

Name: Randy Hultgren

District running for: 14th Congressional District

Political/civic background:

1994 - 1999 DuPage County Board and County Forest Preserve Board

1999 - 2007 Illinois House of Representatives

2007 - 2010 Illinois Senate

2010 - present U.S. House of Representatives

Occupation: Member of Congress

Education: 1988 B.S. from Bethel College, 1993 J.D. from Chicago-Kent College of Law

Campaign website: www.hultgrenforcongress.com

Chicago Sun-Times Editorial Board questionnaire responses

Legislative priorities:

Q) What are your three top national legislative priorities for the country?

A)

1. Providing accessible opportunities for Americans to find meaningful employment.
2. Protecting our nation from terrorist attacks from dangers abroad and at home.
3. Pursuing sensible and affordable health care insurance reforms that respect the doctor-patient relationship, keep treatment and prescription drug costs down, and ensure higher quality of care up for all individuals and families.

Q: What are the three most important issues in your district on which you believe the federal government needs to act?

A)

1. Repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that hasn't been affordable nor provided the promised quality care to the majority of my constituents. We need to adopt state-based alternatives that spur competition to lower healthcare costs, offer choice of care, and provide tax incentives for employers, individuals, and families to maintain health insurance.

2. Stop runaway spending in Washington – reduce the federal debt and deficit. Washington doesn't have a revenue problem—it has a spending problem, and both parties are to blame. Americans have no other option than to follow a budget every month, but like a frequent gambler running out his credit line, the federal government spends more than it takes in, and borrows even more to pay its obligations. Our debt \$17.6 trillion now exceeds \$55,000 per person, plus another \$25,000 for those of us who live in Illinois. Heaping mounds of debt onto our children and grandchildren is wrong—we must cut up the Washington credit card. I have pushed for serious budget constraint tools, such as “zero-based” and biennial budgeting which frees legislators to eliminate costly and outdated programs through more oversight.
3. Pursue most aggressive Congressional authorities available to ensure President Obama’s flawed Iran Nuclear Agreement is adhered to. I strongly opposed the agreement because it is a trust-first-verify later approach. We have no reliable means to ensure the leaders of Iran keep their promises. I have grave concerns about the lifting of the Iran Sanctions and the how the new flow of dollars will impact those fighting the tyranny of Syrian leaders as well as holding ISIS at bay from expanding their footprint in the region.

Q) What is your biggest fundamental difference with your opponent(s)?

A) N/A. No opponent in the primary.

Transparency:

Q) Will you pledge to make public: a) your campaign schedule; b) your fundraiser schedule and the names of all fundraiser hosts ; c) if elected, your daily schedule of meetings? If not, why not?

A) I adhere to all applicable laws, rules and regulations governed by the Federal Election Commission and Congressional Ethics and gift rule laws.

Q) Please list all relatives on public or campaign payrolls and their jobs on those payrolls.

A) N/A

National security:

Q) What are the most important actions Congress can take to reduce the threat of ISIS abroad and at home?

A) When America is strong abroad, we are kept secure at home. When our leadership wavers, rogue elements and terrorist organizations seize the opportunity

and assert themselves. Bullies like Russia, and terrorist organizations like ISIL, thrive on uncertainty and weakness.

I have traveled with a bipartisan congressional group to Israel and have seen firsthand the existential threats it faces every day. This tiny nation isn't looking to expand — just to survive. We must strengthen our friendship with the only truly free democracy in the Middle East.

Above all, we must protect American interests in the Middle East. The President has claimed that the “the tide of war is receding” when pulling out the troops from Iraq, but it's grown only more intense as ISIL carries out its bloodthirsty mission.

The United States must project its authority in the region, or else the vacuum will be quickly filled by Iran or others. We need to act boldly to stop the advance of ISIL without empowering Iran or pulling ourselves into yet another conflict overseas. This includes ensuring the Iraqi government takes charge over internal security. We can't keep propping up struggling governments. Iraq must be ready to defend its country without our help.

