



MOBILIZE MISSOURI

U.S. Congress Candidate Survey 2018

Candidate Name: Cort VanOstran

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TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Survey:

1. How would you incentivize clean power initiatives?

As a member of Congress, I would seek membership in and support the efforts of the bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus in their efforts to depoliticize the issue of climate change and draft legislation that promotes innovation and economically-viable solutions to address climate change. I support legislation that would impose a steadily-rising fee on carbon, with revenue returned to taxpayers.

2. Where should the money for infrastructure investment come from?

Maintaining and updating our nation’s infrastructure is a primary function of government. Efforts to privatize infrastructure investment should be scrutinized.

Yes or no:

3. Do you consider the internet a public utility?

Yes No

4. Do you support net neutrality?

Yes No

5. Do you support the expansion of light rail transit?

Yes No

I support light rail and other forms of public transportation in general as a means of providing opportunity for under-resourced communities while also offering more sustainable transportation alternatives.

6. Do you support electrical grid modernization?

Yes No



HEALTHCARE

Survey:

7. What solutions can the federal government offer to address the heroin epidemic?

The opioid epidemic is a public health crisis. Life expectancy in our country is going down for the first time in generations. The federal government can hold big pharmaceutical companies accountable for irresponsible prescription practice. It can adequately fund the Office of National Drug Control Policy and the National Institute of Health. And it can continue to provide and expedite grants to states, allowing Missouri to fund opioid-related education and training and ensure Medicaid recipients have the access they need to addiction treatments. The federal government must also support expanded access to Naloxone.

8. How would you address the dearth of adequate healthcare in rural areas?

While this doesn't characterize my district, I was born in a more rural area, and this issue is close to my heart. My mother, who lived in outstate Missouri and recently died of cancer, was able to access the care she needed thanks to the Affordable Care Act. My motivation in running for Congress is to strengthen the ACA, protect and expand Medicare and Medicaid, lower premiums and extend coverage regardless of income or pre-existing health conditions. These are solutions for all Americans – and they will positively impact the state of healthcare in rural areas.

Yes or no:

9. Do you support the negotiation of Medicare/Medicaid drug prices with Canada?

Yes No

10. Do you support the legalization of marijuana?

Yes No

11. Should the government mandate that all state prescription drug monitoring programs are accessible to health care providers and other prescribers?

Yes No

12. Do you support Medicare for All or a comparable universal healthcare solution?

Yes No

13. The Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA) is a federal law that requires anyone coming to an emergency department to be stabilized and treated, regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay, since 1986 this is an unfunded mandate. Do you support



funding this mandate until a Universal Healthcare Solution is enacted to ease the cost burden on urban and rural hospitals?

Yes No

I don't think this is the most effective fix to our problems. This will be as difficult to pass in Congress as a more long-term solution, and I'd rather expend time and energy promoting a more long-term solution rather than this stop-gap measure.



ENVIRONMENT

Survey:

14. How should state and federal governments deal with clean water issues like Flint, MI?

Ensuring access to safe, clean water is a fundamental responsibility of government and the local, state, and federal authorities have an obligation to fix problems like those in Flint and to prevent them from occurring elsewhere.

15. What should be the position the federal government takes on climate change? Why?

The government’s position should be (1) climate change is real and (2) the whole of government has an obligation to take action to research it, understand it, and implement solutions to mitigate the threat to our planet. I am extremely concerned about this administration’s efforts to slash environmental protections that keep Missouri beautiful and our families safe. We should participate in the Paris Agreement and be a champion and world leader in the global energy economy.

Yes or no:

16. Would you suggest federal involvement in dealing with West Lake landfill?

Yes No

17. Do you support private companies being allowed to drill on public lands, protected areas, or parks?

Yes No

18. Do you support coal/oil industry subsidies?

Yes No

19. Should we continue to fund the cost of national parks?

Yes No

ECONOMIC & LABOR POLICY

Survey:

20. How do you think we can plan our economy for changes to industries/loss of jobs due to automation and the obsolescence of the nation's industrial sector?

I think the government should incentivize the entrepreneurial and innovative potential of our nation's economy.

21. What is your approach to tax policy?

I don't support any tax reform that is not revenue neutral. The recent tax reform bill gave tax breaks to corporations while mortgaging my generation's future. Several proposals I do support include closing corporate tax loopholes, expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit (the GAIN Act), eliminating or increasing the annual cap on payroll taxes, raising the capital gains rate, eliminating or reducing oil subsidies, and capping the mortgage interest deduction.

