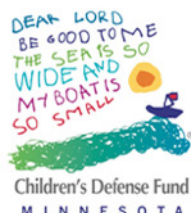


2018 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

MINNESOTA CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATES' VIEWS ON CHILDREN'S ISSUES



EVERY CHILD[★]matters



Children's Defense Fund
MINNESOTA

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ABOUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

This Candidate Questionnaire presents the views of major party candidates running to represent Minnesota in Congress. It covers a range of children's issues—child care and early learning, family economic security, racial disparities, health, immigration, family-friendly workplaces, and afterschool and summer learning.

The survey questions were created by Every Child Matters, Children's Defense Fund–Minnesota, Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children, Minnesota School Age Care Alliance, and Minnesota Head Start Association.

The questionnaire was sent to both major party candidates running in each of the 10 congressional races in 2018—for two seats in the Senate and eight in the House of Representatives. To date, we have received responses from Senator Tina Smith (Senate special election), Angie Craig (District 2), State Rep. Ilhan Omar (District 5), Ian Todd (District 6), and Joe Radinovich (District 8). All responses are printed without editing.

Sincere thanks to all the candidates who responded to these important questions.



SENATOR TINA SMITH

US Senate Special Election Candidate



What actions will you take to support accessible, affordable, and high-quality child care and early learning opportunities and address childcare workforce needs?

As I've traveled the state, I've heard so much about the child care shortages and their impact on families and communities in every corner of Minnesota. Every child deserves a strong start in life, and our nation's youngest children early childhood programs present a real opportunity to mitigate the enormous disparities we see in our society across differences.

That's why I am proud to support the Child Care for Working Families Act, which would make historic investments in affordable, high-quality child care. It would cap the amount working families would have to pay for child care, would increase the capacity of critical programs like Head Start and CCDBG, and would significantly improve compensation and training for the child care workforce.

Additionally, after hearing about these issues on my "Child Care Access and Affordability" listening sessions across the state, I authored the Child Care Supply Improvement Act. This bill would fund child care facilities, help child care providers meet important health and safety requirements, and help states and tribes improve their administration and implementation of child care programs.

What actions will you take to reduce multigenerational poverty and ensure that all children have opportunities for success?

A quality education is the engine of opportunity and it ought to be available to all of our kids, not just some. Supporting child care and early learning opportunities is a critical part of making sure all of our kids are off to a strong start. As Lt. Governor, I fought for free all-day kindergarten for every Minnesota family and worked to expand affordable pre-k education. I strongly support existing programs, like Head Start, that offer important wraparound services for families and take a two-generation approach to families.

Unfortunately, too often poverty is the result of stagnant wages and rising costs. According to the Pew Research Center, the average hourly wage for a U.S. worker has the same buying power as it had in 1978. Yet while average wages have remained stagnant, incomes for the top 1% have more than doubled in the last four decades. I believe that our economy works best when working families are able to do well. That's why I've been fighting to raise the federal minimum wage and ensure women and people of color receive the same wage for the same work. All workers should receive a fair wage for their work. That's why I support raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2024.

What actions will you take to reduce racial disparities and ensure strong health, education, and economic outcomes for all?

I believe that people should have the freedom and opportunity to live the kind of lives they want. So often, quality education serves as the engine of that opportunity and it ought to be available to all of our kids, not just some. Investing in high-quality early childhood care and education is a real opportunity to address the enormous racial disparities present in our society. Stud-

ies show that if done right these types of investments will more than pay for themselves in better education, health, and economic outcomes.

We also need to acknowledge and address economic disparities and implicit biases in the labor market, because too many people, especially women of color, are not getting equal pay for equal work. That's wrong, and that's why I am working to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act to help close longstanding pay gaps.

I've held meetings with leaders from many of Minnesota's larger communities of color, including the Somali, African American, Hmong, and Latinx populations, to hear about the issues they need addressed in Washington. I also serve on the Senate Indian Affairs committee and have introduced legislation to address issues that affect Minnesota's Indigenous communities including bills that would expand resources to fight the opioid epidemic, give tribes the power to prosecute instances of sexual violence committed by non-native people, and allow tribes to administer food assistance on their own terms.

What actions will you take to prevent the uninsured rate from rising further and ensure that all children have access to health care?

I'm a strong advocate for programs that increase access to comprehensive, affordable health insurance for all Americans. For example, In January I voted for a six-year extension of the Children's Health Insurance Program. I have also supported legislation to expand coverage options by allowing more people to buy into public programs, like Medicare and Medicaid. I have opposed Trump administration efforts to cut Medicaid, undermine coverage options, and roll back protections for people with pre-existing conditions. And I've championed efforts to bring down health care costs, especially high prescription drug costs.

