**Name: Luis V. Gutiérrez**

**District running for: IL-04**

**Political/civic background: Aide to Mayor Harold Washington, Alderman of the 26th Ward, Chicago Member of Congress (elected 1992)**

**Occupation: U.S. Representative, IL-04**

**Education:** B.A. Northeastern Illinois University

**Campaign website:** luisgutierrezforcongress.com

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

**Legislative priorities:**

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

A) (1) Passage of the *Working Families Agenda* which would raise the minimum wage, guarantee equal pay for equal work, ensure paid vacation time and family and sick leave and allow for affordable childcare for working parents; (2) with an average of 89 people per day dying of gun violence, we need to pass comprehensive gun control legislation that requires a background check on every gun sold in America so that guns are less likely to end up in the wrong hands; and (3) Comprehensive Immigration Reform (CIR) so that American families need not fear deportation of their loved ones and American workers and businesses are able to play by the rules to the benefit of all--and our nation finally has the functioning immigration system it deserves.

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

A) Same as the answers above: the Working Families Agenda, reducing gun violence and Comprehensive Immigration Reform.

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

A) I provide unparalleled service to my Chicago constituents and fight as my top priority for their interests in Washington, but I do not agree that a member of Congress should limit his or her leadership to the local level alone. The job of a U.S. Representative is a federal one, with consequences for Chicagoans and all Americans and I believe my national leadership on the priorities of those in my district is my job and a vital asset, not a liability. For example, in consultation with my constituents and Chicago leaders, I submitted to the White House in early 2011 the very first detailed memo on the President’s ability to stop the deportations and exercise his discretion to allow DREAMers and millions of the undocumented to live and work in the U.S. without fear. My memo launched a national conversation and helped to galvanize our communities nationwide around the common goal of executive action. I am very proud of how successful we have been. We now have various prosecutorial discretion memos that better protect law abiding immigrants from deportation, the historic creation of DACA in 2012 that so far has provided nearly 700,000 DREAMers (and several thousand in my district) with a work permit and protection from deportation, and the announcement in November 2014 of expanded DACA and the new DAPA program for parents. And while this last announcement has been challenged by its opponents in the courts, the law is on our side and I am confident we will prevail in the Supreme Court where the case will be heard in April and millions more immigrants will qualify this summer for the executive action that I and others across the country fought so hard for. These national policy victories are among my greatest accomplishments as a Congressman and have had far-reaching impact on my constituents and American families across our nation.

**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 can make these pledges, with the understanding that I dedicate most of my time to my work as a Member of Congress, so my campaign activity is quite limited and overseen by me with few resources. I will review if there is more I can do with the limited capacity of my campaign website to provide additional information. With regard to my congressional work to which I devote nearly all of my time, I have the largest following in Congress on Facebook because I proudly share with the public daily updates on my activities, policy positions and whereabouts. I am also prepared to post notice of official meetings to my congressional website and will do so by the first of March.

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

A) My wife Soraida is Treasurer to my campaign, thanks to her background in finance and banking.

**National security:**

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

A) ISIS is like no terrorist threat we have ever confronted before because, instead of massive attacks like 9-11, they use more rudimentary means to carry out their violence and instill fear and terror, such as suicide bombs and mass shootings. Our intelligence agencies and the U.S. military with our international coalition partners should hunt down terrorists wherever they are and provide the training and support that Iraqi and Syria forces need to fight and defeat ISIL on the ground. We also need as our number one diplomatic priority to negotiate a transition in Syria that removes Bashar al-Asad from power and replaces him with a government that represents all Syrians. On the domestic front, we need to prevent suspected terrorists on the no-fly list from purchasing weapons, reinstitute the assault weapons ban, shut down the ability of ISIS to conduct on-line recruitment in the U.S. and work closely with the Muslim-American community to fight against radicalization and Islamophobia, both of which create opportunities for ISIS’ reach in the United States. Finally, I believe we need to put the best minds together in the public and private sectors to identify the most effective, technologically feasible solutions to track terrorists’ encrypted communications without resorting to mass surveillance that most Americans reject.

