



## Congressional Questionnaire: District 7

### District 7 Congressional Candidates (in alphabetical order)

**Thomas D. Abrams (Prosperity Not War)**  
**Dean Greco (All-day Breakfast)**  
**Michael P. Hsing (Hsing for Congress)**  
**Leonard Lance (Republican)**  
**Linda Stender (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?**

Thomas D. Abrams-

The No Child Left Behind Act is unconstitutional and must be abolished. The Constitution grants no power to the Federal government to involve itself with education or schooling.

Dean Greco- *No Response Received*

Michael P. Hsing-

The No Child Left Behind Act was enacted with a good purpose, but it needs reform to achieve our desired result. The current testing-based system has unfortunately been circumvented by certain states and schools who lower testing standards to get by, thus resulting in poorer student performance, not better. Though standardized testing may always be necessary, I believe we should include other benchmarks, such as college acceptance rates, when we evaluate school performance. For younger students, we should consider allowing parents to provide feedback and rate teachers on their methods and results. These reforms will allow us to have a clearer view of school performance, allowing us to reward and encourage quality teachers, ultimately resulting in better education for all of America's children.

Leonard Lance-

I favor reauthorization of an improved NCLB in 2009 based upon the experience of the last seven years. The bipartisan Aspen Commission on NCLB, chaired by former Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson and former Georgia Governor Roy Barnes, has recommended reforming the adequate yearly progress calculations so that significant progress is recognized in formerly struggling schools. The Aspen Commission also recommends voluntary national standards to reflect high expectations, with states having the right to keep their existing standards if those standards are rigorous. Other recommendations concern English language learners, a growing percentage of school children,

and students with disabilities. Also, we must fund NCLB appropriately and ensure that teachers are not merely forced to “teach to the test.”

Linda Stender-

The No Child Left Behind law has been seriously undermined by the Bush Administration’s failure to fund it, and we must reform this unfunded federal mandate to give schools credit for any progress they make. In addition to fully funding NCLB, I will fight to give states and school districts greater flexibility in implementing the law and support a variety of accountability and assessment systems. We must replace the adequate yearly progress formula so schools are not unfairly penalized when they are found to be improving test scores.

## **2. What is your plan for resolving America’s energy crisis?**

Thomas D. Abrams-

The Federal government should concentrate on those things it is constitutionally permitted to do. Meddling in the energy business is not one of them. Therefore, the Department of Energy should be abolished. The free market, as it does every day with billions of things, will supply our needs. Let government uphold the sanctity of contracts and prosecute fraud and criminal activity. Alternative sources of energy will come on stream as the market demands, so government should not by trying to “plan” this economic sector. Central planning, as the Soviets clearly demonstrated, doesn’t work because markets are simply too complex to control.

Dean Greco- *No Response Received*

Michael P. Hsing-

In the short term, we need to increase domestic oil production and refinement, release more of our strategic oil reserves, implement a “carbon cap-and-dividend” program, and strictly regulate price gouging by oil companies. Next, I suggest that we research and invest more in other renewable energy solutions before we consider clean coal, nuclear power, and offshore drilling. For the long term, we should focus on renewable natural energy programs and provide incentives for companies that utilize “green” energy technologies. This will not only solve America’s energy crisis in a sustainable way, it will also create new industries and stimulate future economic growth.

Leonard Lance-

Federal tax credits for hybrid and hydrogen vehicles should be increased. Higher CAFE standards for cars, trucks and SUVs should be set. We should provide increased incentives for renewable energy sources like solar, wind and geothermal power. The development of cellulosic biofuels should be encouraged as opposed to corn based ethanol because of increased corn price for food. Two trillion barrels of oil currently locked in oil shale should be explored in an environmentally responsible way. I oppose drilling in ANWR or off our coast. Tariff barriers that hinder Brazil and other countries from

importing alternative energy should be eliminated and deposits into the Strategic Petroleum Reserve temporarily suspended.