22. What role should unions play in our future? Please include your thoughts on Right to Work legislation.

Unions play a vital role in providing a voice to our nation's workforce, and I am proud that the Missouri Teamsters voted to endorse me based on my strong support of the labor movement. Right to Work is wrong.

Yes or no:

23. Do you support an increase to the federal minimum wage? If so, what dollar amount?

Yes No \$ 15

24. Do you support a Financial Transaction Tax (FTT)?

Yes No

I'd have to learn more about this proposal.

25. Should there be increased enforcement of antitrust laws?

Yes No

26. Do we need to decrease federal spending?

Yes No

This question is difficult to answer as a binary. We have an obligation to spend taxpayers' money wisely. I certainly wouldn't be opposed to decreasing federal spending if we were able to provide better government services in a more cost-effective manner.

27. Should we continue to fund Medicare and Social Security; the so-called entitlements?

Yes No



POLICING/JUSTICE

Survey:

28. What are your thoughts on reducing the prison population, and recidivism rates in the US?

This is an important issue which has bipartisan appeal. Red and blue states are innovating to decrease their prison populations. A cultural shift needs to occur within the correctional system to emphasize and incentivize rehabilitation. As a start, corrections officers and institutions should be evaluated based not just on their ability to manage facilities, but on their ability to reform inmates who are in them.

29. How would you improve equity within our Court system with reference to plea deals, 3-strikes laws, and mandatory minimums?

We imprison more of our own people than any other country — this disproportionately impacts people of color and the poor. I favor abolishing federal mandatory minimums and reforming our justice system, which favors plea deals over trials on the merits.

Yes or no:

30. Are you in favor of for profit prisons?

Yes ___ No ___

31. Would you support restoring the vote to felons who have served their time?

Yes ___ No ___

32. Are you in favor of federal legislation to remove the “felon box” from job applications?

Yes ___ No ___

33. Do you think police departments need military grade equipment?

Yes ___ No ___

The answer is almost always no, although occasional exceptions for highly specialized units in certain geographic areas (e.g., counter-terrorism units in New York City, etc.) are sometimes appropriate.

34. Do you support ending the death penalty?

Yes ___ No ___



35. Do you support creating a committee to study and make suggestions on how to reduce crime in prisons?

Yes No

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS & GENDER ISSUES

Survey:

36. Where do you stand on reproductive freedom for women? Please discuss such topics as: abortion, ease of access to birth control, fact-based sex education, and rights/responsibilities of fathers? Please add how you will present your position to voters with different opinions.

I am proud to have earned the endorsement of NARAL, the nation’s leading pro-choice organization, based on my commitment to protecting women’s constitutional right to make their own choices about their bodies and their healthcare.

37. What would your public and private response be if allegations of sexual harassment were made against a colleague in government or a member of your political party?

My response would be the same both publicly and privately and irrespective of political affiliation. As the #MeToo movement has made clear, sexual harassment is endemic to industries where there are power dynamics and gender imbalances – hallmarks of Capitol Hill. This must change. I will do everything I can to both empower and protect those who are victimized, and will support efforts to improve workplace protections in the private sector.

Yes or no:

38. Will you protect access to contraception and support mandated insurance coverage, state or private?

Yes No

39. Do you support revoking tax credits for alternatives to abortion agencies, specifically, crisis pregnancy centers which have no state regulations?

Yes No

40. Do you support mandating that medically accurate sex education be taught in every public school district?

Yes No

41. Do you support mandatory sentences for those convicted of sexual assault?

Yes No

Sexual assault must be treated with the utmost seriousness. I strongly support sentencing ranges that reflect the egregiousness of sexual violence; but as stated above with regard to mandatory



minimums more generally, I do not support federal mandatory minimum sentences that may imperil due process rights and often disproportionately affect poor or minority communities.

42. Do you think federal civil rights law should be expanded to protect transgender Americans?

Yes No

ETHICS/TRANSPARENCY

Survey:

43. What approach do you take in deciding which campaign contributions to accept?

I believe the *Citizens United* decision is a major contributor to Congress' dysfunction today and I am proud to be endorsed by End Citizens United, the group devoted to ending the unlimited dark money that is flowing into our system and eroding our democracy. I have pledged not to accept corporate PAC money.

