines of opioid proliferation rake in that amount in a month. Let’s get serious.

The Solution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solution 1: Police Raids on Opioid-Pushing Corporations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In one sentence</td>
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<tr>
<td>How it works</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. DEA and FBI vans pull up to the headquarters of a McKesson, or a Purdue, or one of the numerous corporations that have already been hit with fines. Hundreds of agents storm the offices, handcuff senior management, and begin removing every computer from the office as evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Within ten minutes, news of the raid hits newswires, Twitter, and CNBC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Less than a minute later, the publicly listed stocks of every pharmaceutical distributor related to opioids are dropping precipitously.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Within fifteen minutes of the stock market drop, the corporate boards of every opioid producing and distributing corporation in America hold emergency conference calls. Panicked CEOs scream at the tops of their lungs at their subordinates, demanding that they 100% guarantee that every pill sold/shipped is for a valid medical need, which their subordinates cannot vouch for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Within an hour of that meeting, the opioid corporations begin releasing statements to the press announcing that they will halt...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
all shipments of opioid products until their control systems are audited and they can verify the validity of every truckload.

6. Meanwhile, investigators pour over the confiscated email archives and documents looking for evidence of prosecutable offense. As the tobacco industry cases of the 1990s revealed, corporate misdeeds are often well documented.

And thus, from one raid of a single corporate office, the deluge of these addictive painkillers into Staten Island is disrupted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example legislation</th>
<th>This is an original Zach Emig for Congress proposal. Though Congressional oversight will encourage the process, it is incumbent upon executive branch officials to lead the charge.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Solution 2: Universal Healthcare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In one sentence</th>
<th>Universal healthcare expands access to mental health and substance abuse services to everyone, which can only help to reduce the addictive impulse.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How it works</td>
<td>Depression, anxiety disorders, and other mental health ailments are a large driver of alcoholism and drug abuse. The stress of overwork for low pay combined with limited health insurance among the working-class results in some turning to drugs for relief. Universal healthcare addresses the latter issue. Substance abuse treatment is an expensive and time consuming remedy, and Universal Healthcare is needed to make it available to those who need it. (See plank 2 of The Narrows Agenda above for more detail on this topic).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Solution 3: Higher Pay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In one sentence</th>
<th>The stress of poverty is another driver of drug usage, and passing laws that increase workers’ wages can only help to reduce the addictive impulse.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How it works</td>
<td>Higher minimum wage, stronger labor rights, and tax policy that encourages pay raises are a few of the steps that will get more money into people’s pockets (see plank 1 of The Narrows Agenda above for more detail on this topic). The less stress workers have, the more free time they have to spend with family, friends, and neighbors, the lower the urge to substance abuse.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Communities over Corporations

The Problem:

Congress, partly for ideological reasons, partly for partisan reasons, and partly for fundraising reasons, devotes tremendous time and energy to serving the needs of various corporate interests. Conversely, the bedrock of our civic life, America’s communities, are ignored.

The Solutions:

I expect this list of policies to expand over the course of my 2018 campaign. Here are just a few solutions to improving community life:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solution 1: Preventing the Next Sandy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In one sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How it works</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thankfully, there are many practical steps that we can take that help both the environment and the economy. Shifting our energy mix from polluting sources to renewable sources. Highlighting the true environmental cost of our consumption patterns. Being a world leader on the topic rather than a world deadbeat. American leadership is the responsible choice.

### Solution 2: Support Women’s Health Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In one sentence</th>
<th>Planned Parenthood delivers healthcare that leads to healthier neighborhoods, families, and children.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How it works</td>
<td>It’s simple: the health of our communities depends on the health of women, and for many neighborhoods, Planned Parenthood provides critical services in that regards. I wholeheartedly support their mission of service, and wholeheartedly trust women to make the right medical decisions in the privacy of their doctor’s office.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Solution 3: More National Holidays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In one sentence</th>
<th>We work too much, so let’s designate Easter, Women’s Suffrage Day (August 18), and Election Day as national holidays.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How it works</td>
<td>There are forty countries around the world that have more national holidays than America. Having time off from work to spend with family, neighbors, and community is critical. We should increase the number of Federal Holidays from ten to thirteen by adding Easter, Women’s Suffrage Day (August 18, in honor of the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 1920), and, on even numbered years, Election Day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example legislation</td>
<td>“A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to make the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., a legal public holiday.” H.R. 3706, 98th Congress (1983).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Solution 4: Focus Immigration Enforcement on Bosses Not Neighbors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In one sentence</th>
<th>Relentlessly crackdown on the greedy bosses hiring illegally and show compassion to our undocumented neighbors who’ve been in our community for years.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How it works</td>
<td>Rather than draconian enforcement against the undocumented immigrants themselves, the law enforcement assets of the USCIS should be directed against employers who knowing hire undocumented workers. Put simply, if large agribusiness, corporate warehouses, and other businesses obeyed hiring laws,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Zach Emig for Congress  
the draw for migrants to enter America illegally would be greatly diminished. It would only take a handful of raids and arrests of corporate middle managers for a sea change in hiring practices to take place.

It is well past time for us to separate the issues of immigrants and immigration. Many undocumented immigrants have lived productive, peaceful lives for years in our neighborhoods, and it would strengthen our communities economically and socially to legalize their status here.

Immigration is the ongoing flow of new residents to the US, and like every sovereign nation, we have the right to tailor that flow to our social and economic needs and capacities.

Example legislation

Zach Emig for Congress is working on detailed legislative proposals on this topic.

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### Solution 5: Legalize Marijuana

**In one sentence**

Marijuana is less addictive than cigarettes, less intoxicating than alcohol, and less toxic than opioids. It should be legalized for adult consumption.

