

UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 8

QUESTION 1: CANDIDATE RICK NOLAN:

Please provide a brief statement about who you are and why you are running for the office of United States Representative.

It has been an honor to serve as your Congressman over the last 4 years where I have fought to protect and expand the middle class. Simply put, there is more work to do, which is why I'm asking for your support again in November.

I bring to Congress lessons and values learned as a father and a grandfather, and my marriage to my wife Mary Nolan for 32 years. I was born and raised on the Cuyuna Iron Range, and started a successful small business, creating jobs throughout northern Minnesota from the sawmill and pallet factory I owned in Emily for many years. I am a lifelong hunter and fisherman, who harvests wild rice in the fall, boils maple syrup in spring, and I never miss a fishing opener.

It's these values and experiences I bring with me back to Washington in the fight to protect pensions and programs like Social Security and Medicare, to secure living wages, to improve programs assisting our veterans, and to get more of the products we use every day made right here in America.

The simple truth is, however, there is an element in Washington strongly opposed to the work we do. They would rather protect Wall Street billionaires, other wealthy trust fund elites, and the rigged system voters are fed up with.

I ask you to support me in our effort to bring more fairness and equality for all.

CANDIDATE STEWART MILLS:

As I travel around our part of the state, I hear from Republicans, Independents, and quite frankly many Democrats who are fed up with Washington's way of doing business. They are had enough with the petty, partisan, political attacks. They are weary of politicians who constantly change their positions depending on the latest poll or political wind direction.

If I am fortunate enough to be elected to Congress, I will put the folks in the 8th District first and fight to unleash the economic boom in greater Minnesota, regardless of the consequences to my party or re-election efforts.

We have the right raw materials here in Minnesota whether it's our Main Street entrepreneurs, the iron and copper in our ground, the timber in our forests, or the grit and determination of the men and women who've lived here for generations. I will be a strong voice for them because the American people – not the government – have the answers to the challenges facing our nation.

For six generations my family has lived and worked in Minnesota's 8th District. I worked at my family's businesses, Mills Fleet Farm and Mills Automotive Group for more than 30 years where I learned the meaning of hard work and what it takes to grow jobs and successfully maintain a main-street oriented business.

As a father, husband, and business owner, I believe our best days are ahead and we must do everything we can to make it morning in America again.

QUESTION 2:

Please explain why you do or do not believe that the federal government should ensure that every American has health coverage.

CANDIDATE RICK NOLAN:

I strongly believe that the federal government should do more to ensure that every American has health coverage for themselves and their families.

It should be a thing of the past that someone should face bankruptcy to pay a medical bill, or be forced to choose between medical treatment and the basic necessities of life, which is why I support a universal, single-payer system that covers everyone, reins in administrative costs, negotiates fairer prices for the American people and provides better results. This approach has proved successful for many democratic nations, and that's what I intend to keep fighting for.

Meanwhile, I will keep fighting against dangerous Republican policies that would return us to an era where 46 million uninsured people were using Emergency Rooms for care, and a time when people who needed care were denied coverage for a pre-existing condition. The same era where women were charged more than men for the same treatment. That's no solution, and I am committed to making sure that all Americans have access to affordable health care.

CANDIDATE STEWART MILLS: Declined to respond.

QUESTION 3:

What should the federal government do about the growing economic disparity between the poor the middle class and the wealthy?

CANDIDATE RICK NOLAN:

The widening wealth gap between Wall Street billionaires, wealthy trust fund elites and the rest of us is harmful to our democracy. We need to do more to reduce economic disparities and lift more Americans into the middle class. One way to reduce the wealth gap and expand the middle class is addressing the issue of tax fairness.

The current tax system is unfair to the middle class. It's costing us tens of millions of jobs. And study after study makes it clear that more tax breaks for the super wealthy, for Wall Street, and for multi-national corporation executives is not the cure. Trickle-down economics makes the rich richer – the poor poorer – and crushes the middle class. We need to fix our tax system.

We can fix it by requiring the wealthy to pay their fair share, while shifting the burden off the poor and the middle class, and institute more tax incentives for small and medium sized businesses to expand and hire more workers.

We can fix it by putting an end to unfair tax and trade policies and agreements negotiated in secret like the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). TPP will allow foreign companies to dump below-cost products – propped-up by state-subsidies and produced by under-paid workers – into U.S. markets. What we need instead is to encourage American businesses to expand and hire right here at home, and provide them with a well-trained workforce that isn't coming out of college and vocational training burdened by heavy debt.