44. Discuss what truthfulness in campaign ads means to you and how you have put that into practice.

My campaign ads are and will be focused on who I am and my contrast with the Republican incumbent, not on my Democratic opponents. I know "truth" can seem relative in the post-Trump world, but I have a hard time even answering this question, as the truth still seems fairly straightforward to me. My campaign is based on a desire to hold our politicians accountable – the only way to do so is by being accountable myself.

Yes or no:

45. Do you support publicly funded elections?

Yes No

46. Do you support a standardized code of conduct for all elected officials at a federal level?

Yes No

I'd have to learn more. Who would write and enforce such a code?

47. Will you release your tax returns?

Yes No

48. Will you commit to holding town halls with all members of your constituency?

Yes No

How many? As many as possible! I have pledged to hold one at every major recess opportunity.

49. Do you have a plan for remaining engaged with your district while in D.C.?

Yes No

A written, formal plan seems presumptive – but since this is one of my primary frustrations with Rep. Ann Wagner, I will make it a priority to listen and be accountable to my constituents.

50. Do you believe Citizens United should be overturned?

Yes No



51. Do you support expanding voter ID laws?

Yes ___ No ___

I support efforts to expand access to voting, including early voting, voting by mail, moving election day to a weekend (or making it a federal holiday), and other proposals that encourage more citizens to participate in our democracy.

52. Do you support an inclusive, clean census, counting all diverse members of our society in census?

Yes ___ No ___



VOTER ENGAGEMENT

Survey:

53. Much of our population either votes along party lines, or doesn't vote because they don't believe either main party serves their interest. Do you think it's more important to reach across the aisle to voters your party has lost over time or to invigorate non-affiliated voters?

I think this is a false choice – there's no reason you can't reach across the aisle and invigorate independents. With a commitment to listening to everyone, I think I can do both.

54. What are your strategies to increase voter turnout?

I've made my schedule public and make myself available everywhere I go. I've hired a field coordinator and my team (which includes many volunteers) is knocking on hundreds of doors every day to identify and turn out voters in August and November.

55. How do we make it easier to vote?

Eliminating obstacles to registering and making voting day a federal holiday are a good start. Automatic registration should be the long-term goal. We also need to admit that voter apathy is another reason for low turnout. I hope that listening to citizens and being accessible and responsive to them will increase engagement.

Yes or No:

56. Should voting day be a federal holiday?

Yes No

57. Do you support automatic voter registration?

Yes No

EDUCATION

Survey:

58. Briefly discuss your ideas to ensure that all children have access to equitable education to ensure a well-educated populace?

Strong schools are the foundation of equal opportunity in America. As a product of Missouri's public schools, I will fight to make sure every student has the chance to excel and the skills to succeed in the future. A high quality education is the key to opening the doors of opportunity for our children and securing our nation's economic future.

Ensuring the promise of equal opportunity requires us to recommit ourselves to the mission of our public schools. The zip code in which a child in America is born should not determine the quality of that child's education. I am committed to fully funding our public schools from cradle to college and investing in career and job training opportunities for all working Americans. That also means addressing the student loan crisis, preventing the federal government from profiting off of college students, and fighting to expand the accessibility and affordability of higher education.

59. What are your ideas for improving the academic achievement of students living in poverty?

In addition to the above, I would emphasize the importance of supporting the whole child. All children benefit from an educational approach that supports childrens' social-emotional well-being as well as their academic achievement. While such pedagogical approaches are determined at the district level, ensuring that schools have the resources to provide counseling and support to families beyond the classroom is important.

Yes or no:

60. Do you support public funding for school vouchers for private and charter schools?

Yes ___ No

I do not support voucher funding. There are certain geographic areas where partial government funding of certain competitive charter schools makes sense; a one-size-fits-all approach will not work with this issue. In general, though, we must ensure that every single child has access to quality public education.

61. Should state universities and trade schools be a part of our public education system?

Yes No ___

62. Should we add educational assistance programs specifically for people who are being downsized due to industry obsolescence?

Yes No ___

63. Should teachers carry firearms in school?

Yes___ No__x__

64. Teachers often work in other industries due to being underpaid. The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) acts often mandate that earned Social Security is not available to draw on for retirees. Do you support legislation to correct this while ensuring the “no double-dipping” standard set in WEP/GPO?

