

Name: Jan Schakowsky

District running for: 9th Congressional District

Political/civic background: Community Activist

Occupation: US Congresswoman

Education: Graduated University of Illinois, 1965

Campaign website: www.janschakowsky.org

Chicago Sun-Times Editorial Board questionnaire responses

Legislative priorities:

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

A) Pick from:

- Income Inequality
- Expanding the Middle Class,
- Labor/Organizing Rights
- Climate Change
- Retirement Security/Protect & Expand Social Security
- Immigration Reform
- Infrastructure Investment

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

A) Pick from:

- Immigration reform
- Affordable housing
- Income inequality
- Education
- Gun control.

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

A)

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) All campaign events, fundraisers (and fundraiser hosts), and volunteer actions will be made public. Out of respect for constituent privacy, the often-changing nature of Congresswoman Schakowsky's daily schedule, and the sheer volume and complexity of that schedule, it won't be made public in its entirety.

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) Our first priority must be to protect our homeland. I believe the first line defense has to be working with Muslim community here in the United States to ensure against radicalization and the creation of home grown terrorists. The Muslim community, in cooperation with law enforcement, is the best ally Congress could have in ensuring the fight against future attacks.

Abroad, I support both military and humanitarian multilateral efforts to stabilize the situation in Iraq and Syria as we work toward a peaceful resolution. We cannot rely on unilateral U.S. action but must build a committed, strong coalition to respond effectively. ISIS poses a significant threat to American interests and to stability in the region as a whole, and I am convinced that the international community must address that threat.

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

A) I vehemently oppose any ban on Muslim admissions to the United States. Refugees undergo the highest level security screenings of anyone who enters this country. They undergo rigorous levels of screening before they even enter the country and typically have to wait for over one year before they come to America. Those who claim the vetting process doesn't exist or is insufficient are either unfamiliar with the details of the program or are perpetrating myths.

We don't need to turn our backs on those who need help. With violence and terrorism at their worst in Syria, House Republicans want to block refugees from seeking a safe haven in our nation of immigrants. As a Jew, I'm reminded of when the United States closed its doors on those fleeing the Holocaust, sending many back to their deaths. It is very, very painful to think that we could do the same thing today to anyone who is seeking safety.

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 against the American SAFE Act of 2015 and will continue to oppose it in all forms. The American SAFE Act imposes further restrictions on those fleeing from horrific violence. Our first priority must be to keep America safe, but we can't turn our back on those who need our assistance most of all. The bill imposes undue burdens on refugees and will make it harder for aid workers in the region to do their jobs.

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

A) Yes, I support the enforcement of humanitarian safe zones to reduce the violence in Syria. However, a safe zone is merely the first step in what must be an international commitment to stopping the violence. Safe zones have worked in the past, but have also been used as excuses for Western forces to turn a blind eye to genocide, as happened in Srebrenica during the Yugoslav conflict. We must be diligent to ensure that there is not a repeat of similar events in Syria.

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 House Benghazi Select Committee has made it clear that their work is directed at partisan shaming of the President and Secretary Clinton rather than any substantive investigation. As a member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, I was involved in the initial investigation into the events that killed four service members and no wrong doing was found. I have called for the committee to be disbanded as it is only serving to be a partisan football.

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) I am cautiously supportive of giving authorities access to encrypted communications. I believe that monitoring those communications is crucial to ensuring that our security and intelligence forces are able to thwart possible attacks, but it must be done in a way

that does not infringe on the rights of private citizens to maintain their personal privacy without due process.

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

A) Yes, I support the transfer of terrorism suspects out of Guantanamo Bay. Throughout my tenure in Congress, I have supported closing Guantanamo Bay. Guantanamo has damaged the reputation of the United States in the world, cast doubt on our foreign policy, provided terrorist groups with a new recruitment tool, and raised the likelihood that U.S. troops captured abroad will be mistreated or tortured. I have repeatedly voted against authorization and appropriations legislation that contain restrictions on transferring Guantanamo detainees, particularly those who have been cleared for release.

Gun violence:

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

A) The gun violence epidemic in this country requires comprehensive, common-sense gun safety legislation. On average, 88 Americans are killed with a gun every day. No one action will end the gun violence epidemic, but enacting policies like universal background checks, easier prosecution of gun traffickers, and an assault weapons ban will begin to address the issue. These background check provisions would simply require that gun store owners, gun shows and online vendors simply verify that those who are purchasing these weapons don't have a criminal background. I believe that we can act to protect Americans from gun violence without violating any Constitutional rights.

At the very least, Congress should follow President Obama's lead and fund the initiatives included in the executive order he issued in January. We should end the ban on allowing the Center for Disease Control to conduct gun research. This vital research could lead to breakthroughs in smart gun technology that would keep more Americans and their families safe from the dangers of guns.