CANDIDATE STEWART MILLS: Declined to respond.

QUESTION 4: CANDIDATE RICK NOLAN:

How can the federal government, in collaboration with other levels of government; help address racial and cultural divides in public safety?

This past summer, which saw the killing of Philando Castile in Minnesota and the five police officers in Dallas, I expressed my fear for the future of our Country. We simply must find ways to come together and end the division, demonization and senseless violence that will rip our Country apart if it continues.

I've expressed my support for legislation that would call for greater requirements for enrollees at law enforcement academies to receive sensitivity training on ethnic and racial bias, cultural diversity, and police interaction with the disabled, mentally ill, and new immigrants. It would also push states to adopt laws requiring independent investigations and prosecutions of law enforcement officers in cases where one or more of the alleged offenses involves an officer's use of deadly force in the course of carrying out his or her official duties.

CANDIDATE STEWART MILLS: Declined to respond.

QUESTION 5:

What should the federal government's top three priorities be in setting a sound energy policy?

CANDIDATE RICK NOLAN:

As the Congress works to craft our national energy policies, I believe our primary focus must be to develop clean and renewable energy supplies and technologies right here in America that reduce our contribution to climate change and create good, middle class jobs. Furthermore, as a member of the Congressional Biomass Caucus, I continue to work with my colleagues to support the development of Minnesota's clean energy potentials and elevate their profile in Congress. To that end, I have supported legislation that makes use of American innovation and supports policies to require the use of domestic content in green technologies.

Additionally, I have supported legislation to end outdated tax breaks for big oil companies and impose a carbon tax, with new revenues dedicated to reducing the deficit and investing in clean energy jobs. I have also fought to sustain and strengthen landmark environmental laws that help address air pollution, oil spills, disposal of solid and hazardous waste, toxic chemical use and reduction, and our nation's drinking water resources.

CANDIDATE STEWART MILLS: Declined to respond.

QUESTION 6: CANDIDATE RICK NOLAN:

What do you believe the federal government should do to limit the impact of global climate change?

The federal government can and should play an important role in reducing the impacts of global warming and climate change. Our air, lakes, rivers and forests, are crucial to our economy in Northern Minnesota. The degradation of our air and water, along with global warming, threaten the very survival of our species here on earth. We must protect the environment in order to not just protect our economy and tourism, but to protect our traditions and way of life.

The Administration's efforts to advance the Clean Power Plan and reduce carbon pollution from power plants are also on the right track, but must do more to take into account the progressive work states like Minnesota have already done to reduce emissions. Minnesota's utilities have spent millions complying with existing regulations and mandates, and should be credited for their important work.

Congress can do its part too and help limit the impact of global climate change by incentivizing the use of new sustainable and renewable energy sources, funding research into the impacts of warming temperatures on unique environments and landscapes like our northern forests and cold water lakes and streams, researching the long term impacts global warming will have on our health and safety, and reducing the impacts of new climate change related invasive plant and animal species.

CANDIDATE STEWART MILLS: Declined to respond.

QUESTION 7: CANDIDATE RICK NOLAN:

What should be done to ensure that every citizen has the ability to vote and have their vote counted without undue barriers

The right to vote is fundamental to citizens of the United States but it is under assault, as it was here in Minnesota in 2012. More states across the country are making it harder, sometimes near impossible, for eligible citizens to exercise their right. Moreover, many areas of our current electoral system are outdated and in desperate need of modernization.

We must do everything we can to expand this sacred responsibility to all people who are constitutionally eligible to vote. I support continuing efforts being used to reach more people like automatic voter registration, expanding early voting and same day registration, the push to make Election Day a National Holiday. I strongly oppose unconstitutional, cumbersome and restrictive photo ID requirements that are used to keep students, seniors and minorities from having equal access to voting.

Minnesotans understand that broad access to voting is fundamental to the success and health of our democracy, and we are fortunate to have an open and fair voting process, without barriers to youth, people of color, seniors, and people living in poverty. Each time that the voting franchise has been expanded to a new group of people in our country, our democratic institutions have been strengthened.

CANDIDATE STEWART MILLS: Declined to respond.

QUESTION 8: CANDIDATE RICK NOLAN:

How can the federal government, in collaboration with other levels of government, provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre-K through grade 12?

