

# THE ISSUES

CANDIDATES WERE ASKED TO ANSWER EACH QUESTION IN 45 WORDS OR FEWER

# U.S. HOUSE, SIXTH DISTRICT

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**BEN CHANDLER**

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## EARMARKS

**Will you place "earmarks" for specific projects in the federal budget? Why or why not?**

Since my opponent joined the committee that writes spending bills, the publicly held debt has nearly doubled. In Congress I will support a moratorium on earmarks, force the government to live within its means and support new spending only for worthy programs that we can afford.

I have supported greater transparency and a prohibition of earmarks to for-profit companies. And when I can help a small community with their water system, support the Blue Grass Army Depot or bring life-saving technology to rural hospitals and veterans, I'll jump on it.

## ABORTION

**In what instances do you think abortion should be legal?**

Other than when the life of the mother is at stake, I believe Congress should do all that it can to protect the life of every human being, born and unborn. I will support policies that encourage adoption as an alternative to abortion.

We must reduce the number of abortions. And while I oppose partial-birth abortion and taxpayer-funded abortion, ultimately, this difficult decision ought to be made by the woman in consultation with her family, her physician and her faith.

## IMMIGRATION

**Do you favor removing illegal immigrants from the United States? If so, how would you do it?**

I support removing illegal immigrants through programs like Section 287(g) that allow states to remove detained inmates who are here illegally to federally approved facilities for deportation proceedings. I believe state governments have concurrent jurisdiction to regulate immigration where the federal government has failed to act.

I oppose amnesty, voted to build the fence and pushed to send additional troops to the border. In the past year, we deported a record number of illegal immigrants — more than 392,000 — about half of whom were convicted criminals. It can, and is, being done.

## CIVIL RIGHTS

**Should private businesses be allowed to refuse service to minorities?**

Absolutely not. I fully support the Civil Rights Act's prohibition on racial discrimination.

Absolutely not. The Supreme Court has spoken strongly on this matter, and it is settled. We have come so far since the Civil Rights Act and the Americans With Disabilities Act, we shouldn't move backward.

## DEFENSE

**Name one specific cut you would make to the Department of Defense budget.**

For starters, I'd cut \$500,000 designated to study brown tree snakes, \$5,000,000 designated to subsidize property in downtown San Francisco, and \$18,900,000 to fund a shrine to Edward Kennedy. I'd also work with the DOD to stop the billions of funding outside of its request.

We spend one-quarter of the federal budget on defense. Current policies allow large government contractors to overcharge taxpayers and make huge profits off taxpayer money. I would support the elimination of these policies.

## ENTITLEMENT PROGRAMS

**To keep Social Security and Medicare solvent, would you raise payroll taxes, reduce benefits or increase the required retirement age?**

Entitlement reform must keep the commitments the government has made to current retirees and ensure the long-term solvency of the program for future generations of Americans. I support legislation to end the practice of spending the Social Security surplus on unrelated programs.

I am absolutely committed to protecting Social Security and Medicare. I look forward to the findings of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform because Medicare and Social Security are too important to change without careful consideration and a national discussion.

## HEALTH CARE

**Name one change you will propose to improve health care in the United States.**

Sensible medical liability reform would lower health-care costs and save as much as \$54 billion over the next decade, according to the Congressional Budget Office. I will support reform that relies on free-market solutions, not the government, to preserve quality and decrease cost.

There are still too many children who lack health insurance and, as a result, are unable to get routine care which will give them a healthy foundation. I will fight to make the state Children's Health Insurance Program more accessible to our young people.

## BALANCED BUDGET

**Would you support or oppose an amendment that requires a balanced federal budget?**

I support a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution. On the Appropriations Committee, Ben Chandler could use his influence to rein in runaway spending. Instead, Chandler voted to raise the debt ceiling to \$14 trillion and voted to adjourn Congress without passing a budget.

Support. And I have supported a balanced budget amendment while in Congress.

## ECONOMY

**Was the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, commonly called the stimulus plan, a success or a failure?**

While sympathetic economists manufacture figures to justify the stimulus, Kentuckians know it was an irresponsible failure. The facts: 12 months after the stimulus passed, unemployment still exceeds 10 percent, 17,441 fewer Kentuckians are working and our country faces an additional \$1 trillion in debt.

When the private sector slowed, the Recovery Act provided \$300 billion in tax cuts and supported infrastructure investments, not to mention saving the jobs of Kentucky teachers and policemen. It prevented an even worse economic downturn, creating or preserving 17,000 jobs in Kentucky.

## EDUCATION

**Should the federal government continue funding programs under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which is designed to improve academic achievement of the disadvantaged?**

I support Title I but oppose efforts to make these funds contingent on the adoption of national standards. I support greater local flexibility to use these funds to intercede in failing schools, and oppose using these funds as leverage to force adoption of federal mandates.

Title I is absolutely essential to making sure that all Kentucky kids have access to a high-quality education, and it ought to be continued and fully supported.

## COAL

**Should the Army Corps of Engineers' Nationwide Permit 21 rule, which allows coal mines to make minor impacts on streams and watersheds without the heavier scrutiny of an individual permit, be reinstated?**

Yes. The elimination of this rule is one part of this administration's efforts to kill Kentucky jobs and eliminate Kentucky mining through overregulation. The Nationwide 21 permits do not exempt mining operations from maintaining water quality, but they do allow a more efficient permitting process.

Coal is essential to our economy and our energy security, but I believe it can be mined in a more responsible way. The Corps is now reviewing each permit individually on its merits. Mines making minor impacts should have no problem with the review.

## AGRICULTURE

**Should direct subsidy payments to farmers, which were envisioned to be temporary under the 1996 Freedom to Farm Act, continue indefinitely? If not, when should they end?**

Like any other Kentucky family, Kentucky's farmers want the opportunity to make a living by growing and selling their crop, not because of a government payment. The direct payments are one part of a three-part payment system to farmers that needs to be comprehensively evaluated.

Farm programs are important for family farms in Kentucky because they provide stability and predictability in the market, encouraging continued agricultural production. However, in future farm bills, we must ensure these programs benefit small Kentucky farms who need them, and not massive agribusinesses who don't.

## DRUG ABUSE

**Do you support or oppose spending federal funds to establish a nationwide system to track prescriptions for controlled substances, such as OxyContin?**

The Commonwealth of Kentucky's KASPER system for tracking prescription drug abuse is an international model program. This program can expand through interstate compacts, but as we move to electronic medical records, the federal government should provide guidance for interoperability and the protection of privacy.

As attorney general, I led efforts which created a state prescription drug tracking program, which became the model for the nation. I believe the Kentucky program is a proven, successful program, and it is time we tackled the illegal trafficking of prescription drugs across the country.

## AFGHANISTAN

**Do you think the current U.S. troop presence in Afghanistan is justified?**

I support our mission in Afghanistan, as a necessary front in the War on Terror. I will support our soldiers with the resources they need to come home safely, with honor and victory.

Yes.