**How it works**

I don’t drink Appletinis. I can’t stand cigarettes. I’ve never been curious to try marijuana. But of these three, the least damaging to health and community relations (see: DUIs) is the marijuana.

The benefits of legalization, which has succeeded without incident in places ranging from Colorado to Portugal, are:

2. Freeing the police to focus on much more toxic substances like fentanyl and heroin.
3. Cutoff a revenue stream for illegal drug gangs.
4. Adults gaining the freedom to enjoy their lives as they see fit.
5. New source of tax revenues.
6. Healthier population, as people drink less alcohol and use fewer opioids for pain relief.

Worries that have lingered since the 1950s that marijuana is a gateway drug have proven unfounded again and again. It’s a tragedy that young men—predominantly from minority communities—are rotting in jail for so common and mild a substance.

**Example legislation**

**Solution 6: Public Servants Must Host Public Townhalls**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In one sentence</th>
<th>Representatives should hold frequent, public townhalls since The People are their boss.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How it works</td>
<td>Senators and Representatives are public servants. Their bosses are We, the People. The recent trend of avoiding townhall meetings or closing them off to the public is cowardly and detrimental to our civic life, and must be rebuked immediately. Townhalls give citizens the chance to make their voice heard, and if a representative doesn’t have the guts to engage all voters, whether friendly or adversarial, they should look for a new job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example legislation</td>
<td>As the representative for New York’s 11th district, I pledge to host a dozen public townhalls a year, divided evenly amongst the South Shore, Mid-Island, North Shore, and Brooklyn pieces of my district.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Solution 7: Paid Family Leave**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In one sentence</th>
<th>Paid family leave ensures that, should an emergency strike a family member, workers can temporarily step away from the job to care for them.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How it works</td>
<td>As the average life expectancy continues to happily increase, a simple insurance policy for workers who need to act as emergency caregivers for their elderly relatives or other family members is an easy step to improve the health of our families and neighborhoods.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**CODE OF ETHICS**

I pledge to the constituents of my district that in all decisions taken as a candidate and officeholder, myself, my campaign staff, and my office staff will aspire to the following ten principles:

1. **Fearless**
I will not cast a vote nor propose a policy based on fear, especially fear of potentially losing a future election. Cowardice inspires no one.

2. **Frugal**

   My staff and I will treat other people’s money, whether it be campaign contributions or taxpayers’ monies, with as much care as our own money, and avoid frivolous expenses.

3. **Humble**

   In a representative democracy like ours, no public servant is indispensable. I will treat voters like they are my boss—since they are—and will be grateful and humble for the honor of representing them. No politician is above the law or above The People.

4. **Respectful**

   Opposing views are a necessary part of life. I will neither dismiss nor insult any voters because of their views, no matter how vehemently I may disagree with them. I will eagerly participate in debates and conversations that are respectful in nature.

5. **Accessible**

   Public servants are meant to serve the public. I will hold townhalls open to the public as frequently as possible. Without regular, sometimes heated, feedback from the public, politicians have a tendency to drift off to serve other masters.

6. **Informative**

   I will provide links and references to all my political arguments. It’s 2017, the internet has been around 25+ years, and linking to source data, research, and articles should be standard. I will elevate the debate by providing the data to back up all my major proposals.

7. **Transparent**

   Every vote I take will be accompanied by an explanation, either recorded or written, of the pros and cons of the vote and my decision-making process.

8. **Inspiring**
All elected officials should lead by example, since their very power means their conduct will affect our civic life. My campaign and public service will be daring and fearless, and will hopefully lead to the next generation becoming bolder and more daring in all facets of life.

9. Direct

I will never use staff or surrogates say things on my behalf that I wouldn’t be comfortable saying myself. I will never use staff or surrogates to attack an opponent, since that is cowardly, and I am tough enough to conduct political combat myself.

10. Press Friendly

Public officials should face tough questioning, and I fear no questions. The free press, which has come under such abuse over the past couple years, is thus a critical part of civic life in our democratic republic. As such, I will treat the press with respect and, to all extents possible, accommodate their questions and interview requests.

CONCLUSION

Typically, congressional campaigns don’t release detailed campaign platforms like this, certainly not fifteen months prior to an election.

But I am not a typical candidate. I am not running a typical campaign. And, frankly, I think voters are sick of typical politicians from both parties who mouth empty slogans and learn their principles from the daily polls. We, The People, are thirsty for public servants who are fearless, who have a clear plan for fixing our country, and who have the smarts and guts to make it happen.

The Narrows Agenda is my blueprint for quickly improving lives here in Staten Island and Brooklyn. These policies, once enacted, will result in more money for workers, more healthcare security for families, fewer opioid deaths, cleaner politics and healthier communities.

I hope you agree, and will support my campaign for Congress. We can do this. Now is our time.

All the best to you and yours,

Zach Emig for Congress  http://www.zachemig2018.com/
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Narrows Agenda is a culmination of many conversations, forums, presentations, readings, and research I’ve done over the past months and years. There are too many of them to name here, but I appreciate all their tutelage, and will let them know privately. Photo credit for most of the photos used herein goes to Cristine Trimarco.

I anticipate The Narrows Agenda to be refined over the coming months of the 2018 campaign. I look forward to the many lively future conversations about it.

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\[^i\] St. Louis Federal Reserve data. [https://fred.stlouisfed.org/graph/?g=er1r](https://fred.stlouisfed.org/graph/?g=er1r), [https://fred.stlouisfed.org/graph/?g=eqUt](https://fred.stlouisfed.org/graph/?g=eqUt).


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