As a former teacher and proud member of the MEA (now Education Minnesota), I have spent a lifetime fighting to expand early childhood education initiatives, so every child will be ready to meet their full potential. I continue to keep working to fully fund elementary and secondary education, and to supply every student and school with the 21st-century technology and resources necessary to succeed.

Specifically, here in the Northland I have seen first-hand the success of Head Start, which provides kids in low-income families with special education, health and nutrition services they need to get going in life. For example, in Duluth the services provided through Head Start translate into 3.5 hours every day with teachers and counselors. Duluth wants to expand Head Start services, and they're not alone.

The good news is that the bipartisan Education Bill (the Every Student Succeeds Act) that passed Congress with my strong support includes pre-school development grants and other provisions that allow states more flexibility to use federal funds for Head Start and other early childhood development programs. Meanwhile, Sen. Patty Murray of Washington and I are championing our "Strong Start for America's Children" Act to provide even more resources to states. And I'm cosponsoring the bipartisan Early Childhood Nutrition Improvement Act to ensure that children in pre-school programs for more than 8 hours a day get an additional nutritious snack or meal to keep their energy up as they learn and grow.

CANDIDATE STEWART MILLS: Declined to respond.

QUESTION 9: CANDIDATE RICK NOLAN:

Please explain why you do or do not think it is important to reduce the role of money in American elections.

I believe it is imperative to reduce the role of money in American elections and change the way we do our politics. The influx of secret, dark money - ushered in by the Citizen's United decision - denigrates the candidates, discourages voter turnout and destroys citizen confidence in our democracy.

Members of Congress spend too much time campaign fundraising and not nearly enough time working together to get things done for the American people. Part of the solution I support is to ban Members of Congress from personally asking for money and put an end to the practice of "dialing for dollars" and making direct requests for money would be a thing of the past. It's a simple, common sense fix that already applies to judicial elections in 30 states across our nation.

Our work to pass this legislation will also help build support for my Restore Democracy legislation - a blueprint for even more comprehensive campaign and election reform. The foundation lies in overturning the U.S. Supreme Court's Citizens United decision that opened the floodgates to billions of dollars in special interest money being secretly funneled into campaigns. Our legislation would also put Congress on record supporting small donor-public campaign financing; limiting the campaign season; fully disclosing all campaign contributions; ending partisan gerrymandering of congressional districts; establishing national online voter registration and stopping voter suppression.

CANDIDATE STEWART MILLS: Declined to respond.

QUESTION 10: CANDIDATE RICK NOLAN:

What measures do you support to protect America from domestic acts of terrorism?

We must leave no stone unturned to keep the American people safe and protect ourselves at home and on our borders from ISIS-trained terrorists. To be sure, we must be strong, tough and unwavering in defending our country and protecting our people from the threat of terrorism. To that extent, we must constantly be examining our intelligence-gathering capabilities and making improvements wherever necessary. Everyone who enters the United States from another nation must be carefully screened, regardless of the time or the inconvenience involved.

We must bring the murderers of our citizens to justice, and I applaud all efforts by the President and our law enforcement agencies and military in their determination to do that.

CANDIDATE STEWART MILLS: Declined to respond.

QUESTION 11: CANDIDATE RICK NOLAN:

In your opinion what are the most important challenges facing our country and how do you propose to address these challenges?

One challenge we face is that an increasing number of Americans feel as though the system is rigged against them, and sadly they are often right. So our ongoing mission has been to fix this system and make government work for families and not Wall Street millionaires and billionaires.

To help fix a rigged system, I have repeatedly testified before the International Trade Commission to stop the illegal dumping of low-quality foreign government subsidized steel. That effort has put over 1,000 people back to work on the Iron Range and throughout our region.

I have fought to protect the pensions of Teamsters that were threatened earlier this year. Make no mistake – there are powerful forces trying to do away with people’s pensions, and we will continue to fight them on every front. It’s also why I continue to fight to protect Social Security and Medicare from being privatized and gambled away on Wall Street.

That mission to unrig the system highlights why we must fix tax and trade policies to encourage businesses to expand and hire here at home – and keep our jobs from being sent overseas thanks to damaging ‘free trade’ agreements like the Trans-Pacific Partnership – negotiated in secret with big, multi-national corporations with no interest but their own profit and gain.

I respectfully ask for your support to join me on this mission to secure a system that works for our Nation’s middle class, not one rigged against them.

CANDIDATE STEWART MILLS: Declined to respond.