

Chicago Sun-Times Editorial Board
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Name: Brad Schneider

District running for: Illinois 10

Political/civic background: Represented IL-10 from 2013-2015.

Occupation: Prior to Congress, I had a 25+ year career in business. I was a management consultant, working mostly with small and medium-sized, principally family-owned businesses. I also owned and managed a life insurance agency from 1997 - 2003.

Education: Bachelors of Science in Industrial Engineering from Northwestern University, as well as an MBA from Northwestern's Kellogg Graduate School of Management.

Campaign website: www.SchneiderforCongress.com

Legislative priorities:

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

A) Our first priority must be smart policies that will grow our economy and create well-paying jobs to once again grow our Middle Class. This includes legislation that will foster expansion of our manufacturing sector through innovation and workforce development, as well as rethinking, reinventing and rebuilding our nation's infrastructure. And we must restore the confidence of small and medium-sized businesses to invest in both people and technology, for these businesses are the engines of our economy, accounting for 65% of new jobs in our country.

Second, we must work to make sure that every child in America has the opportunity for a quality education that will give her/him the skills necessary to succeed in a twenty-first century economy. In particular, we must work to open more affordable pathways to completing a college degree, and create foundations and incentives for more students to succeed in STEM related fields.

Third, we can and must work to reduce the gun violence that is ravaging our nation. There is no reason we cannot pass sensible legislation that will respect the 2nd Amendment while also limiting access by those who should not be able to get guns.

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

- A) My national legislative priorities detailed above, of course, reflect what I believe are the most important issues for our district: strengthening our economy, educating our children and addressing gun violence in our communities. But I would also add here passing comprehensive immigration reform.

We have to urgently pass Comprehensive Immigration Reform. I applaud President Obama for taking executive steps on immigration. But Congress must act, including securing our borders and making DACA and DAPA permanent. Doing so will free people from living in the shadows of fear from deportation to be able to pursue higher education, buy homes, start businesses, and expand our economy. This will strengthen the communities of the 10th district, and our nation.

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

- A) What distinguishes me in this race is my record in Congress as a thoughtful, effective leader, legislator and progressive Representative of the people in the Tenth District. My record is reflected in the legislation I worked on, the votes I cast, and the service I, and my team provided our district.

My experience, and record of leadership and accomplishment, uniquely prepares me to return to Congress and have an immediate impact. From working to pass immigration reform, to taking on the NRA to pass sensible legislation to reduce gun violence, to crafting policies that will help small business and grow our economy, I know I can make an immediate difference the very first day the new Congress is sworn in.

I believe it is my experience and leadership record that have earned me the support of over 100 local and national elected representatives, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, the unanimous support of the AFL-CIO, SEIU Illinois State Council, the Lake County Federation of Teachers, and many other labor unions, the National Jewish Democratic Organization and the Indo-American Democratic Organization, and numerous other groups. They all recognize the important work that I have done and have confidence in what I will do in the future.

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) While serving in Congress I was proud to hold public events, including meetings, job fairs, roundtable discussions and telephone town halls in order for constituents to share how I could serve them better in Washington. I look forward to doing that again in the next Congress. In many cases, constituents meet with their Representative without wanting their meeting or casework issue to be made public. I respect their right to privacy.

I'm also proud that my campaign shares widely through the press and social media, public events, candidate forums, meetings, parades and other events with voters so that they can meet and talk with me on the campaign trail.

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

A) My son is in the U.S. Navy. My nephew is an elected State Representative in Rhode Island. Other than that, I have no other relatives on public or campaign payrolls.

National security:

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

A) The terrorist organization ISIS represents a clear and present danger to American national security, both directly to American interests and as a destabilizing force in an important region. To fully address the risks, I believe we must (1) defeat ISIS at its roots in Syria and Iraq; (2) identify, disrupt and dismantle ISIS satellite and allied groups in places like Libya, Sinai, Indonesia and anywhere else they appear; (3) track and prevent the flow of radicalized fighters and terrorists from Syria to other nations, including the U.S.; and (4) counter ISIS efforts to radicalize "home-grown" terrorists through social media and other means.