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

A) None. Americans' beef is not with Muslims, but with ISIS, al-Qaeda and terrorists who seek to harm us. It is our commitment to religious equality and the freedom to worship that has made us the greatest nation on earth and this is no time to abandon who we are by imposing a religious test on those who seek to enter the U.S. We should not succumb to fear of ISIS and abandon our core American 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) When some in politics, including our Illinois Governor, suggested we close our doors to women and children seeking a safe haven from terror, I was among the first to strongly condemn them. I voted against the so-called SAFE Act of 2015 which would limit the admission of Iraqi and Syrian refugees to the United States. Shutting our doors to refugees fleeing terror represents a radical departure from the humanitarian response of the international community, including that of France where, despite the horrific terrorist attacks in Paris, they continue to accept refugees. Of course our utmost priority is the safety of the American people, but protecting our homeland and accepting refugees are not mutually exclusive goals. That's why those seeking refugee status in the U.S. undergo the most stringent security and screening measures of any other group who comes to the U.S.—and why we can and must uphold our legacy as a beacon of hope for those fleeing oppression and violence.

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

A) Given the atrocities of Bashar al-Assad against his own people, I understand the initial appeal of the idea of a no-fly zone. But I do not think it will free the Syrian people from the Assad regime and ending Syria‘s air war would require a far deeper, longer term commitment from the U.S. than just shooting an occasional helicopter or jet from the sky. American troops on the ground would be necessary to enforce the zone and protect civilians, raising the possibility of the U.S. slipping into war with no exit strategy, as well as confronting the Russians who lend air support to Assad. I believe sending American troops to Syria would make matters worse and fail to accomplish the goals of the United States, and I am therefore unwilling to put our troops in harm’s way to create and enforce it.

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 Committee should have been given a deadline to complete its work; 19 months and counting is long enough. I am concerned that the Committee has become overtly political and partisan, and I doubt it will provide any additional facts or insights that the eight prior investigations into the September 11, 2012 terrorist attacks in Benghazi, Libya haven’t already provided. **Instead, I think that Congress should act on the security lessons of Benghazi and provide the resources and reforms we desperately need to better protect our diplomats.** This is the only way to truly honor the sacrifice of Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens the three other Americans who died at the mission in Benghazi.

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 sit on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and I know that dark web communications by terrorists is a serious challenge for our intelligence community. At the same time, U.S. agencies have made serious advances in cyber intelligece gathering, making it even more difficult for criminals and terrorists to hide in the dark web. I strongly support authorities pursuing terrorists and disrupting terrorist plots whereever they can be found, including the dark web. I also believe this can and should be done in a way that upholds the law, strengthens data- and cybersecurity, protects the privacy and civil liberties of those not involved in nefarious activities, and provides checks and balances to ensure that the U.S. government does not conduct surveillance of innocent Americans.

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

A) I support the closing of Guantanamo Bay and the transfer of the detainees to the United States. It makes financial sense: With a population of around 90 individuals, the prison at Guantanamo is nearly empty—at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars a year to the American taxpayer. It also makes sense from a security standpoint: I trust our law enforcement and Supermax prison professionals in the U.S. to maintain control over the most dangerous prisoners, including terrorists. It also makes sense from a moral and constitutional standpoint: indefinite detention without charges or a trial flies in the face of more than two centuries of American legal tradition and the 5th Amendment.

Gu**n violence:**

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

A) I think the single most important action Congress can take to reduce gun violence is to make anyone who wants to purchase a firearm first pass a background check. Currently only 60 percent of gun purchases are conducted with a background check. And despite the fact that 90 percent of Americans support such checks, the powerful gun lobby continues to exert its influence over many members of Congress to prevent action on this straightforward and lifesaving measure. Given the daily loss of life to gun violence, including horrific mass shootings, this inaction is a shameful stain on the U.S. Congress.

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

A) I strongly support and I was among the first to sign onto the Discharge Petition for the Denying Firearms and Explosives to Dangerous Terrorists Act, a commonsense proposal that would close the loophole that currently allows individuals on the FBI’s Terrorist Watchlist to buy guns. It is ridiculous that we would prevent a dangerous individual from boarding a plane, but allow them to purchase weapons in the U.S.

**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, we have scientific evidence of climate change and the fact that human activity causes it. As I write this we have just learned from NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that 2015 smashed 2014’s temperature record. I believe in science. I also believe we can change our behavior to slow and reverse climate change to protect the planet for future generations, but we need to act fast. This is what the Paris agreement is all about: a strong, international commitment to reduce carbon pollution around the world. There is more work to be done, for sure, but this established a framework among nearly 200 nations and will serve as the blueprint to ultimately solve the world’s climate crisis. And I am proud of the leadership of the U.S. and its commitment to reduce our carbon footprint, which I believe creates jobs, saves households money and improves public health.