Q) What bans, if any, do you support on Muslim admissions to the United States? Please explain your position.

A) Banning certain people groups based on ethnicity or religion should not be our focus. Such action goes against America's long history of accepting those who are persecuted and oppressed and seek refuge and a better life here. Instead our primary efforts should be aimed at installing a secure vetting and entry process. This should apply to anyone and all people seeking to enter the United States. A secure and thorough vetting process doesn't target people based on nationality, religion, or other narrowly defined characteristics, but provides a comprehensive procedure applicable to all those seeking entrance into this country. It is also the best way to protect our own citizens, which should be a top priority.

Q) Specifically, how would you have, or how did you, vote on the American Security Against Foreign Enemies (SAFE) Act of 2015 and its efforts to make it harder for Syrian and Iraqi refugees to enter the U.S.? Please explain your position.

A) I voted in support of the SAFE Act along with a bipartisan majority of my colleagues in the House. The SAFE Act requires the FBI to conduct a thorough background check on all covered aliens – not just those from Syria and Iraq – seeking refugee status in the United States. In the wake of the Paris terror attacks and the legitimate concern that terrorists are infiltrating the ranks of refugees, I think we need to ensure the protection of our own citizens while still providing refuge for those fleeing turmoil in their homeland. The SAFE Act helps accomplish this by requiring a thorough background check before a refugee is admitted into the

United States – and they should be admitted if they are certified as not being a threat to people living here.

Q) Do you support a Syrian no-fly zone or the U.S. enforcement of Syrian humanitarian safe zones? Why or why not?

A) I would certainly consider enforcement of a no-fly zone or humanitarian safe zone in Syria. It is critical that humanitarian assistance reach Syrian civilians and non-combatants that are bearing the brunt of the civil war there. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has proven himself to be a brutal dictator who thinks nothing of doing whatever is necessary to retain power, including using chemical weapons on his own people. If the United States can take steps to provide safe havens for Syrian civilians to find a reprieve from the violence perpetrated by the Assad regime – and ISIS for that matter – it is something worth considering.

Q) Regarding the House Benghazi Select Committee, should its investigation remain open-ended, or should the panel be given a deadline to complete its work? Please explain.

A) The allegations and issues involved with the investigation are serious and the American people deserve the facts and answers to questions that remain unanswered. Much of the problem involved with the investigation stems from the difficulty the committee is encountering in obtaining crucial information in a timely manner. Sources that can provide that information need to cooperate better so that the committee can do its work and complete it in a way that provides answers the American people deserve. I would be cautious about placing deadlines. It is more important that the panel gets the information it needs as expeditiously as possible so that it can conclude a thorough and accurate investigation.

Q) What measures, if any, do you support to give U.S. authorities access to encrypted or “dark web” communications about potential terrorist plots? Please explain.

A) It's tempting to say that anything that can be done to disrupt terrorist plots is worth implementing. Crime rings and child pornographers make use of the Dark Web as well. Of course, the Dark Web can be used for legitimate purposes as well by those in totalitarian societies wishing to communicate with the outside world. It's an option worth exploring, but caution is always the watchword whenever the government for any reason is given broader powers to obtain information.

Q) Do you support transferring the detention of terrorism suspects from Guantanamo Bay to the United States? Why or why not?

A) I believe the President's plan to close down the facility and move detainees to our shores is more political than practical. On a recent in-depth bipartisan congressional fact-finding trip to the Guantanamo Bay prison in September, my colleagues and I saw first-hand how the facility is an important solution to housing the world's most hardened terrorists. The conditions are humane but secure—the right combination for enemy combatants bent on harming our citizens. Until these terrorists are tried by our nation's military tribunals, they should remain in Guantanamo Bay.

Gun violence:

Q) What is the single most important action Congress can take to reduce U.S. gun violence?