Linda Stender-

We must develop a comprehensive energy plan that brings down gas prices and invests in renewable energy sources and increased efficiency. We must work to end our dependence on foreign oil and provide real relief for families struggling to afford \$4 a gallon. Instead of tax breaks for the same Big Oil companies reporting record profits, we must encourage investment in hybrid vehicles, as well as wind, solar, and geothermal energy sources. Oil companies should drill on the 68 million acres of land currently leased but not used for drilling. We must work to make America energy independent in ten years, transitioning away from fossil fuels to create a cleaner, greener world for our children and grandchildren.

**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?**

Thomas D. Abrams-

Article I, Section 4 of the Constitution leaves the times, places, and manner of holding elections to the state legislatures, but Congress can alter state election laws. Identification is a perfunctory matter, therefore, I would leave the decision to each individual state to determine its particular needs.

Dean Greco- *No Response Received*

Michael P. Hsing-

There are of course pros and cons of photo ID requirements, but after weighing between potential election fraud and possible discrimination and inconvenience, I believe that we still should require voters to present valid photo ID at polling places. The current voting process is outdated and flawed in that it is difficult to verify voters' identities, allowing for both accidental errors and intentional fraud. Implementing an ID check will eliminate this problem. As long as "all" voters are required to present identification without exceptions, the system will remain fair and unbiased and allow for a smoother, more confident polling system.

Leonard Lance-

States should have the right to protect the integrity of the voting process so long as measures they employ are nondiscriminatory. In upholding Indiana's voter identification law last April the Supreme Court, in a decision by Justice John Paul Stevens, said that the risk of voter fraud is real. The Indiana law contains safeguards so that provisional ballots can be cast by those without identification. I believe a range of broadly accessible documents should be accepted as identification, such as photo drivers' licenses, student identification cards and employee badges. The integrity of the ballot and universal voter participation should not be at odds with each other and indeed can be complementary in our society.

Linda Stender-

I oppose any efforts that hinder American citizens' right to vote.

**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?**

Thomas D. Abrams-

Federal government healthcare insurance is unconstitutional and should be phased out without jeopardizing people reliant on the current system. Aside from this, Medicare, Medicaid, and subsidized employer insurance, have made health care a third-party-payer system. When someone else is paying the bill, people, naturally, become insensitive to frequency of use. Combine increased demand with the added cost of administration required to validate services and prices go up.

Reallocate \$800 billion a year spent on the useless military empire and use some of the funds to transition to fee-for-service health care. Major medical should be funded by low-cost, high-deductible policies. "Bad-outcome" insurance could cover high-risk procedures to reduce physician malpractice insurance costs. Charitably supported clinics can continue to meet the needs of the destitute.

Dean Greco- *No Response Received*

Michael P. Hsing-

I recommend that we implement a "tiered" universal healthcare system that will encourage people to treat their illnesses in the early stages with simple clinical visits, instead of costly emergency hospitalizations. The basic level of the plan will cover physician or clinical visits for preventive care, generic drugs, and vital operations, at low or no cost to all Americans. Higher tier policies, with higher premiums, can include more comprehensive care such as premium drugs, extended hospitalizations, elective surgery, and other higher-cost non-critical procedures. This way, we can maintain the high quality of service offered by America's best care providers while ensuring affordability and freedom of choice for American patients.

Leonard Lance-

Health care must be accessible to all Americans, who should continue to have the option of tax-free employer-based coverage. Coverage by employers, especially small business, should be expanded through pooling and portability, available across state lines. Health savings accounts and tax credits should be examined and the safety of the drug supply ensured, generic and otherwise. I support a Guaranteed Access Plan within each state whereby a nonprofit corporation would contract with insurers to cover patients who have been denied coverage because of pre-existing conditions or for other reasons and could join with other state plans to lower overhead. I favor tort reform, the expanded use of technology systems and Medicare and Medicaid reform, including non-payment for preventable medical errors, mismanagement and fraud.

Linda Stender-

Our health care system is broken. I support a system of shared responsibility, in which we provide every American access to quality, affordable healthcare. We must maintain choice in coverage and work to control skyrocketing costs. No parent should be forced to decide between taking their child to the doctor or filling up a tank of gas. We must ensure that individuals and families are not shut out of insurance markets because of a current illness or pre-existing medical condition. I support fully funding and expanding the State Children's Healthcare Insurance Program (SCHIP) to include an additional 100,000 uninsured New Jersey children.