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

A) I strongly support the Denying Firearms and Explosives to Dangerous Terrorists Act. This is an example of common-sense gun legislation that will make our country safer without affecting law-abiding gun owners. I am a cosponsor of this bill because I believe that individuals deemed too dangerous to fly and suspected of terrorism should not be allowed to purchase deadly weapons.

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) Climate Change is real, and it is happening at an alarming rate. Fourteen of the 15 hottest years since 1880 have happened since 2000. 2014 was the hottest year ever, 2015 was the second-hottest, and 2016 is expected to set a new record. Over the next few centuries, sea levels could rise an average of 12 feet, swallowing coastal areas in the U.S. and around the world. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, drought and famine could lead to decreased water availability, increased starvation, and new instability in many regions of the world.

America must take meaningful action before it's too late. We cannot afford to be on the wrong side of history. I have been a strong supporter of EPA actions to raise standards for particle pollution, power plant emissions, and mercury pollution. I have also introduced legislation that would better protect water sources against pollution caused by hydraulic fracturing, and another bill that would permanently extend a tax credit for renewable energy.

I strongly support the Paris Climate Agreement – the first of its kind in history. It requires every nation to contribute to emissions reductions and climate resiliency while at the same time setting up a process to regularly monitor and reevaluate those commitments to ensure we stay on the right path. I will continue to work to defend the agreement and to advance policies that will help us to reach its ambitious but achievable goals.

Economy:

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

A) I support changes to both the corporate and personal income tax codes.

On the corporate side, we must start by eliminating incentives to ship jobs and profits overseas by ending tax deferral on foreign income and making it more difficult for American corporations to move their headquarters overseas to reduce their tax obligations (tax inversions). I have sponsored legislation to do the former (H.R. 1790, the Corporate Tax Dodging prevention Act), and I am a cosponsor of legislation to do the latter (H.R. 415, the Stop Corporate Inversions Act).

On the personal side, we should eliminate tax loopholes that enable the richest people in the country to pay lower tax rates than those striving to reach and remain in the middle class. We should start by eliminating special tax treatment for money earned from investments (discounted rates for capital gains and dividends) and raising tax rates on income over \$1 million per year. I am the sponsor of legislation (H.R. 389, the Fairness in Taxation Act) to do just that.

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

A) Social Security benefits are funded through wages – Social Security doesn't receive general revenues and, by law, cannot borrow or contribute to the deficit. We need to lift the cap on wages subject to FICA -- \$118,500 in 2016. Eliminating the cap would affect only the top 5% of wage earners, but would go a long way toward providing 75-year solvency. By raising wages – stopping wage stagnation and ending gender-based pay discrimination – we will both help families today and increase Social Security revenues. Those steps would allow us not just to protect but to expand benefits. Two-thirds of retirees rely on Social Security for most of their income, 1 in 3 for virtually all of their income. Yet, the average yearly benefit is about \$15,600 – less for women who earn less, take more time out of the workforce to care for family members, and live longer. I've introduced H. Res. 393 to highlight the need to provide better benefits that will enable retirees, disabled workers, families and children in Social Security to meet their basic needs.

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

A) Risk fee on big banks: I support a “risk fee” on America's biggest banks, which are even bigger today than they were before the financial crisis of 2008. The CPC Budget, which I coauthored, includes the President's Financial Crisis Responsibility Fee. That proposal would impose a .07% tax on bank assets over \$50 billion, raising needed revenue while imposing a financial disincentive for banks to continue to grow.

Health care:

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

A) I fully support Obamacare. One of the proudest days of my life was when the Affordable Care Act became law on March 23, 2010 and we took a huge step to provide every American with access to quality, affordable health care.

Because of Obamacare, Americans can no longer be denied health coverage or have to pay higher rates because they have a pre-existing condition. Providers can no longer refuse to cover women or charge women higher insurance premiums. Health coverage now features a comprehensive set of benefits, including prescription drugs, maternity services, and mental health services. More than 2.3 million young adults, up to the age of 26, have been able to stay on their parents' health insurance plan. Today, more than 972,000 Illinoisans have gotten health care through the Affordable Care Act. Because of the law, seniors and people with disabilities have already saved \$15 billion in drug costs since 2010. For so many Americans there is now peace of mind that they are no longer a

major health crisis away from bankruptcy and that they will be able to access health care needed to maintain or possibly even save their lives.

I will continue to work to improve the law, and I've sponsored legislation to add a public option (which the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office estimates would save \$158 billion over the next decade) and provide federal backup authority to help lower costs in states like Illinois that lack the authority to deny or modify unreasonable health insurance premiums. I also believe that we need to improve network adequacy to ensure that plans offered on the Marketplace offer a wealth and a range of quality providers. We also need to work to lower premiums, deductibles, and other cost-sharing associated with insurance plans. Unfortunately, Illinois is at a disadvantage as we do not have robust state laws to regulate the insurance industry, which has led to higher premiums and narrower networks. I will be working at the federal level to enact legislation to address these issues.