**Economy:**

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

A) I believe changes to the tax code must be balanced in terms of spending cuts and revenues. Corporations and the wealthy must also share the burden to help reduce our deficits. I support limiting high-income tax benefits, eliminating tax loopholes that benefit the wealthy and special interests and securing the payment of taxes on profits hidden in offshore accounts. Greater investments in America--in infrastructure, manufacturing and education--are needed to increase tax receipts, spur the economy and create jobs, reduce crime, and help revitalize neighborhoods like those in the 4th District.

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

A) Millions of working Americans and their families depend on the earned benefits from our social safety net to stay out of poverty. I have opposed proposals that would cut the earned benefits in Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare. Instead, I would support raising the wage cap on Social Security payroll contributions to extend solvency by bringing in additional revenues. When I first ran for Congress, I expressed my commitment to raising this cap and indeed we did. But the cap needs to be raised again; I would be glad to contribute a greater percentage of my paycheck to help keep Social Security solvent and viable for my grandson and future generations. Too many in my congressional district believe Social Security is a ponzi scheme, and we must act to contradict that narrative.

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

A) Yes, I think a risk fee on big banks is a modest proposal and just one tool of many to help prevent future excesses of Wall Street. In 2010 I served on the Financial Services Committee and the Conference Committee to pass the Dodd-Frank law, the cornerstone of our response to the financial crisis. A risk fee, among other policies, would give regulators an additional tool to use if confronted with too-big-to-fail financial institutions behaving in a way that can hurt the broader economy. The fee would incentivize big banks to behave within reasonable limits and not take on too much risk.

**Health care:**

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

A) I strongly support the Affordable Care Act and oppose its repeal. More Americans have health insurance and the quality of that coverage has improved for millions of Americans. Obamacare also eliminated gender discrimination by health insurance companies and ensures coverage of preventive and essential services for women. Of course, there is room for improvement, which is why I introduced the “Exchange Inclusion for a Healthy America Act,” a bill that would impose the individual mandate on undocumented immigrants who meet residency requirements and allow them to purchase health care insurance in the exchanges with subsidies if they qualify, spreading risk and further reducing the number of uninsured. I also strongly support the Health Equity and Accountability Act, which would inform our future efforts to improve America’s healthcare system by finally collecting the data we desperately need to reduce health disparities among racial and ethnic minorities.

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

A) I absolutely support federal funding for the vital services Planned Parenthood provides its patients and have repeatedly voted against defunding Planned Parenthood. With federal funds, Planned Parenthood gives millions of low-income men and women access to reproductive health services, education, and information, birth control, cancer screenings, STI screenings, and mammograms. It is important to note that Planned Parenthood does not use federal funds for abortions, which represent only 3 percent of their health services. My constituents have voted on this issue with their feet: In Illinois, Planned Parenthood provides 140,000 medical visits a year, 25% of which are to patients in my District. Clearly, women’s health, the health care of American families, and the freedom of women to control their own bodies are deeply important to my constituents and their families—and to me.

**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) My record on this is well known. I introduced the very first DREAM Act in Congress, worker hard to pass the DREAM Act in the House and have consistently supported relief for DREAMers—Americans but for a piece of paper—that includes a path to citizenship. I fought and continue to fight the Obama Administration on the deportations and made my first demand for executive action right after the DREAM Act failed to pass the Senate in Decemeber 2010. I strongly support President Obama’s executive actions in this regard and am pleased the Supreme Court has decided to hear the case for DAPA and expanded DACA and I believe our community will prevail. Of course, executive actions are no replacement for legislation and I will continue to work for a permanent solution whenever the Republicans return to the table and negotiate a solution that fixes our broken immigration system once and for all.

**Education:**

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

A) With college tuition and fees on the rise, students have to take out more and more loans in order to be able to earn a college degree. Student loan debt has doubled over the past seven years and is now close to $1.3 trillion, limiting young adults’ ability to take out car loans or buy a home or save for retirement—a fact that also undermines our economic recovery. For those students who establish financial need, I strongly support expanding access to federal Pell grants which do not have to be repaid. I also strongly favor all students‘ access to federal student loans which have lower interest rates, greater transparency and stronger consumer protections than private sector loans. I am also a cosponsor of the America’s College Promise Act which makes a community college education free and the Student Loan Debt Relief Act which would eliminate the unfair tax on a student’s debt that has been discharged.