

## CHAMBER CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

*1) Do you believe our free enterprise system is currently threatened?*

I am concerned that legislation like the bank and auto bailouts have weakened our free enterprise system. The American free enterprise system is the source of our historic economic strength, where every person and business has the ability to succeed and the risk of failure. The bailout mentality that took over Washington in 2008, with the active support of many in the business community, is the most significant threat to our free enterprise system.

Further, the financial security of this great nation requires a level playing field in savings, investment and access to capital. I voted for the Wall Street reform law that will ensure a balanced approach to regulating our financial markets. Without these regulations, in the past 10 years con-men and hucksters were able to gamble with the retirement funds of millions. By passing common sense regulations, peace of mind was restored for investors and the accountability demanded by the American people was achieved.

*2) Do you believe that tax increases hurt job creation?*

Increasing taxes on the middle class is the wrong approach. The middle class is the key to revitalizing our economy. Through tax cuts targeted toward the middle class and small business, our local businesses will be the engines of job creation as we grow out of this recession. The more money they have to spend, the more private sector job creation we will see.

The latest research produced by the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office indicates extending President Bush's tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires will have a detrimental impact on our economy. To ensure long term fiscal security, our country must begin paying down the debt. The first thing we must do is stop digging. Those who advocate adding up to \$4 trillion to the national debt with permanent tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires are placing our national security at risk.

*3) Do you think the growth of government at all levels and the deficits that follow negatively impact job creation?*

I think we have to be smart about the investments we make. I choose smart government while others argue about big and small government. The debate about bigger government or smaller government misses the point. Government needs to work efficiently. I am disheartened by politicians who think they can score political points by calling for cutting spending without stating what spending they will cut. If you don't think a program is working, you should have the courage to eliminate it, and to tell the voters what you will do. To just promise to cut a specific amount of spending, without specifics, is a promise that is insincere at best.

I believe that we must institute an ironclad pay as you go restriction on the Congressional impulse to spend.

Representative Demmer wants to take us back to the economic policies that got us into this mess. It is dishonest to profess concern about deficits in one situation, but ignore them when tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires are at stake.

*4) Would you deal with the debt and deficit issues through increasing government revenue or decreasing government spending?*

We must not just cut the pie differently – we must grow the pie. If our economy can be grown while government spending is restrained we can eliminate the deficit through growth the same way we did during the Clinton Administration. Policy makers should focus more on cutting unneeded regulations and instituting smart tax policy to foster job creation and economic growth.

*Do you believe that the uncertainty resulting from pending tax increases, higher government deficits and more government regulations will hurt the economy?*

The uncertainty and chaos in our financial and banking industries was enabled by a lack of proper oversight. The folks complaining about regulatory uncertainty are the bankers who want to continue fleecing the taxpayers and withholding capital from Main Street while playing the games that got us into this mess. The tax increase on the millionaires and billionaires included in the Bush tax laws has been known for 10 years. The only uncertainty is whether the Republicans in Congress, aided by Randy Demmer, will block an extension of tax cuts for almost every single household and small business in the First District, in order to protect the tax breaks for the top 2%.

Local Chambers of Commerce could be part of the solution to this crisis if they would educate their members on key issues of the day using a balanced approach to problem solving, not allowing themselves to be hijacked by one or two partisan individuals looking to score points with national Republican leaders.

**PLEASE NOTE: The following only allow for a “Yes”, “No”, or “Don’t Know” answer. The form provides space for one 150 word explanation of all nine questions. Below you the bolded answer is the suggested one word answer.**

*1) Would you have voted for HR 3963, the Affordable Health Care for America Act, in the House of Representatives, that included a public option and imposed an employer mandate?*

**Yes.** I continue to stand with the largest private employer in Minnesota and the single largest member of any Chamber of Commerce in southern Minnesota. Mayo Clinic made it clear they believe we took a good first step. I agree with them.

*2) Do you support market-based health reforms such as small business health plans, health savings accounts and tax deductibility of premiums as ways to control rising health care costs?*

**Yes** – I support market-based programs like the free market exchanges included in HR 3963 that address the health care needs of southern Minnesotans. I do not support health insurance providers that deny sick children necessary care or jack up premiums to line the pockets of their executives. I stand with my neighbors who suffer from pre-existing conditions and fear losing their coverage or being denied a life-saving procedure. I stand with the 700 families who declared bankruptcy last year because their health care costs financially devastated them. I stand with the small business owners who want to do the right thing and provide health insurance to their hardworking employees but can’t hire a new worker because their costs are too high. I

support market-based solutions except when the market fails and that approach fails to help out a friend or neighbor in need – the market doesn't protect us from crime, respond to natural disasters, or heal the sick.