Every Minnesota family deserves access to high-quality health care they can afford. I've heard first-hand how the opioid epidemic has touched nearly every community in Minnesota and I believe in a strong federal re-

sponse to prevention, treatment, and law enforcement efforts. Many people also face mental health challenges so I've worked with Senator Lisa Murkowski to bring more mental health resources to schools and communities.

How can our policy and enforcement best promote the well-being and later success of children in immigrant families?

Minnesotans know that our rich immigrant communities make our state stronger by contributing to and diversifying our economy. And Minnesotans also know that it is wrong to separate children from their parents. I'm fighting to stop family separation at the border, to create a pathway to citizenship, and to protect the 6,000 Dreamers who call Minnesota home. My very first weekend as a Senator, I attended a rally to support Dreamers and the DREAM Act. After that, I introduced the HELP Separated Children Act to restore basic humanity to the immigration enforcement process. Parents should have the opportunity to make phone calls to arrange for child care and no child should ever be left abandoned as a result of an immigration enforcement proceeding.

What is the best approach to ensuring workers can take needed time off to care for themselves and their families?

I came to Minnesota 34 years ago with my husband Archie, a beat-up orange car, student debt, and a new job at General Mills. Archie and I raised our two sons Sam and Mason in Minnesota and made the state our home. As a mom of two boys, I know there are days when a parent needs to stay home with a sick kid. I hear from more and more Minnesotans who are worried about losing a paycheck when they have to stay home.

That's why I am proud to be a cosponsor of the FAMILY Act, which would ensure that all workers are able to take up to 12 weeks of paid leave to care for a new child or sick family member. Prior to joining the Senate, I helped to secure paid family leave for 34,000 Minnesota state employees, and supported legislation to enact paid family leave in Minnesota.

What actions would you take with respect to afterschool programs and community services to ensure youth have the support they need for success in school, career and life?

In the Senate, I am proud to be the Democratic Chair of the Afterschool Caucus with Senator Lisa Murkowski of Alaska. I pushed to increase funding for afterschool programs in the 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Programs like these aren't just "extras;" they help keep kids safe, boost school attendance, and can help close opportunity gaps that can otherwise keep kids from reaching their full potential. They are also critical for many parents juggling work and family commitments.

There is tremendous demand for afterschool programs- for every child in an afterschool program there are two waiting to get in. I will keep pushing to ensure that we maintain and expand federal support for afterschool programs because it's what kids, families and communities need.

ANGIE CRAIG

2nd Congressional District Candidate



What actions will you take to support accessible, affordable, and high-quality child care and early learning opportunities and address childcare workforce needs?

We have a child care availability and affordability crisis looming in many areas of this country and the Second Congressional District and need to consider all possible solutions to addressing it. I support investments in high-quality early childhood education programs, including child care. We also need to pay child care workers a fair and livable wage.

What actions will you take to reduce multigenerational poverty and ensure that all children have opportunities for success?

Education is key in breaking the cycle of poverty. We must invest in public education and vocational skills training to ensure our children are prepared to enter the workforce and have a bright future.

What actions will you take to reduce racial disparities and ensure strong health, education, and economic outcomes for all?

In Congress, I will work to lower healthcare costs for all families in Minnesota and ensure working families have access to quality plans they can afford. I will prioritize making higher education more affordable and

investing in vocational skills training. We must make sure our children are prepared to enter our workforce and are prepared with skills specific to our region. That will not only help provide a bright future for our children, but also strengthen our economy.

What actions will you take to prevent the uninsured rate from rising further and ensure that all children have access to health care?

At times growing up, my family could not afford health insurance. I know firsthand that if healthcare isn't affordable, it's not accessible. In Congress, I will work to make sure all families in Minnesota have access to healthcare they can afford. We must work to repair our healthcare system, starting with immediate fixes to the Affordable Care Act (ACA), and work toward universal health coverage with a focus on prevention and reducing costs, especially for prescription drugs. To address the lack of choice and competition in the insurance marketplace, I support opening up Medicare for a buy-in to compete with large insurance companies. Congress needs to work across the aisle immediately to stabilize healthcare costs for working families who have little choice in their regions.

How can our policy and enforcement best promote the well-being and later success of children in immigrant families?