In Congress, I voted to give our military the funding and authority it needs to help contain ISIS and ultimately eliminate the threat they pose. I believe that

the U.S. must work with our international partners, and in particular our allies in the region, to stop the spread of this dangerous threat. This can only be done through our ongoing partnership to strengthen the Iraqi military and supporting a secure and democratic region. I also remain resolute in my belief that the U.S. engagement in Iraq and Syria must not involve combat troops on the ground. The ultimate defeat of ISIS, and the distorted ideology, will only come when the people living under the thumb of their oppression are able to rise up and take back their homes and their communities.

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

A) While we must always be diligent in keeping all individuals seeking to do us harm from entering our borders, we should never ban any specific religious or ethnic group as a whole, and I would vigorously oppose any effort to do so.

There are common sense steps we can and should take to ensure that we are properly screening people entering this country, including social media screening of visa applicants. I would also support additional funding to ensure that our government has the resources needed to conduct robust, diligent screenings in a timely fashion.

Donald Trump's so-called plan to ban all Muslims from entering into the United States will not only make us more enemies around the world, it goes against the very fabric of who we are as a nation. I've been dismayed that Donald Trump and others have focused on fear mongering and political expediency rather than discussing options that would keep our country safer and more secure.

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 of course share the apprehension we all feel after the horrific murders in Paris, in Jerusalem, in San Bernardino and so many other places. We are absolutely right to be concerned about infiltration of terrorists into this country and into our daily lives. There is certainly a risk that individuals intent on harming us will try to sneak into the U.S. as refugees, or tourists, or business people. Some will even be born and raised here.

In this context, we all rightly look to our government to secure our borders, protect our cities and keep us safe. Security has to be, and has long been, our

government's top priority. It is imperative that we continue to diligently watch for potential threats by all appropriate means. We have to make sure we control who enters our country. And we have to sustain and increase our efforts to fight the terrorists at their source, both on the ground and in the battle for hearts and minds.

But we cannot afford to let fear overwhelm the very values that define our liberties and put us on the right side of this struggle. Our country is stronger today because we welcomed and integrated past generations into our communities. We cannot turn our backs on these principles now.

I understand and appreciate the desire of people to ensure that our current screening processes guarantee that no terrorist is able to enter our country. I also know from experience that no system is perfect, and even the best systems need to be continually improved. That's why I support calls for investing in enhancing our screening programs, not just now but into the future.

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

A) While I would consider a no-fly zone, if proposed by the Administration and our national security and military experts, I would do so with serious concerns and reservations.

The civil war in Syria is the greatest humanitarian crisis of this young century and the chaos it has created is a threat not just to the region, but also to the entire world. Unfortunately there are no easy answers or quick solutions, and every positive action the international community, including the U.S., is considering carries significant risks with limited potential for long-term success. The only long-term solution to the Syrian crisis is a political solution, which will only be possible when the multitude of warring factions decide that there is no path for them to a military victory.

Until a path to a political solution is achieved, the humanitarian crisis will only worsen unless good people rise to do something. The U.S. has taken the lead in helping Syrian refugees in the region, including providing funding and resources to countries bordering Syria, particularly Jordan and Turkey.

But these countries are being stretched thin and so we must seek to establish safe havens inside Syria. However, unlike previous engagements where we used a no-fly zone with some success (e.g., Bosnia and Iraq), Syria carries unique complications. First, the Syrian regime would most certainly be

expected to resist such measures, leading to the potential for armed air conflict. Second, the introduction of Russian aircraft into the region makes the potential for a U.S. - Russian conflict high. Third, the dynamic and overlapping alliances and rivalries in the region, where today's friend could be shooting at you tomorrow, makes enforcement of no-fly zone extra challenging. And finally the fact that many non-state actors, including ISIS and Al Qaeda, may have captured sophisticated anti-aircraft weapons from both the Iraqi and Syrian armies.

