**Name:** Deb Bullwinkel

**District running for:** Illinois 8th Congressional District

**Political/civic background:** Village of Villa Park President, Village of Villa Park Trustee

**Occupation:** Villa Park President, Proprietor of BE Communications Group

**Education:** B.A., Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, IL, 1990

**Campaign website:** debforcongress.com

**Chicago Sun-Times Editorial Board questionnaire responses**

**Legislative priorities:**

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

A) 1. Boosting federal infrastructure investment and transportation 2. Creating jobs by making it easier to start and grow a small business 3. Clean Energy investments

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

A) **Infrastructure.** As President of Villa Park, I championed one of the largest infrastructure referenda in the village’s history. I understand that strong investments in infrastructure lead to a more stable economy.

**Gun Violence.** Too many families have suffered from gun violence. It’s time we do something about it. The very least we need to expand background checks and keep guns out of the hands of the mentally ill.

**Health Care Reform.** We need to continue expanding access to quality, affordable health care for families across my district; especially ensuring women have access to reproductive health care.

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

A) As a former minimum wage worker who spent a great deal of time working for mental health nonprofits, small business woman, and Mayor, I see the issues my constituents are facing through a much different lens than my opponents. I believe my perspective is uniquely qualified to represent this district.

**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) Yes

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

A) None

**National security:**

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

A) We can defeat ISIS by building a coalition among Arab countries in the region and by making smart moves here at home.

We need to do everything we can to empower our partners in that region and provide the support they need to defeat ISIS. This involves continued cooperation in the Middle East and resisting the urge of fear mongers like Donald Trump to blame the entire Muslim religion for the actions of terrorists who improperly use its teachings. To reduce the threat at home we need to concentrate on clean energy. The more we can remove our economy from fossil fuels, the less resources flow to those who would do us harm.

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

A) I do not support any bans on Muslim admissions to the United States. Not only is it unconstitutional, but also it goes against the fabric of our nation. Our country prides itself as a beacon of religious freedom to the world, and a ban on Muslim admissions goes against our deep-rooted values.

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 would not have voted for this bill. The refugee process should already have extensive background checks and security protections. We are going against our founding values when we enforce additional security measures for countries based on their religion or what language they speak.

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 support the enforcement of Syrian humanitarian safe zones. There is terrible human suffering in Syria and the least we can do is provide humanitarian aid to those in need. We will work diligently to find an answer to the conflict in Syria whether it may be diplomatically or militarily, but in the meantime we need to take care of these displaced and scared families.

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) It should be given a deadline to complete its work. The Committee is taking up too much time and resources when there has been sufficient evidence that shows no wrongdoing by the Administration. This is a political witch-hunt that is wasting taxpayer money and Congress should be focused on solving the issues that will help the middle-class grow.

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) When this concerns United States citizens, we have laws that must be respected to gain access to their communications. Court-orderd warrants must be used. Regarding overseas communications, I fully support giving the FBI, NSA, or DOD the tools they need to access these platforms.

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

A) Our prison system in the US is already overburdened by overcrowding, inadequate staffing and funding limitations as it is, and increasing this burden by integrating even more potentially, extremely dangerous individuals into the system here is a concern of mine. As long as enemy combatants remain in our hands, I support the facilities we have under our control.

**Gun violence:**

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

A) There are simple measures Congress can take right now that will significantly reduce gun violence in our country. We need to close the Charleston Loophole where gun sales can be completed without a background check if that check has not been completed within three days. We also need to tighten internet sales and gun show loopholes for individuals that sell large amount of firearms to require them to conduct background checks on all their sales.

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

A) I would support this bill. If suspected terrorists are too dangerous to board an airplane, then they are too dangerous to purchase a firearm.

**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) Yes, I do believe there is scientific evidence of climate change. I applaud the Paris agreement as it is one of the most aggressive measures to combat climate change in decades.

**Economy:**

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

A) As a small business owner, I know how hard it is to start a business in general. I support targeted tax breaks to small businesses to promote hiring. I do believe the wealthiest among us have been unfairly using their accountants and lawyers to shield income from taxation and I would support a return to minimum standards where those exemptions cannot unfairly lower their burden.

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

A) Congress needs to find responsible measures to ensure the solvency, but we also cannot have enormous amounts of income shielded from payroll taxes that middle and lower class families primarily pay. Income is income and simple adjustments to the payroll tax cap can go a long way to ensure solvency. We also have to attract more workers to the U.S. economy to replace the aging baby boomers such as fixing our broken immigration system. Finally, let’s remember that current projections are for the funds to lack necessary funds to pay benefits in 2034. If we address crucial infrastructure needs, fix our immigration system, and switch to a new energy economy, tremendous economic growth will change that “insolvency” date.

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

A) Yes, big banks created the financial mess by taking big risks and we should find ways to discourage this dangerous behavior. Hillary Clinton has released strong policy on this subject and I support measures such as this to achieve a more stable financial system.

**Health care:**

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

A) I am committed to building on reforms in the Affordable Care Act that improve value and quality care for Americans. We should also have constant discussions with small businesses as well to make sure they are not burdened and make the process of providing their employees with quality health care as seamless as possible.

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

A) Absolutely not. Planned Parenthood provides important health services like cancer screenings and breast exams to women in my district and I will fight vigorously to maintain its funding.

**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) Fixing our immigration system would significantly benefit our economy as we bring millions out of the shadows and into a tax base that can be used for resources like education, healthcare and infrastructure. Deporting DREAMers would be conducive to stagnating our economy. These talented individuals can serve our country and our communities and we should find responsible ways of providing them a path to citizenship.

**Education:**

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

A) I would support reforms that allow current holders of debt to refinance at a lower rate and future students to take on debt at low interest rates that reflect the government’s low cost of debt.