A) The recent cases of mass shooting are a grim reminder of the dangers we face every day. Many if not all of these shooters passed background checks. We must target our efforts on where criminals get their guns. This means increasing the penalties for illegal gun trafficking to stop the flow of guns. Illinois serves as a model for how gun control should be brought about and tested—by the states. However, we must be realistic. New means of gun control will not alone stop violence. Americans need real opportunities for education, employment, and approaches to ending the circle of violence and despair that is present in some neighborhoods.

Q) Do you support or oppose the “Denying Firearms and Explosives to Dangerous Terrorists Act?” Please explain your position.

A) No, when even U.S. Representatives have inadvertently been put on the “terrorist watch list,” we need to go back to the drawing board before letting unelected bureaucrats interfere with the constitutional rights of law-abiding Americans.

Climate change:

Q) Do you believe there is scientific evidence of climate change, and is it caused by human activity? What is your position on the Paris climate change agreement?

A) The climate trend over the last several hundred years has been an increase in average global temperature, which is not a fact anybody disputes. I believe all Americans want a cleaner environment for our children and grandchildren. The question, then, is how do we get to a cleaner economy? I absolutely disagree with unrealistic proposals put forward, which will only serve to raise electricity costs on families and businesses, raise transportation costs across the economy, and substantially slow down the rate of economic growth. They lack a clear and common sense cost-benefit analysis.

Instead, I believe the fastest way to a clean economy is robust economic growth through faster technological advancement, and empowered consumers. Greater investments in light rail and public transportation are also needed.

Economy:

Q) What changes, if any, to the U.S. tax code do you support and why?

A) Almost everyone agrees America's current tax code is complex, costly, and time consuming. We need real reforms that simplify the tax code, make it fairer for everyone and lower taxes on all Americans and their families. We shouldn't be prioritizing tax breaks for special interests and big businesses—we should be removing burdens on small businesses who want to expand, and making sure middle class Americans can take home more of their own money to keep up with rising healthcare and grocery prices. Our deficits have exploded and our debt has grown out of control, not because taxpayers don't pay enough but because Washington spends too much. My constituents are more capable of deciding how to spend their own money than the federal government.

But there's a careful balance we need to pursue. A new tax code shouldn't hurt the creation of new jobs, or home ownership, or the opportunity for churches and community organizations to benefit from charitable deductions. I have fought to repeal the onerous "death tax" which hurts family farms and small businesses, and to repeal the marriage penalty as the cost of raising a child goes up every year. I have fought to preserve the municipal bond exemption which safeguards this key lifeline for our local communities who want to improve their infrastructure. I respect Speaker Ryan's efforts while he served as Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee which oversees taxes. He has encouraged Congress and the President to seriously take up tax reform, and I look forward to incorporating many of his ideas and working with my colleagues to produce a simpler, fairer tax code.

Q) What are the most important actions Congress can take to ensure the solvency of Social Security?

A) Social Security and Medicare are vital safety net programs that our seniors count on, and I will continue to uphold my promise not to support any cuts to Social Security or Medicare for those 55 and older. I fought against the Affordable Care Act's drastic gutting of Medicare by \$700 billion.

However, it is no secret that Medicare costs are still growing and Social Security is projected to be bankrupt by 2033. We must look to long-term reforms that will protect these programs for our seniors and preserve them for future generations. In the House, I have advocated for measures that would require the president to

submit a plan for restoring fiscal balance to the Social Security Trust Fund, and I supported passage of a bipartisan, long-term fix to the formula that reimburses physicians who serve patients on Medicare to strengthen and preserve this program for our seniors. Our seniors continue to live fulfilling lives and paid into the social safety net system. We should uphold our promises to them while also helping ensure their children and grandchildren are put on solid financial footing.

Q) Do you support a “risk fee” on big banks? Why or why not?

A) No, I support the most knowledgeable and experienced financial regulator, the SEC, to continue its work to ensure fair and transparent markets. The so-called “risk fee” only results in higher costs of credit to consumers and to small businesses that need credit assistance the most.

Health care:

Q) Should Obamacare be overturned, left intact, or changed — and if so how?