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

Thomas D. Abrams-

The Constitution grants NO power to the Federal government to legislate in the area of immigration. It only deals with the naturalization of citizens. According to the 10<sup>th</sup> Amendment, the power to deal with immigration belongs to the states or the people. It is up to the states, I feel, to make rules for immigration onto their sovereign domain. The "illegal" immigration issue is driven by xenophobia and a concern that social services are being overburdened. Xenophobia is not new since it existed with the Irish, Italians, Chinese, Japanese, etc. They all eventually assimilated. However, there was no welfare state when they arrived, so hopping on the "freebie" bandwagon was never in question. If government welfare were abolished, there would be no "illegal" immigration issue.

Dean Greco- *No Response Received*

Michael P. Hsing-

To fix our immigrant problems, we need to reform our flawed system and also handle the issue of illegal immigrants. Streamlining our current procedures will make it easier for qualified immigrants to apply for legal citizenship. Increasing the quotas for immigrants with certain desired skills can enhance our workforce to better suit the needs of future industries. We should not offer amnesty to illegal immigrants; however, we can provide a pathway to citizenship that requires them to pay a "legalization fee", file the proper paperwork, and "get in line". We should also secure our borders, not by building an ineffective wall, but by using a high-tech, cost-effective "virtual wall" (including border patrol blimps, and ground-penetrating radar to detect tunnels) to prevent illegal immigration more effectively.

Leonard Lance-

Securing the borders can be done electronically and by adequate funding on the ground and for training facilities and US Attorney's offices in border states. Reform should include a reliable biometric employment verification system and prosecuting "bad actor" employers. A temporary workers program should reflect the labor needs of the US in both high-tech and low skilled agricultural and non-agricultural sectors while protecting opportunities for US workers. All criminal aliens should be prosecuted and deported; all other undocumented individuals must learn English, pay back taxes and fines, pass a citizenship course and most important of all not receive a green card before those who have been legally waiting in line outside the country.

Linda Stender-

Our immigration system is broken. I support a comprehensive approach to reforming our immigration system. First, we must focus on border security- our border ought to be well protected and orderly. Second, while stricter federal enforcement of immigration law is needed and must be implemented, our government must also crack down on employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants. Third, I do not believe we should offer federal benefits for people here illegally, and believe we must work to bring such people out of the shadows. For those here illegally who are willing to pay taxes, pay fines for breaking the law, and learn English, I support an earned path to citizenship. These people should not be shown favoritism over those who have respected our laws and are waiting in line.

**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?**

Thomas D. Abrams-

Cut Federal government spending by eliminating the military empire of some 700 bases in 130 countries and ending US intervention into the affairs of other countries. It was ineffective in preventing the criminal acts of 9/11 and is only precipitating more ill will and "blowback." The human and financial capital consumed by the military-industrial complex is better spent in the peaceful free market on wealth-producing, job-creating enterprise.

Have money backed 100% by precious metal to circulate in competition with Federal Reserve Notes. This will allow people to retain the value of the savings and help prevent the boom-bust bubbles created by the Federal Reserve inflationary policies.

Dean Greco- *No Response Received*

Michael P. Hsing-

In order to improve our economy, we need to identify our industrial strengths and focus on developing two key areas: renewable energy and agriculture. Though we are among the world leaders in alternative energy development, we need stronger government incentives and support to boost that industry to help both our economy and our environment. The US also has the largest area of fertile cropland on Earth, and we need to strengthen our agriculture industry and become "The Farm and Barn of the World" so that we can not only feed ourselves, but also meet the needs of a growing world. This approach will avoid a losing battle with other nations for low-cost labor while boosting our natural strengths, ensuring short-term growth and long-term stability.

Leonard Lance-

Growth and jobs will increase if we rein in the federal debt, which now stands at almost \$10 trillion. The annual federal deficit declined from \$318 billion in 2005 to \$162 billion in 2007, but will increase to \$410 billion this year. I oppose irresponsible new federal spending such as the 2008 Farm Act of almost \$300 billion. The scandalous earmark process must be completely reformed and military procurement practices changed as part of reining in debt. The second way to strengthen our economy is to keep taxes

as low as possible, strengthen the dollar and lower trade barriers. I favor repeal or significant modification of the Alternative Minimum Tax, which has not been indexed for inflation and which hurts our district disproportionately.