*3) Do you support initiatives to focus our education system on workforce readiness?*

**Yes.** A well-trained workforce is vital if we are going to compete in the world economy. Preparing today's students for success in the workforce is essential.

*4) Would you have voted for HR 2454, the American Clean Energy and Security Act, that would set new greenhouse gas emission standards, efficiency standards, and create a carbon cap-and-trade program?*

**Yes** – I voted for HR 2454 because it would bring this country to a new era of renewable energy job creation, jumpstarting our economy and greatly enhancing our national security. I have heard from energy policy experts and, just as importantly, energy producers in southern Minnesota that are hoping for HR 2454 – or a similar piece of legislation – will be passed and signed into law so that we can reduce our dependency on foreign oil and invest in a 21<sup>st</sup> renewable energy economy. HR 2454 will put a price on carbon, encouraging the use of domestic, renewable, low carbon fuels over high carbon oil imported from Venezuela and the Middle East. The same bill provided substantial support for clean coal technology, promising a future where American energy is domestic energy and ending our dependence on unstable foreign suppliers.

*5) Does the federal government need to play a prominent role in the maintenance and development of transportation infrastructure in the United States?*

**Yes.** I have worked with the Chamber of Commerce to advocate for a new surface transportation bill without delay. However, I also believe that rural communities should have more of a say in how their transportation dollars are spent and that's why I introduced HR 2782.

*6) Would you vote to increase competitiveness of US manufactured goods, services and agriculture products by supporting trade agreement such as the US-Korean Free Trade Agreement?*

**Don't Know.** I understand trade with South Korea is very important to southern Minnesota's agriculture producers. I know Ambassador Kirk is currently negotiating with all parties and trying to take into account the concerns of agricultural producers, along with the concerns of fair trade advocates. I hope these negotiations will result in a FTA that maintains and creates jobs here in the United States while also opening up a new market for US agricultural exports.

*7) Do you support HR 1409, the Employee Free Choice Act, that would make it easier for unions to organize by effectively eliminating the secret ballot and imposing binding arbitration if the employer fails to agree on a contract with a newly formed union?*

**Yes.** In fact, I am a co-sponsor. Workers should have a fair and direct path to form unions through [majority sign-up](#) and have a contract with their employer in a reasonable period of time. Companies that harass, fire or threaten their employees for trying to join a union should face [tougher penalties](#) for violating their employees' rights.

8) *Would you support a permanent or temporary extension of the 2001 and 2003 Tax Bills that included cuts in the marginal income tax rates, increased child tax credit, increased dependent care credit, phased-out estate tax, cut dividend tax, and cut capital gains among others?*

**YES, I support a permanent extension of the increased child tax credit, dependent care credit, and reduced marginal rates for 98% of Americans. I do not support renewing tax cuts for the Wall Street hucksters and Paris Hiltons whose only contribution to the nation are scandals and setting a bad example for the next generation.** The gap between the wealthiest Americans and millionaires like Randy Demmer is wider than any time in our history. We have serious economic and national security issues that are more important than a 4% increase in rates for the wealthiest Americans. Extending the millionaire tax cuts is irresponsible public policy – it adds more than a trillion dollars to the national debt and does nothing to put middle class Americans back to work.

9) *Would you support the repeal of the estate/death tax?*

**Don't know.** I believe we need to reform the estate tax system to ensure that family farms and small businesses are not unfairly taxed and those family farms and small businesses can be passed onto the next generation. If the Republicans would stop trying to eliminate the estate tax for the idle rich with fortunes in the hundreds of millions we could have already come to an agreement that would have protected family owned businesses and family farms from ever paying the estate tax. Instead they are willing to sacrifice those hard-earned fortunes to protect trust fund kids from paying their fair share.

### **1,000 Character Explanation:**

The previous nine questions require far more discussion than just a one-word answer. I believe business leaders and families in southern Minnesota want a real conversation on these issues about the best way to help businesses grow. Please visit my website at [www.timwalz.org](http://www.timwalz.org) for full answers to each question.

Nine (9) straight months of PRIVATE SECTOR job growth and some of the lowest unemployment rates in the country show the policies I have voted for are getting this country back on track. My opponent takes a different view. Rep. Demmer continues to promote and promise the exact same policies that pushed our economy over a cliff. Now, just as we pull ourselves up, they want to extend or re-implement the same failed policies. It is time to move America forward.