A) Americans repeatedly put healthcare near the top of their list of issues that concern them, and for good reason. The system today has so many conflicting incentives, rules, and regulations that few Americans have the ability to make sound and affordable decisions for themselves and their families. Healthcare decision-making has been taken out of the hands of most Americans under the ACA.

With the advent of the President’s healthcare law, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act—also known as Obamacare—most middle class Americans struggle to find affordable quality healthcare. They yearn to feel secure within the every changing current system. Americans have a right to feel frustrated with the Affordable Care Act today – it’s far from what they were promised. Every vote I took in the House to repeal the Affordable Care Act was a protest on behalf of my constituents against a very broken rollout and against the executive actions that were taking place. Under the same circumstances, I would take those votes again.

I’ve heard the stories of too many of my constituents who received letters terminating their coverage, or of employers who have had to eliminate health benefits, or of workers and teachers whose hours have been reduced because employers can’t afford the higher premiums, or of families losing doctors they’ve known for decades.

But in fact, the House and Senate have passed, and the President has signed into law, several changes to the ACA to make it better. One example of this is the elimination of the CLASS Act program for long-term care. HHS Secretary Sebelius admitted it wasn’t financially viable, and the President signed a law passed by the House and Senate to repeal it. He also signed into law a bill passed by Congress to eliminate the burdensome 1099 IRS reporting requirement on small businesses.

I still think there are better approaches out there which spur competition to lower healthcare costs and provide tax incentives for people to maintain health insurance. Smart tax provisions would allow families and individuals to deduct healthcare costs, just like companies. I support expanding access to Health Savings Accounts, reforming medical malpractice laws and stopping government's intrusion on religious freedoms. I also support finding means to rein in the runaway drug costs and the drug companies who first look after their shareholders before they look after the people who rely on the medications and treatments. Alternatives like these would also give greater flexibility to Medicare patients, tackle Medicare and Medicaid fraud, and address our doctor shortage by offering loans to medical students.

I have introduced my own alternative plan, the State Health Care Options Act, which eases the ability of states to chart a course away from the law and toward tailored health solutions for the resident. The waiver plan would allow states to opt out of certain provisions of the law pertaining to qualified health plans and insurance exchanges so that they have the flexibility to pursue innovative solutions.

As these ideas show, Members of Congress—especially Republicans—don't just say "no" to health reform. We say "yes" to alternatives that address our system's deep challenges. In the end, we can and should work together to implement a step-by-step, common sense approach to healthcare reform that really does lower costs and provide access to the quality care people need.

Q) Do you favor stripping federal funds from Planned Parenthood? Why or why not?

A) Yes. As I wrote in the Chicago Sun-Times op-ed page, women and children deserve better than Planned Parenthood. The video investigation caught several of Planned Parenthood's top officials eagerly promoting the harvesting of the lungs, livers, heads and hearts of aborted babies, purportedly for research but likely for profit. Over lunch and red wine, the so-called doctors talk about a daily "huddle" to determine what body parts are in demand and how to obtain them by strategically "crushing" the children's bodies.

I supported the congressional investigation to determine if Planned Parenthood affiliates have done "better than break even" and profited from the sale of baby body parts, which is illegal.

According to Planned Parenthood's own 2012-2013 annual report, they received more than half a billion dollars from taxpayers. That same year, they performed 327,653 abortions — more than the population of St. Louis. For every adoption referral, they performed 174 abortions (for which they charge several hundred dollars).

In Congress, I have called for a stop to Planned Parenthood's inhumane practices and have cosponsored and voted for legislation to defund them of taxpayer dollars and instead make those \$500 million available to comprehensive health centers that provide whole-woman care, not abortions.

There are 13 times more Federally Qualified Health Centers (9,170) than Planned Parenthood facilities (700) nationwide, serving low income populations in rural and urban areas. In Illinois, 540 health care sites serve 1.1 million individuals a year, versus 18 Planned Parenthood clinics.