Yes__x__ No_____

I support repeal of the GPO/WEP.

IMMIGRATION

Survey:

65. What approach should the U.S. take in our refugee resettlement program?

America has an obligation to accept refugees and support them. We have a proud tradition of this in St. Louis, and it’s an integral part of who we are as a country.

66. What would be your approach to dealing with illegal immigration and the policies surrounding it?

Our immigration policies should reflect the role and contributions immigrants have made to our country. Instead of building walls and inciting hate, we should work to maximize the potential of everyone and treat people with dignity and respect. We can do that by passing the DREAM Act, ensuring that those who are fleeing violence and persecution are given due process, and ending the militarization of our immigration enforcement system that separates families.

Yes or no:

67. Do you support a clean DACA bill with a path to citizenship?

Yes_x__ No_____

68. Do you support a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants already within our borders?

Yes_x__ No_____

69. Regarding what is known as “The Wall,” should the existing structures along our southern border be expanded and fortified?

Yes___ No_____

I think a physical barrier is not only an ineffective way to secure our border, it is infeasible. I do believe technology can and should be deployed more effectively to secure our border.

RACIAL JUSTICE SECTION

Survey

70. What is the role of the federal government in addressing racial inequities in access to healthcare, employment, housing, and living wages? Discuss some key policies that you support that would reduce racial gaps in these areas.

We must acknowledge the role that race continues to play in determining outcomes in America. The federal government has a role to play in identifying and eliminating systemic barriers to accessing affordable healthcare, jobs, wages, and housing. Federal policies should remove barriers to homeownership, expand opportunities for quality jobs and access to affordable educational opportunities (including expanding consumer protections), improve policies that provide for greater diversity in federal and state contracting practices, and expand access to retirement investment programs.

Yes or no:

71. Do you support federal funding to remedy food deserts in predominantly black neighborhoods?

Yes No

72. Will you commit to making racial inclusivity a priority when recruiting your own staff?

Yes No

73. Arrests for drug possession and selling are disproportionately skewed to imprison minorities, essentially making drug use and selling quasi-legal for white Americans. Do you support policy changes to reduce this inequity?

Yes No



CONCLUSION

71. Why are you seeking the endorsement of Mobilize Missouri?

As a progressive running for office in Missouri, it seems like a good fit! I've participated in the organization's events, enjoyed getting to know your members, and would be honored to represent and promote the issues that matter to Mobilize Missouri.

72. What are your top three legislative goals when elected?

1. Expanding access to quality, affordable healthcare to all Americans.
2. Investing in education to ensure every child has access to quality education from cradle to college.
3. Eliminating the plague of gun violence in our schools and communities.

Yes or no/fill in the blank:

74. Do you have a fundraising plan?

Yes No

75. Do you have a campaign manager?

Yes No

76. What amount of time per week do you envision dedicating to campaigning/call time?

I devote many hours per week to call time, and have done so since July 2017. I also dedicate significant time to knocking on doors, making voter outreach calls, and making myself available to voters and listening to their concerns.

77. Do you have access to or plan to access VAN or some other voter information/address list?

Yes No

78. What is the size of your universe?

This is sensitive campaign information – willing to discuss if endorsed.

79. What is your goal number of votes needed to win?

This is also sensitive campaign information. However, we have tabulated this number and have a plan for success in both the primary and general elections. Again, willing to discuss further if endorsed.

80. Do you have someone organizing volunteers for your campaign?

Yes No



81. Are you willing endorse the winner of your primary race if you are not the selected candidate?

Yes No

Please use this last opportunity to discuss anything else about your issues, principles, or differentiating factors from opponents that you want your constituents to know that may not have been covered in our questions.

My campaign is being run and staffed by a team of highly capable, devoted women and men, and demonstrates my ability to attract talent as well as lead and empower them. The campaign has received over 1,500 individual small dollar donations, and small dollar donors comprise more than 75% of our total campaign contributors. This demonstrates the breadth and depth of our grassroots support.

My team's hard work and success has put this race on the map in unprecedented ways, and the Cook Political Report credited our campaign specifically when it moved Missouri's Second District away from the "Solid Republican" column. We can get this done, but only if we work together. I am confident I'll be able to keep this momentum going with the help of grassroots organizations like Mobilize Missouri.