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) Republicans have turned the House Benghazi Select Committee into nothing more than a political weapon to score points against Hillary Clinton. In a rare moment of honesty, Republican House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy even admitted as much. Instead of trying to learn important information about what happened or how to keep our US facilities abroad more secure, this select committee has decided to focus on Hillary Clinton. The committee should be closed so that we no longer waste precious taxpayer dollars for more partisan attacks.

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 agree with Hillary Clinton that we need a "Manhattan-like Project" focused on this important aspect of our security while protecting our privacy. I believe more can be done to balance the real and dangerous threats that end-to-end encryption protect with the need for an individual's privacy. Technology companies must be at the table with the national security agencies so that any solution leaves American's privacy intact while allowing intelligence authorities the tools they need to stop future terrorist plots.

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

A) I support taking steps to close the detention center at Guantanamo Bay. We continue to see that the very existence of it is a recruitment tool for those terrorists that wish us harm.

Gun violence:

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

A) I was named after my great-uncle who was murdered with a gun. To me, working to reduce gun violence in our communities is not about politics but a very personal matter.

That's why my very first speech on the House Floor was on curbing gun violence calling for universal background checks and a ban on assault weapons. I was proud to sponsor legislation in Congress to expand background checks, restrict large capacity ammunition clips and close the gun show loophole. My work and votes in Congress earned me an 'F' from the NRA.

Senseless gun violence is happening daily across America, hurting our communities, schools, even our children in their own homes. We can't prevent every instance of violence, but inaction is unacceptable. We must work to enact safe, sensible gun policy to reduce gun violence, while preserving our constitutional right to bear arms.

I would like Congress to pass a comprehensive gun violence prevention package that includes mandatory background checks for all gun purchases, a ban on assault weapons and ammunition, enhanced gun lock and gun safety technology, and increased funding for mental health services.

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

A) I do support keeping guns out of the hands of suspected terrorists – people prohibited from boarding planes. That's just plain common sense. Unfortunately, the NRA and its allies in Congress have continued to block this legislation from even coming to a vote. This is unacceptable. We need a leader in Washington who will stand up to the gun lobby and demand responsible gun laws.

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 is a present threat, not a prospective fear, to our nation and our children's future. Equally important to understand, the scientific evidence that the current accelerating rate of change is connected to human activity is overwhelming. This truth should not be a partisan issue.

It's our moral obligation to future generations to protect our air and water, conserve our natural spaces and urgently address climate change. Acting responsibly today will promote economic growth, create jobs and ensure our global leadership in energy and other fields. Climate change remains an urgent, pressing threat and we must act without delay to address the real threat of climate change.

In Congress, I supported policies and investments that move our country toward a clean energy economy and a reduced carbon footprint. I also applaud the President's announcement that EPA will work with our energy sector to curb carbon pollution. Reducing carbon pollution improves our air and helps spur important investments in green technology that is critical to reducing our dependence on fossil fuel. I also voted against the attempts to weaken clean air and clean water protections and against defunding critical environmental regulations. And I stood firm against the Republican proposed \$300 million cut to the Great Lakes Restoration Fund and worked hard until this crucial funding was restored.

I support the Paris Climate Change agreement and the need for the global community to urgently tackle the problem of climate change.

Economy:

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

A) Put simply, our outdated tax code is straining our economic recovery, restricting job growth and hurting communities. I believe we must work to pass comprehensive tax reform. The United States' current tax system is outdated, riddled with excessive loopholes and overly complex. Taxes for our middle class families are too high and at 35 percent, our corporate tax rate is among the highest in the world, which impacts our global competitiveness.

One important place I would like to start is to pass the “Buffett Rule.” The Rule is simple – CEOs like Warren Buffett shouldn’t be paying a lower tax rate than their secretaries and millions of other middle class Americans. Having a fair tax code is essential to allowing all Americans to benefit from a stronger and secure economy.

