

Don Manzullo questionnaire

What are the challenges you can see to covering a large, and for some, a new district?

I currently represent a large geographical area. I live on a small farm in Ogle County, so I have experience of equally representing rural Illinois. Many of the same issues and problems that face my current constituents in rural northwest Illinois also confront north-central Illinois residents. Also, approximately 44 percent of the people that I am privileged to currently represent are also part of the new 16th District, so the transition should not be too difficult. I plan to have at least two district offices, one located in the northern part of the new district and another office located in the southern part to equally serve the needs of all the constituents of the new 16th District

A recent ABC News/Washington Post poll finds just 13 percent of Americans approve of the job Congress is doing, the lowest rating in 40 years. One of the criticisms of Congress is the amount of squabbling between parties. Would you work across the aisle and why? If yes, use specific examples of how you could/have accomplished that.

Yes. I am blessed to work primarily on manufacturing issues where there isn't the gridlock that you find on other issues. I work closely with my Democratic co-chair of the Manufacturing Caucus, Representative Tim Ryan of Ohio, on issues such as decreasing our dependency on China for critical "rare earth" minerals. I also co-chair the House Automotive Caucus with Representative Dale Kildee (D-MI). I also work with the top Democrat on the Foreign Affairs Committee, Representative Howard Berman of California and the Obama Administration, to reform our nation's outdated export control laws and regulations. I also worked with Representative Brad Sherman (D-CA) to change a misinterpretation of an export control regulation (Section 17(c) of the Export Administration Act) that freed up billions of dollars worth of exports of aviation parts and components. I am part of a coalition organized and led by Rep. Sandy Levin (D-MI) to force China and other nations to stop manipulating their currency for a trade advantage. This proposal is now also part of Governor Mitt Romney's economic plan. Thus, working with members of the opposite political party is nothing new to me.

Do you approve of the recent health care reforms? Are there portions you approve of or would you like the whole law repealed? What would you like to keep and what would you change?

I opposed the Democratic health care bill throughout the legislative process in 2009 and 2010 because of the unconstitutional individual mandate to purchase health insurance and the job-killing employer mandate imposed by this legislation. Health care reforms that I support include:

- Pursue significant medical lawsuit reform to reduce costs and discourage unnecessary tests, estimated to save \$54 billion;

- Allow the self-employed to purchase health care insurance before paying the Social Security/Medicare (FICA or payroll) tax, effectively reducing premiums by about 15 percent;
- Provide more tax incentives to encourage individuals to purchase consumer-driven Health Savings Accounts (HSAs), which have reduced costs;
- Allow individuals to purchase health care insurance across state lines;
- Give individuals the same tax treatment to purchase health insurance as employers;
- Create refundable tax credits to help low-income Americans purchase health insurance;
- Preserve high-quality health care through America's community health centers;
- Enhance state high-risk pools to provide more coverage for those with medical pre-existing conditions;
- Eliminate yearly and lifetime caps on insurance payments; and
- Allow dependent young adults to remain on their parent's health insurance plan until age 26.

What are your thoughts on President Obama's proposed "Buffet Rule" for taxes?

I oppose the President's proposal because it would essentially require that either the capital gains rate and the tax on dividends double to 30 percent, or mandate Congress enact another form of an Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT).

According to the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center, those earning more than \$1 million currently pay a total effective federal tax rate of 29.1 percent while everyone else in lower income brackets pay a declining rate, all the way down to 1 percent for those earning between \$10,000 and \$20,000

(<http://www.cq.com/graphics/weekly/2011/09/26/wr20110926-36taxes-cht2.pdf>).

Obviously, there will be exceptions based on an individual circumstance, but Congress should avoid the mistake of the AMT, which was initially imposed to force 155 high-income individuals back in 1969 to pay some taxes. Now, the AMT affects millions of taxpayers, most of who earn less than President Obama's threshold of "rich" (\$250,000).

In addition, the capital gains and dividends tax is a form of double taxation. Capital gains and dividends are paid by the business after they paid their taxes. Thus, the tax rate paid by individuals like Mr. Buffet must also include the other taxes paid by corporations and individuals before he received his capital gains or dividend. In other words, if the "Buffet Rule" is adopted, the U.S. would have the top overall statutory dividend tax rate in the world at 61.2 percent, according to the Tax Foundation. This would make the U.S. a less attractive place for investment and undermine our competitiveness as other nations would become a better place to invest. Plus, if wealthy individuals feel guilty about how little in taxes they pay, they are more than welcome to contribute directly to the fund to reduce the national debt

(<https://www.pay.gov/paygov/forms/formInstance.html?agencyFormId=23779454>).

Instead of tax policy by envy, the better, pro-growth solution can be found in the general direction contained in the President's Fiscal Commission recommendations for comprehensive tax reform. The Fiscal Commission postulated several options, but at its core, it recommended three lower rates and simplifying the tax code by eliminating special tax breaks. This could result in the "rich" paying more in taxes even as rates go down because loopholes are closed. One scenario even allowed the retention of a few key tax provisions that promote work, home ownership, health, charity, and savings while still keeping three lower rates of 12 percent, 22 percent, and 28 percent (and also lowering the corporate tax rate to 28 percent while eliminating loopholes). This is the better approach.

Congress has a ban on earmarks. How do you propose funding projects or programs in the district? Please offer specifics.

Even in light of the earmark ban, I continue to work with local communities to prioritize projects with the respective state agencies that receive federal funding on a formula basis. In the past, I fought and protested the Illinois State government when they failed to come up with a capital planning bill, and infrastructure funding primarily went to Chicago and not to downstate. There is a lot of discussion on how to be fairer in distributing transportation money by the state, such as a formula so that local governments can receive a fair portion of what they have contributed in federal tax revenue to the Highway Trust Fund.

I will also continue to join requests from community organizations, when asked, who apply for grant funding directly from federal agencies. I will also continue to work to elect Republican officials to state offices in Illinois so that downstate needs are not forgotten.

Do you support the troop draw down in Afghanistan and the exit strategy?

Yes. Congress authorized the use of force against the Taliban and al Qaeda forces in Afghanistan as a result of the horrendous September 11th attacks. I do not support staying in Afghanistan indefinitely, and I strongly believe that developing the capacity of the Afghan national military and police to defend them is an important step towards our eventual withdrawal, which should be sooner than later. America's withdrawal from Afghanistan must be based upon conditions on the ground, not an arbitrary date. We must continue to move from a counterinsurgency ("boots on the ground") strategy to a counterterrorism (furnishing intelligence) focus, which means the Afghans must continue to assume more and more responsibility for their own security.