Linda Stender-

The failed policies of the Bush Administration have left our economy in shambles and American families struggling to make ends meet. Americans are hurting from the rising costs of everything from gas to food to healthcare, and they need real relief. We must stop spending \$12 billion a month on a war in Iraq that should never have been waged, and demand a timetable for withdrawal so we may bring our troops home and refocus on domestic priorities. We must work to make America energy independent in ten years, through investments in renewable energy sources and the creation of green collar jobs.

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

Thomas D. Abrams-

Short term: get troops out. Long term: keep troops out. As Jefferson most aptly advised, peace, commerce, honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none. US foreign policy should only include trade, diplomacy, and people-to-people interaction.

Dean Greco- *No Response Received*

Michael P. Hsing-

I believe we should immediately lay out our military and political objectives in Iraq and withdraw our troops by 2011 or sooner. After that, we should maintain a friendly economic and cultural exchange with the Iraqi people, helping them to grow and open their nation as we have previously done with countries like China. Our goal in the Middle East, in both the short and long terms, should be peace. We need to strongly encourage all parties in conflict, such as the Israelis and the PLO, to evaluate their political and social objectives and work aggressively toward lasting and mutually beneficial peace agreements.

Leonard Lance-

Short term I favor leaving Iraq as early as is responsibly possible. Five brigades were withdrawn this summer and further progress continues to occur. The counterinsurgency strategy carried out by General Petraeus has dramatically reduced sectarian and ethnic violence. We must continue to demand greater political accountability by the Shias, Sunnis and Kurds. Iraqi oil revenue surpluses should be used to rebuild the nation. Long term our goals in the Middle East should be peace and security. There needs to be greater diplomatic pressure on Syria and Iran, a country that has exported terror to Iraq and must not be permitted to possess nuclear weapons. Strong support of Israel is essential and the focus on defeating terrorism should shift to Afghanistan.

Linda Stender-

We must demand a timetable for withdrawal from Iraq, so we may bring our troops home safely and soon. The failed policies of the Bush Administration have destabilized the region, emboldened Iran, and put Israel at greater risk to threats from its neighbors as Hezbollah and Hamas gain strength. We must work to stabilize the Middle East and prevent Iran from gaining nuclear weapons. And we must continue America's commitment to protect Israel without qualification.

**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?**

Thomas D. Abrams-

Social Security is unconstitutional and a pyramid or illegal Ponzi scheme to boot. It was destined to fail at its inception, but may have had a better chance of survival if it were not changed from the supplemental income program originally intended by vote-hungry politicians. Federal government assets can be sold and the military empire abolished to raise funds to phase out of the program. People on the program and those near accepting its benefits must not be dislocated. Young people must be allowed to opt out and provide for their own retirements.

Dean Greco- *No Response Received*

Michael P. Hsing-

First of all, we need to immediately stop the Social Security program from bleeding out and collapsing. I support the creation of a dedicated "reserve account" for Social Security funds only. This will prevent politicians and other programs from "robbing" the Social Security accounts and causing the depleted situation we have today. Once this is done, we should reevaluate the Social Security tax formula and implement methods to increase revenue and redesign the payment system to be reasonable, fair, and affordable for all Americans.

Leonard Lance-

Social Security and Medicare must be strengthened to protect future generations of workers and retirees. I favor the establishment of a bipartisan commission similar to the 1983 National Commission of Social Security Reform supported by President Reagan and House Speaker O'Neill. I do not favor taxing income over a certain level without a corresponding benefit increase. Also, privatization is unlikely to have widespread support, would be expensive short term and could be unfair to millions of American workers. The Social Security Trust Fund of \$2 trillion will exceed expenditures only until 2117. Modest reforms enacted by the new Congress can alleviate more serious measures that would have to be taken if we do not address the issue next year.