In Congress, I was also proud to introduce a bipartisan measure to ensure that small businesses' tax structure is addressed during tax reform. With so many American’s employed by small businesses I didn’t think that lobbyists for the largest corporations should be the only ones involved in rewriting the tax code.

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

A) Social Security is a promise we made to our seniors, and is a promise worth keeping. The multi-generational commitment of Social Security is a foundation of our social contract, and a defining feature of our national prosperity. Underlying this program along with Medicare is the deeply rooted belief that all seniors, the people who supported our families and developed our communities, deserve the dignity for a secure retirement and affordable health care.

More than a third of today’s seniors depend on Social Security to keep them out of poverty. That’s one reason I oppose raising the retirement age or attempts to privatize Social Security. It is our duty to honor the generations that came before us and worked to secure our freedom, and it is also our duty to provide critical safety nets that help our older generation retire with dignity.

Still, I believe there are measures we can take to strengthen social security. For example lifting the salary cap on people earning more than \$1 million a year. Someone earning a million dollars a year *should* pay the same Social Security rate as hard working, middle class families.

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

A) The middle class cannot afford another financial crisis created by the largest banks that acted recklessly with our economy. I support strengthening the rules put in place by Dodd-Frank and ensuring that we no longer have any institutions that can bring down the country’s economy.

That's why I believe we need to create disincentives for big banks taking imprudent risks, as well as creating mechanisms for holding banks, and individuals, accountable when they do take improper risk (and before they damage our entire economic system). I support mechanisms like "risk fees" or other tools that will help tackle the dangerous risks and irresponsible behavior that we've seen the Wall Street banks engage in.

Health care:

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

A) I oppose repealing the Affordable Care Act and in Congress repeatedly voted against Republican attempts to repeal the law. Every American deserves access to quality, affordable health care. And while not perfect, the Affordable Care Act represents an important step forward in providing health care to millions of Americans. The Affordable Care Act allows kids to stay on their parents plan until age 26, eliminates pre-existing conditions as a barrier to getting insurance, prohibits insurance companies from kicking people off their insurance when they get sick, and closes the Medicare doughnut hole that affected millions of seniors.

Unfortunately, Republicans in Congress have repeatedly wasted taxpayer time and money, and even shut down the government, in their endless efforts to completely repeal the Affordable Care Act. We simply cannot afford this kind of dysfunction and gridlock.

Rather than partisan attempts to repeal, defund or dismantle healthcare reform, we must focus on working together to improve what is working, fix what is not working and rethink what is not fixable. That's why I helped introduce legislation to repeal the arbitrary medical device tax that hinders medical innovation and I also supported legislation that would ensure that individuals who paid their health insurance premiums, and tried to but could not enroll online, receive retroactive health insurance coverage.

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

A) Absolutely not. I strongly oppose stripping federal funds from Planned Parenthood, an organization that provides comprehensive health care services to millions of women and their families. In many places, without Planned Parenthood, these families would have no health care.

I was proud to earn a 100% score from Planned Parenthood while serving in Congress. All women should have the freedom to make their own choices about their bodies without interference from Congress, and Planned Parenthood should be applauded for the wide range of necessary health services they provide to women and men. I will always support a woman's right to choose, and that promise isn't conditional.

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) I applaud the President for taking steps to prevent children from being punished for the failures of partisan gridlock. I believe the DREAM Act is an essential part of a comprehensive immigration solution. Each year, approximately 65,000 undocumented students graduate from high school. By passing the DREAM Act, we can start to provide legitimate pathways to citizenship for these immigrants who were brought here as small children to pursue their dreams and contribute through college or military service.

Education:

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

A) Let me start with the basic principle that in an economy where a college education is almost mandatory to earn a middle class income, we have to aggressively work to make college education more accessible and more affordable to all Americans. And we have to also address the extraordinary current burden student loans are having on countless students and their families.

We should start by acknowledging that the federal government should not be making a profit from student loans, and we should lower interest rates accordingly. I also believe we should link repayment of student loans to individual earnings capacity and expectations, and hold educational institutions accountable for educating their students for success in our global economy.