Women need more than Planned Parenthood can provide. We should direct taxpayer dollars where they can do the most good.

I urge everyone: watch the videos. Then ask yourself if you want to support this organization with your tax dollars.

Immigration:

Q) President Obama used his executive powers to prevent the deportation of "DREAMers—youths who came to the U.S. illegally as children with their parents. Would you support legislation to prevent DREAMer deportations? Do you support putting DREAMers on a path to citizenship?

A) Since its founding, our country has welcomed immigrants in search of better opportunities and a better life. My grandfather sailed from Sweden and began his pursuit of the American Dream as a doorman at Marshall Field's in Chicago. Little did he know the opportunities he would provide for his grandson just two generations later! The immigration system then was not perfect, but it opened up the way for many who sought a better life in America.

Unfortunately, the system which gave my grandfather and others like him such opportunity is in disarray. There is so much that just doesn't make sense. Our borders are porous and criminals are passing through undeterred. Families are being broken up by bureaucratic inconsistency and ineptitude. Scientists, researchers and entrepreneurs from other countries are being sent back home, removing the valuable education they learned here to our detriment. Despite the tragedy of San Bernardino, the Administration refuses to crack down on foreign brides getting into the country without proper background checks. Immigrants in search of the opportunities America has to offer are languishing for years in long lines, never knowing if they'll be able to make the journey here.

Fixing our immigration system requires a careful and measured approach. This problem is too large, complex and important to rush legislation that will do nothing to solve the difficulties that have plagued us for the past several decades. In 1986, Americans were promised vigorous interior enforcement but that promise was

never kept. I believe the Senate bill falls into the same trap, throwing money at the problem without actually fixing it.

In order to address these important issues, my plan proposes we:

1. Secure the border by ensuring our law enforcement forces have the latest technologies and officers available. We must learn from the mistakes of neglecting to properly implement a biometric entry-exit system.
2. Enforce immigration law at home by ensuring businesses use electronic systems to verify legal status of potential hires. American businesses should respect our nation's laws and American workers.
3. Update our visa system to address agricultural and high-skilled workers, and ensure we support the family as the best social safety net. Breaking down the family creates dependents of the federal government. While I cannot accept amnesty as a viable path forward, we must ensure all immigrants declare themselves before entering into our society. The undocumented must get right with the law and pay necessary fines and back taxes. But doing this will not ensure they can stay. We should welcome productive members of society who go through the legal process to obtain proper status.

Last year, I supported House passage of legislation to stop the President's overreach on immigration as well as key amendments to protect children, who are most vulnerable to human trafficker. The courts have agreed with our approach and stalled his executive actions on legal grounds.

I believe the President should not reward and encourage unlawful entry at the expense of those who have patiently waited years in line to lawfully pursue the American Dream and citizenship. Many in Congress are willing to work with the President on securing our borders, improving the visa system, and pursuing real reform of the broken system. Each branch of government must not step outside of its constitutional role to pursue immigration reform.

Education:

Q) What congressional reforms do you favor to address America's student loan crisis?

A) The federal government must make reforms to encourage more responsible lending to students and their families. Total student debt is approximately \$1.2 trillion dollars, with the federal loans making up more than 90 percent of the total debt and more than 90 percent of new loans each year - federal loans also have an astonishing high default rate compared to private loans despite their generous repayment terms. Congress should require improved disclosures on federal loans such as the APR, demand more information on the performance of the Department of Education's student loan portfolio, and make way for more private loans to be available to borrowers when it means they can get better terms.

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Please tell us your about your campaign by providing the name(s) of:

Your campaign manager, as well as a contact phone: David Carlin, 630-747-3989

Your chief finance chair or chairs:

The members of your finance committee:

All individuals or firms serving as consultants or strategists (media, communications, etc):

Your press secretary: Jameson Cunningham

Your direct mail firm:

Your digital director: Jameson Cunningham

Your chief scheduler: Katie Hunt

Your field director: Nick Provenzano

All social media accounts: facebook.com/randyhultgren

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