Linda Stender-

Social Security is one of our most successful programs and has been vital to allowing America's seniors to retire in dignity. We must preserve this critical program for future generations. First and foremost, we must get our fiscal house in order and return to the pre-Bush days of fiscal responsibility and balanced budgets. I

strongly oppose any attempts to privatize Social Security and allowing Wall Street to gamble with our seniors' future.

**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.**

Thomas D. Abrams-

I do not support spending limits or public funding.

Contributing to a candidate is a matter of freedom of expression, i.e. putting your money where your mouth is. However, since only individuals and not groups vote, only individuals should be allowed to make unlimited direct contributions to candidates. This would eliminate the need for PACs. Individuals could also contribute to groups indirectly campaigning for or against a candidate. Organizations must have the approval of 100% of their members before being able to indirectly support or oppose a candidate.

I view candidates as independent operators seeking a position. They should, therefore, not be supported by taxpayer dollars. Some of those taxpayers might be diametrically opposed to the candidate's positions. This is unjust.

Dean Greco- *No Response Received*

Michael P. Hsing-

I strongly support setting "mandatory" spending limits to curb our increasingly out-of-control political campaigns. We need serious campaign reform, but public funding may not be the best solution. I propose, for all federally elected offices, a "hard cap" on total campaign fundraising and spending, and a drastically reduced maximum for individual contributions. For example, a Congressional candidate might be limited to \$20 individual contributions up to a total hard cap of \$100,000. Thus, the candidate will raise \$20 each from 5,000 people, rather than over \$2,000 each from just 50 influential contributors. This way, we can greatly reduce the amount of time and resources wasted on campaign fundraising, encourage cleaner campaigns, and free our elected officials from their debts to high contributors.

Leonard Lance-

I support public funding of political campaigns. To be effective, however, there would have to be some mechanism that would prohibit self-funding candidates from circumventing the system. Currently, such mechanisms are unconstitutional under the Supreme Court decision in Buckley v. Valeo (1976) and the recent decision, Davis v. FEC (2008), striking down the millionaire's amendment. I doubt that a constitutional amendment could be enacted on this subject. It is discouraging to have political contests determined by levels of financial support and not by positions on the issues. Many good people refuse to get involved in political life because of the constant need to raise campaign funds. Also, independent expenditures by 527 groups can distort the system.

Linda Stender-

I support public financing efforts as a way to limit the effects of big money in campaigns. In this era of bloated budgets and out-of-control deficits, however, we must make sure all proposals can be adequately paid for. We should try to limit campaign spending in ways that can pass Constitutional muster.

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

Thomas D. Abrams

The government has all the tools it needs to protect the country without violating the original meaning of the Constitution. To suggest otherwise is a lot of baloney.

Dean Greco- *No Response Received*

Michael P. Hsing-

In order to protect the privacy and civil liberties of our people, we cannot allow unlimited warrantless surveillance of American citizens. However, in the interests of national security, it may sometimes be necessary to allow our intelligence agencies a brief period of surveillance operations before they are required to obtain an official warrant. In addition, we should not allow the torture of prisoners or detainees. I propose that all intelligence agencies should have "Interrogation Conduct" review boards to investigate and, if necessary, punish government agents who improperly use enhanced/extreme interrogation methods. We should also reform our intelligence budget to reflect a greater focus on high-technology applications and signals intelligence, which I believe can yield better information than we might acquire from most interrogations.

Leonard Lance-

We can both protect our civil liberties and give our government the necessary tools to fight terrorism. The FISA Amendments Act of 2008, a bipartisan measure, contains provisions that try to strike an appropriate balance, including prohibiting the targeting of a foreigner to eavesdrop on an American's calls or e-mails without court approval and prohibiting the government from invoking war powers to supersede surveillance rules in the future while immunizing telecommunications companies that assist the intelligence community in thwarting terrorism. I believe deeply in the rule of law, which has been upheld in several Supreme Court rulings and by the FISA Court. I oppose torture, including waterboarding, which is ineffective, and would close Guantanamo.

Linda Stender-

I believe we can guard our civil liberties while still pursuing a robust fight against terrorism by balancing our Constitutional safeguards with the needs of law enforcement. Particularly in the case of minorities and immigrants, we must always be on guard that in our pursuit of terrorists, we do not trample on the due process rights of hardworking, innocent Americans.