It's critical that Congress takes action to pass an immediate fix to Deferred Action Childhood Arrivals Program (DACA). These are hardworking Minnesotans who serve in our military, graduate from our schools and contribute to our economy. In addition, the development of a path to citizenship for law-abiding immigrants would allow everyone to contribute and pay taxes, as well as pay into Medicare and Social Security. Many of us are descended from immigrants, and we need immigrants for continued economic growth. The

history of and promise of this country is that it will always be open to those who seek a better life, and are willing to work hard and help America grow in the process. In Congress, I will support policies that will continue to make this a reality.

What is the best approach to ensuring workers can take needed time off to care for themselves and their families?

We need a national paid family leave and earned sick and safe time policy. A lack of paid family leave disproportionately impacts women who have to care for family members and those with employers that don't provide maternity leave. We must invest in our families and our workforce – that means providing paid family and medical leave.

What actions would you take with respect to afterschool programs and community services to ensure youth have the support they need for success in school, career and life?

It's critical that youth have safe and nurturing environments to go to after the school day ends and parents are at work. I would support funding these programs in Congress.

STATE REP. ILHAN OMAR

5th Congressional District Candidate



What actions will you take to support accessible, affordable, and high-quality child care and early learning opportunities and address childcare workforce needs?

The average cost of full-time care in child care centers for children under 5 years old is higher than the average cost of in-state tuition. The Child Care and Development Block Grant is so underfunded that only 15 percent of eligible holders receive federal child care assistance. As a Member of Congress, I will fight to fund universal prekindergarten programs nationwide. I will support the Child Care for Working Families Act that would:

- Guarantee child care affordability for working families with children under 13
- Create no co-payments for families with incomes below 75 percent of their states average income and families eligible for Head Start
- Fund full-day, full-year Head Start programming
- Ensure child care workers and early childhood educators to ensure all workers are fully trained and paid a living wage.

What actions will you take to reduce multigenerational poverty and ensure that all children have opportunities for success?

As a Member of Congress I will fight for increased investment in housing assistance so our communities can

afford a safe and stable home to raise their children. We must also increase funding and accessibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and make the Child Tax Credit fully refundable to ensure more low-income families have access.

What actions will you take to reduce racial disparities and ensure strong health, education, and economic outcomes for all?

We must prioritize restorative justice models and fully fund these programs at a national level. We must work to drastically lower the number of people incarcerated in the United States. As a Member of Congress, I support the following policies:

- Ban private prisons and youth prisons
- End solitary confinement of children
- Ensure federal resources for youth justice reform
- Pass legislation that funds preventative and diversionary programs, specifically focusing on ending the school-to-prison pipeline
- Restore felon voting rights
- Ensure that those being released from incarceration are fully supported in their transition back to society.

What actions will you take to prevent the uninsured rate from rising further and ensure that all children have access to health care?

I will fight for a Medicare for All, single-payer health-care system to guarantee quality health for all. It is unacceptable that millions of people are unable to seek care because they live without or cannot afford insurance. As a Member of Congress, I will support the Expanded and Improved Medicare for All Act that would provide:

- High-quality healthcare for all U.S. residents
- Comprehensive coverage, including dental, vision, and long-term care

- No co-payments, deductibles, or other cost sharing
- Substantial administrative savings through global budgeting of hospitals
- Gain efficiency by cutting out private insurance company middlemen.

How can our policy and enforcement best promote the well-being and later success of children in immigrant families?

As a Member of Congress, I will fight to pass a clean DREAM Act that also creates a pathway to permanent status for “DREAMers” and their families. I will fight to extend Temporary Protected Status and Deferred Enforced Departure for all countries currently listed, and create a mechanism for them to receive permanent status and citizenship. I will protect Sanctuary Cities and Counties by preventing the Trump administration from withholding federal funding.

What is the best approach to ensuring workers can take needed time off to care for themselves and their families?

We must raise the living conditions of workers by raising the national minimum wage to \$15/hr, establish national fair scheduling standards, and enact stronger wage theft and recovery laws. As a Member of Congress, I will fight for robust national paid family and medical leave policies to provide economic security, enhance child and family well-being, and keep parents in the workforce. We must also ensure that workers have the bargaining power in the jobs market and provide a workforce for much needed investments to our nation’s infrastructure. I support the following:

- The Schedules That Work Act guarantees that people working in the retail, food service, and cleaning industries, jobs that more often have irregular schedules, receive their schedules at a minimum of 2 weeks in advance and must be paid for at least 4 hours on a shift.
- The Wage Theft Prevention and Wage Recovery Act provides that ability for workers to receive the full back pay that was denied to them, it compensates victims of wage theft with triple back pay, and

makes it easier for workers to take action to recover from stolen wages.

- The Restoring Overtime Pay Act enables workers who are paid less than \$48,412 a year to be eligible to earn overtime pay if they work more than 40 hours per week.

