



Congressional Questionnaire: District 4

District 4 Congressional Candidates (in alphabetical order)

Christopher H. Smith (Republican)
Steven Welzer (Green)
Joshua M. Zeitz (Democrat)

1. The No Child Left Behind Act is set to be reauthorized in 2009. What kind of reforms, if any, will you be advocating during the legislative process?

Christopher Smith-- *No Response Received*

Steven Welzer-

I believe the No Child Left Behind Act has many problems, especially the section that gives the military access to student records. I strongly oppose its over-reliance on high stakes standardized tests. It lacks the perspective that Federal policy on education should act principally to ensure equal access to a quality education. The Green Party calls for equitable state and national funding. Parental involvement is important – schools should be controlled by parent-teacher governing bodies. We oppose vouchers, or any scheme that will transfer money out of the public school system. We encourage more programmatic support and decision- making to the true grassroots level – the classroom teacher and school principal.

Joshua M. Zeitz-- *No Response Received*

2. What is your plan for resolving America's energy crisis?

Christopher Smith-- *No Response Received*

Steven Welzer-

Make innovative use of the tax code and economic development systems to promote more efficient manufacturing while saving energy through environmental retrofits and industrial co-generation of electricity. Increase investment in construction of “green buildings” and energy efficient homes and offices through innovative financing and incentives, improved building operations, and updated codes and standards. Link higher energy standards to consumer/manufacturing incentives that increase demand for new durable goods and increase investment in US factories. Diversify energy sources by promoting existing technologies in solar, biomass and wind, while setting ambitious but achievable goals for increasing renewable generation. Invest in effective multimodal transportation networks including

bicycle, local bus/rail transit, regional high-speed rail. Provide incentives for converting domestic assembly lines to manufacture highly efficient cars.

Joshua M. Zeitz-- *No Response Received*

3. Recently the Supreme Court backed Indiana's law requiring all voters to show photo identification at the polls. Where do you stand on voter photo ID requirements?

Christopher Smith-- *No Response Received*

Steven Welzer-

Election laws must strike the balance between ensuring that every eligible voter can vote and preventing voter fraud. It is the government's responsibility to guarantee that any ID policy will not prevent an otherwise eligible voter from voting. The requirement that voters present a physical form of identification (i.e. drivers license, voter registration card with a picture, etc.) is a means to ensure that the person attempting to vote is actually an eligible voter and will only vote once. States with this policy have an obligation to ensure all citizens receive a state identification card free of charge. Charging citizens for a required ID is tantamount to a Jim Crow era poll tax.

Joshua M. Zeitz-- *No Response Received*

4. The US Census Bureau has reported that 47 million Americans are uninsured, almost a 5 percent increase 2005. What kind of health care reform do you support to combat the growing number of uninsured Americans?

Christopher Smith-- *No Response Received*

Steven Welzer-

I advocate guaranteeing universal health care with a single-payer system. A national health insurance system has been implemented by our neighbor, Canada, and most other advanced countries. Objective measures of effectiveness indicate that they get superior results relative to our expensive and chaotic system. Why can't the richest country in the world replicate that success? There will always be room for some private insurance because a national health system cannot provide all possible medical procedures to everyone. But a national health care system can and will take care of our basic needs. We need to affirm that basic health care is a right, and not a commodity to be dispensed or refused based on a private company's profit margin.

Joshua M. Zeitz-- *No Response Received*

5. Should the federal government reassesses the existing immigration laws and reform them as warranted to face 21st century issues? What are your ideas to implement such a reform?

Christopher Smith-- *No Response Received*

Steven Welzer-

The Green Party advocates immigration policies that promote fairness, non-discrimination and family reunification. We call for permanent border passes to all citizens of Mexico and Canada whose identity can be traced and verified. Work permits for citizens of Mexico and Canada must be easily obtainable, thereby decriminalizing the act of gainful employment. We advocate an end to employer sanctions, which have been shown to hurt not only undocumented workers but also U.S. – born workers (especially those of color). A fair and equitable legalization program will provide equal access to working people of all nationalities, not tied to a specific employer or guest worker program. Programs involving temporary worker status must include the option of permanent residency for immigrants already in the US.