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

A) I strongly oppose and am actively working to defeat efforts to defund Planned Parenthood, which provides vital health services to 3 million Americans. More than half of Planned Parenthood health centers are in rural or medically-underserved areas and their closure would leave their patients with no other options for medical care. In Illinois, 18 Planned Parenthood centers serve over 64,000 patients every year. Planned Parenthood is an invaluable community-based provider, and it is critical to achieving the goal of improving quality health care in this country, including efforts to improve women's health, lower the rate of unintended pregnancies, and decrease infant mortality.

More than 90 percent of the care Planned Parenthood health centers offer is preventive and includes lifesaving cancer screenings, routine gynecological examinations, contraceptive services, immunizations, testing and treatment for sexually-transmitted infections and family planning. This fight isn't just about access to safe and legal abortions, it's also about contraception. Not only have House Republicans repeatedly voted to shut down Planned Parenthood, in their 2016 budget proposal, they wanted to completely eliminate Title X, the largest federal family planning program serving 4.6 million Americans. House Republicans also cut the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative by over 80% in their 2016 budget proposal. If we truly want to reduce unplanned pregnancies and the need for abortions, it is imperative that we adequately fund family planning programs.

It is shameful that House Republicans are using the recent videos released by the Center for Medical Progress for their own partisan purposes. These videos are misleading and highly edited in order to falsely suggest that Planned Parenthood is profiting from the donation of fetal tissue. As an independent analysis of the doctored and possibly illegal videos found, Planned Parenthood and its affiliates have not broken any laws and do not profit from the donation of fetal tissue. However, after three standing Committees investigated Planned Parenthood and did not find a shred of evidence of any wrongdoing,

House Republicans took it a step further and created a Select Committee Investigative Panel, which I call the Select Committee to Attack Women's Health, and to which I was recently appointed to be the Ranking Member. In this new role, I will continue to work to protect access to the vital reproductive health services that Planned Parenthood provides to millions of Americans. It is time that we end the war on women, let women -- not politicians -- make their own health decision, and promote women's health by providing access to medical and reproductive health services.

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) Yes, I would support legislation to prevent DREAMer deportations. These are children and young adults who had no say in the method of how they were brought to the United States. I voted for the DREAM Act, passed by the House several years ago, which would give eligible young people the opportunity to legalize their immigration status and work toward citizenship. Nearly 65,000 youth graduate high school in the U.S. each year but find they are unable to work, join the military, or go to college because of their immigration status. The DREAM Act should become law, but in meantime I strongly support the Obama Administration's action to halt deportation of DREAM Act-eligible young people.

Education:

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

A) Student loan debt now exceeds \$1 trillion and we need to act to reduce that debt and make higher education affordable for every student. I have and will continue to work to make higher education affordable. For example, I strongly supported the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act when it was passed by the House and subsequently signed into law. This law expanded income-based student loan repayment plans to an additional 1.2 million borrowers. An income-based repayment plan ties an individual's federal student loan payment to only 10% of their income, after subtracting for basic living expenses. In addition, borrowers will have any remaining federal student loan debt forgiven after 20 years of repayment on this plan, or 10 years for those who work in public service. Careers in public service include teaching, nursing, military service, and government employment.

I have co-sponsored other legislation that will help to reduce the burden of student loans. First, I am a co-sponsor of H.R. 1434, the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act. This legislation would allow student loan borrowers to convert their

private student loan debt into federal student loans, which have more reasonable and flexible repayment options, including income-based repayment. It would also allow student loan borrowers to re-finance their student loans if lower interest rates become available. I am also a co-sponsor of H.R. 1674, the Private Student Loan Bankruptcy Fairness Act, which would allow private student loans to be discharged during bankruptcy proceedings. Finally, I am a co-sponsor of H.R. 2429, the Student Loan Tax Debt Relief Act, which would exclude student loans that have been forgiven from an individual's taxable income. Under current law, student debt discharged through the income-based repayment or the income-contingent repayment programs is treated as income and is taxable, which can result in a huge tax liability for many graduates.

As a former teacher, I understand the importance and value of education, and I believe that college should be affordable for all Americans. Unfortunately, college is increasingly becoming unaffordable – leaving many students to forego a college education and others burdened with unaffordable student loan debt. That is why I also support investing increased federal resources to make college more affordable and accessible for all students. I will continue to do whatever I can to expand educational opportunities for all.

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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: Benjamin Head, 847-651-7916

Your chief finance chair or chairs: Sarah Gersten, 847-424-1998

The members of your finance committee: NA

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

Your press secretary: NA

Your direct mail firm: NA

Your digital director: NA

Your chief scheduler: Leslie Combs, 773-506-7100

Your field director: NA

All social media accounts:

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