What actions would you take with respect to afterschool programs and community services to ensure youth have the support they need for success in school, career and life?

As a Member of Congress, I will fight for robust funding for before-school, afterschool, and summer learning programs for our communities. We must invest in funding for Head Start programs to provide full-day, full-year programming. We must also fund full-day kindergarten and quality preschool.

IAN TODD

6th Congressional District Candidate



What actions will you take to support accessible, affordable, and high-quality child care and early learning opportunities and address childcare workforce needs?

I support a universal pre-K for all children. I also support incentive programs for licensing and supporting child care providers in areas with little to no affordable child care including family child care options.

What actions will you take to reduce multigenerational poverty and ensure that all children have opportunities for success?

To deal with our poverty problems, we must address the high cost of medical care and the extremely low minimum wage. A single payer system that moves the cost of healthcare away from people who can't possibly afford it and removes the expensive and needless administrative costs of insurance companies would reduce some of the worst aspects of poverty. A \$15 minimum wage that's chained to inflation will also drastically increase the spending power of employed Americans and create a boom in our economy that generates more and better jobs (poorer Americans spend most their money in the economy while rich Americans simply save or invest theirs). The introduction of both these policies end up helping small businesses as well, as they rely on local customers having disposable income and are the most burdened by the cost of providing health insurance to their employees.

What actions will you take to reduce racial disparities and ensure strong health, education, and economic outcomes for all?

All actions aimed at eliminating poverty will also help deal with many of the racial disparities, but not all. One of the most important changes we can implement here in Minnesota and the rest of the country would be direct federal review of school districts to assess and correct instances of racial segregation. It's unfortunately all too common across the country, and it's contributing to our achievement gap.

What actions will you take to prevent the uninsured rate from rising further and ensure that all children have access to health care?

I support Medicare for All, a system of health coverage that doesn't punish the use of the health care facilities. We can't let our health be contingent on our wealth, and a single payer system addresses that. At the bare minimum, we should have a federal system that covers all children (perhaps as a pilot program for a single payer system), and allow that entity to negotiate drug prices, which would assist even privately insured Americans.

How can our policy and enforcement best promote the well-being and later success of children in immigrant families?

We must eliminate any policies that maliciously damage immigrant families. This includes reigning in ICE operations if not outright removing the agency entirely, seeking justice for families that experienced the humanitarian crisis of family separation at the border, and opening comprehensive paths to citizenship for both undocumented children and parents that maintain our high vetting standards without keeping the needless bureaucratic runaround.

What is the best approach to ensuring workers can take needed time off to care for themselves and their families?

The United States is one of the few developed countries that does not have any laws that ensure paid family leave. The major question of implementing laws of this nature is who bears the cost: government or employer. I suggest a mix of both, specifically to help small businesses that will find providing leave more difficult than large multinational corporations.

What actions would you take with respect to afterschool programs and community services to ensure youth have the support they need for success in school, career and life?

Most public-school space is unused after standard school hours, and this fact should be capitalized on by using the space to provide high quality programs that both help the parents with schedules that don't fit typical school days and the children with their schoolwork and personal interests. This means increasing funding for these programs and working with areas with extremely limited means to implement the programs. To justify the expense, these programs need proper review to ensure they are making a positive difference in the education of participating students.

JOE RADINOVICH

8th Congressional District Candidate



What actions will you take to support accessible, affordable, and high-quality child care and early learning opportunities and address childcare workforce needs?

I would support federal legislation like the Child Care for Working Families, which would ensure that no low- or middle-income family spends more than 7 percent of their income on child care. In addition, the bill would guarantee a living wage for early childhood educators, as well as invest in increasing the number of quality child care programs available in communities and making other critical child care quality improvements. The bill would also provide incentives and support states to expand preschool to 3- and 4-year-olds.

What actions will you take to reduce multigenerational poverty and ensure that all children have opportunities for success?

One step we can take to ensure that all children have opportunities for success would be to enact a national family and medical leave insurance program to benefit working people, their families, businesses and our nation's economy.

I will also support federal funding that is directed towards comprehensive, wraparound services working to reduce multigenerational poverty – including childcare, afterschool and summer programs for children and

teens, education and job support for parents, and housing for seniors.

I will also support increasing the federal minimum wage to a living wage. This will help working-class families who are living paycheck-to-paycheck. I would also support tax policies that enhance the Earned Income Tax Credit for low wage workers and expand the Child Tax Credit for lower income working families with young children.

What actions will you take to reduce racial disparities and ensure strong health, education, and economic outcomes for all?