Joshua M. Zeitz-- *No Response Received*

6. The majority of the American public believes the US is in a recession. What are the two most important things that can be done to create jobs and economic growth?

Christopher Smith-- *No Response Received*

Steven Welzer-

- 1) A national economic stimulus package focused on retrofitting residential and commercial buildings to conserve energy and to use locally generated power from solar, wind, and other renewable sources. Such a stimulus package – unlike the one passed by Congress this year - would simultaneously pump up the economy, create new “green” jobs, spur innovation and investment in conservation and renewable energy, and save homeowners and businesses money with every utility bill.
- 2) A federally initiated campaign to expedite mass production of electric vehicles, along with renewed investment in clean mass transit (during World War II the entire auto industry converted from making cars to making military vehicles in only six months!). Such a campaign would include large tax incentives for both purchasers and producers of zero emissions vehicles.

Joshua M. Zeitz-- *No Response Received*

7. What should be our short term and long term strategic goals in Iraq and the Middle East?

Christopher Smith-- *No Response Received*

Steven Welzer-

The operating costs of our military presence in Iraq are almost \$200 billion a year, with the total incurred costs approaching an astounding \$3 trillion. I advocate a rapid negotiated withdrawal from Iraq followed by UN sponsored elections. All our troops and contractors should be out of Iraq by the end of 2009; then our bases there should be shut down. Our military presence should be replaced by extensive diplomatic, economic and political efforts to help the Iraqis recover.

Our long-term strategic interests in the Middle East hinge on resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The United States should cease interfering with international efforts to resolve the conflict. We should support the peace groups in the area that are working toward a two-state solution.

Joshua M. Zeitz-- *No Response Received*

8. With the baby boomer generation nearing retirement, the number of people collecting Social Security is expected to increase to 84 million. There are serious concerns about the stability of the Social Security fund in the near future. What reforms would you support, if any, to the Social Security system?

Christopher Smith-- *No Response Received*

Steven Welzer-

Social Security is a vital program that has dramatically cut poverty rates among the elderly. It is critical that the public protections of Social Security are not privatized and subjected to increased risk. The bottom 20% of senior citizens get roughly 80% of their income from Social Security; and without Social Security, nearly 70% of black elderly and 60% of Latino elderly households would be in poverty. To solidify the system's funding, lift the cap on Social Security taxes, which currently are regressive in nature (they are levied only on wage income, not on property income, and the cap on wages subject to the tax means that while most workers pay the tax on every dollar of their income, the highest earners pay it only on a portion).

Joshua M. Zeitz-- *No Response Received*

9. Please explain why you do or do not support setting spending limits for political campaigns and providing public funding for all candidates who agree to take no private contributions.

Christopher Smith-- *No Response Received*

Steven Welzer-

I support the initiative known as "Clean Elections." This gives candidates the option to qualify for public funding to run their campaigns. A candidate qualifies by collecting a set number of small contributions from people in their district. If that candidate is outspent by a privately funded opponent, a matching grant is provided, up to a limit. Extra funding is also available if there is independent spending against a candidate by an outside group or individual. Candidates who choose not to participate in the Clean Elections system can raise money from private donors, but must follow state campaign

finance limits. Clean Elections laws must be voluntary to comply with the Supreme Court's 1976 Buckley v. Valeo ruling, which specifically approved of voluntary public financing systems.

Joshua M. Zeitz-- *No Response Received*

10. How can civil liberties be preserved while giving our government the necessary tools to fight terrorism?

Christopher Smith-- *No Response Received*

Steven Welzer-

My concern in this area is that civil liberties are eroding due to misguided policies associated with the "war on terrorism" and new technologies that allow for easy invasion of privacy. Americans of Arab descent and Muslim-Americans are especially feeling the brunt of these dragnet, arbitrary practices. I support the restoration of civil liberties and the repeal of the Patriot Act, including an end to secret detentions, arrests without charges, restricting access to attorneys, military tribunals for civilians, misuse of non-combatant status, and the shredding of "probable cause" determinations. These policies represent a diminishment of judicial authority in favor of concentrated power in the executive branch. Moreover, from a practical standpoint, dragnet practices are wasteful and reduce the likelihood of apprehending violent criminals.

Joshua M. Zeitz-- *No Response Received*