To address high infant mortality rates in Minnesota and across the nation, I will support and advocate continued funding for federal programs that promote safe motherhood and infant health, such as those led by the CDC's Division of Reproductive Health. This team provides scientific leadership in the promotion of women's health and infant health before, during, and after pregnancy.

Addressing the opioid crisis is another one of my priorities to ensure strong health, education, and economic outcomes for all. The Minnesota Department of Health recently found that African American and American Indian populations are dying from drug overdose deaths in Minnesota at disproportionate rates compared to whites. I agree with the Department when it noted that all program and policy decisions about substance use disorder must include a racial equity lens in order to address the race rate disparity within African American and American Indian populations.

What actions will you take to prevent the uninsured rate from rising further and ensure that all children have access to health care?

I strongly believe that the federal government should do more to ensure that every American has health coverage for themselves and their families. In my view, health care is a right. A broken arm shouldn't bankrupt you and you shouldn't have to choose between preventative care and paying your electric bill. I support universal, single-payer Medicare for All that keeps us and our families healthy and working. This is a system that benefits all Americans, whether they've been self-employed, run a small business, or have bargained collectively for healthcare benefits. Too many of our healthcare dollars are going to middlemen and special interests when they should go to caring for Minnesota families and children.

How can our policy and enforcement best promote the well-being and later success of children in immigrant families?

The major tenets of any immigration reform legislation must address border security, legalization of the undocumented, interior enforcement of immigration laws, and fix our dysfunctional legal immigration programs.

This framework was outlined in S.744, the bipartisan bill passed by the Senate on a vote of 68-32 and the most monumental overhaul of U.S. immigration laws in a generation. It also included key provisions to resolve the DACA program, which I support.

Unfortunately, House Republicans blocked the bill from ever being considered.

The lack of an updated immigration policy helped lead to the Trump Administration's terrible and inhumane family separation policy at the southern border, which I strongly oppose.

What is the best approach to ensuring workers can take needed time off to care for themselves and their families?

As mentioned earlier, I support a national family and medical leave insurance program to benefit working people, their families, businesses and our nation's economy. We need a comprehensive approach to ensure that

workers can take needed time off to care for themselves and their families.

What actions would you take with respect to afterschool programs and community services to ensure youth have the support they need for success in school, career and life?

I will support and advocate continued funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Center program, which is the only federal funding source dedicated exclusively to supporting local afterschool, before-school and summer learning programs. The program was reauthorized in 2015 as part of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

BACKGROUND PROVIDED TO CANDIDATES

Child Care and Early Learning: Working parents depend on high-quality child care so they can earn a living while setting their children up for success in school. In Minnesota, center-based care for an infant costs more than public college tuition, while childcare workers are paid less than \$25,000 per year, on average. Three-quarters of Minnesota's young children live in "child care deserts" with few or no licensed providers at all. Despite the latest increase in the Child Care and Development Block Grant, as well as considerable federal investments in Head Start and Early Head Start, challenges remain to funding and affording early care and education.

Family Economic Security: The cost of basic needs such as housing, child care, food, and transportation continues to outpace wages. Nearly one in three Minnesota children live in low-income households, including 12 percent in poverty, and 21 percent live in families whose parents lack secure employment. Persistent poverty is one of the strongest predictors of future health, education, and social well-being.

Racial Disparities: Minnesota is ranked fourth nationwide in child well-being according to the 2018 Kids Count Data Book, but this high ranking masks persistent racial disparities in health, education, and economic outcomes. For instance, infant mortality rates among African-American and Native American babies in Minnesota remain disproportionately high regardless of income or maternal health status.

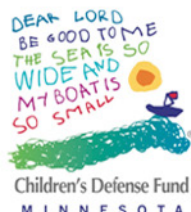
Health: For the first time since the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, the percentage of Minnesota children without health insurance rose in 2017. More than 47,000 children in our state are uninsured.

Immigration and Children: In 2016, 19 percent of Minnesota children were part of immigrant families—meaning either they or a parent were born in another country. Research indicates that heightened immigration enforcement, including denial of needed services, can have serious and lasting effects.

Family-Friendly Workplaces: Paid family and medical leave can provide economic security, enhance child and family well-being, and keep parents in the workforce. Yet, only 13 percent of Minnesota workers have this benefit through their employers.

Afterschool and Summer Learning: Before-school, afterschool, and summer learning programs support working families by filling the gap between work and school schedules, keeping children safe, and providing critical learning opportunities for youth. For every Minnesota youth in an afterschool program, one more would like to participate if a program were available.

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