

5th Congressional District Election Questionnaire

Name: Dr. Victor A. Forys **Birth date:** 1954

Political affiliation: Democrat

Home address Park Ridge, IL 60068

Do you live in the district? No, but my medical clinic is located in the district, and I spend most of my time there.

Phone (office)

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Marital status Married **Spouse's name** Dr. Anna Birn Forys

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Name of any relatives on public payrolls N/A

Name of your federal campaign committee Forys For Congress

Campaign treasurer Stanley Dobek

Please attach sheets with names of your finance committee; dates, locations and names of hosts of fundraisers, and copies of solicitation letters issued by your committee.

We do not have a finance committee.

Have you had any kind of program for top donors or fundraisers (for example seminars, briefings, golf outings)?

We have not had a program of this kind.

List lobbyists assisting you, directly or indirectly, in raising money for your campaign.

To my knowledge, we have not had any lobbyists assisting with our campaign fundraising.

Will you pledge to disclose in advance where and when your fund-raising events occur? If the answer is no, please explain.

For the most part, our fundraising events are well advertised on our website, emails and even on radio. I am open about our fundraising and will continue to be so. Also, our FEC reports will identify all the contributors.

Please explain how your occupation and your life experience qualify you for the 5th Congressional District seat.

I am running for Congress because I know that we pay too much for our health care and it is a drag on our economy. In order to get our economy back on track, we must fix health care. We must also fix our broken immigration system. As a doctor for 25 years in Illinois I have seen first hand we have a health care crisis in America. It is getting worse and worse. I am a small businessman who has worked to create jobs and I know what it takes to grow and manage a business. We can reform health care in America and by doing so, we can help businesses grow and prosper, especially small and medium sized businesses.

I am a primary care physician and I interact with the entire spectrum of health care in America. Unlike specialists that deal with only their specialty, I treat people with the full range of health concerns. I manage home health care patients, treat people in an outpatient setting, in a community hospital, in a tertiary care hospital, long term hospital care and nursing homes. I also deal with the business end of medicine. I must meet a payroll, buy equipment, supplies and make all decisions that a small businessman makes.

My patients are a diverse group of people from all ethnic groups. Our practice is a community health care center that serves everyone in the community. Every patient has individual needs and we try to meet them as best we can, but many have the same questions and concerns. People are worried about their jobs and if they lose their jobs, will they lose their health coverage. They worry about the cost of health insurance and if their insurance policy will cover the tests and treatments they need. We help them as much as we can, but the system is set up in a way that the insurance company is in control. That is wrong.

I have a Polish language medical and health radio show. It is a talk show with a question and answer format. Through this medium, I help Polish speaking immigrants by explaining to them how to access the health care system and answer their questions about illness and prevention. This, in addition to my practice has given me a close up view of how bad our health care crisis is. I often see patients that are struggling and do not have health insurance. All too often they wait too long to see us and by the time they do, they are very sick. One patient recently died because he waited too long to get help after he had chest pain, which was a symptom of the heart attack he was having. He didn't have health insurance. Patients without insurance will refuse to go to the hospital, even when told that not going to hospital might cause death or permanent paralysis. Honestly, it probably happens about once a week in our health center.

I also believe that I bring a unique view of the immigration issue to this campaign and hopefully to the Congress. I was born in Poland and moved to the U.S. when I was four years old. My wife was also born in Poland and I met her while I was in medical school in Poland. I know from personal experience the hardships that people in the immigration system face trying to come to the U.S. and bring family to the U.S. Immigration is a personal issue to me.

From my personal experiences as a doctor, businessman and an immigrant, I have a unique perspective on managing a business, on health care and the challenges faced by immigrants that will allow me to serve the residents of the 5th district as their representative in Congress.

Issues:

Please attach any materials you wish describing your key issues.

DOMESTIC ISSUES

What are your top three district-specific priorities? My three top priorities are getting our economy back on track, reforming health care and fixing our broken immigration system. All of these apply to our district and America at large. The district is about half immigrant, working class (for the most part) and people are losing their jobs as a result of the bad economy at a rate that I have never seen before.

Do you feel TARP has been effective so far? Why or why not? If not, what would you change? Are you satisfied with the transparency and accountability of the program?

No and No. The TARP has not helped unfreeze the credit markets as was hoped and our economy is not getting better. The TARP has not restored the confidence in the financial markets or the housing market.

The lack of transparency and accountability in the TARP program is outrageous. Funds were expended and Congress was told that the administration was unable to tell them where the funds went because it would hurt the bailout plan. That is ridiculous. New corporate jets, bonuses and the same exorbitant executive pay; it just isn't right. We have to reign in the spending. These companies are being saved by taxpayer dollars and they should respect that. We need to stop throwing money at the problem and start investing our money wisely to grow the economy.

Before becoming President Obama's chief of staff, Rahm Emanuel, was on track to be speaker of the House, which would be a coup for Chicago and Illinois. There have been persistent rumors that Emanuel might wish to return to the 5th Congressional seat for that very purpose. Yes or no, in those circumstances, would you be willing to step aside?

It would be up to the voters to decide who their representative should be. I think I can represent the 5th district extremely well. I would not make my decision to run or not to run based on Mr. Emanuel wanting to run.

Do you support President Obama's proposed stimulus package? Explain.

Overall, I support President Obama's proposed stimulus package. We do need to invest in our infrastructure and our people. I would like to see more investment in people. The increase in the Pell Grants and the funds that will be given to states to shore up their budgets are a good start. States administer much of the health care apparatus and public education in our country and they invest in infrastructure. Above all we must act quickly so that we can help stimulate our economy and prevent deflation.

Do you have a plan to ensure access to higher education? Explain.

First, we must ensure that our k-12 education system is sound and serving children will so that they are prepared to compete in the world. A high school dropout will never have the chance to go to college. Drop out rates in cities are unacceptable.

I support a tax deduction for all tuition dollars spent on higher education for four years of undergraduate and up to four years of post-graduate studies. The economic stimulus bill increases funding for Pell Grants and I support this. We must increase the funding for

Pell Grants, lower interest rates on student loans, and make interest on student loans tax-deductible so that higher education is affordable for all qualified students. The stimulus plan also helps state budgets, which is important so that states do not have to cut budgets at public universities or raise tuition.

Are you in favor of universal health care or some other plan?

I believe that every citizen decent health care and should have basic health insurance. I have a specific plan to cover everyone and reduce the costs of health insurance to individuals and businesses.

My plan is below.

Standardized Health Insurance Policies. In order to create true competition, consumers need to be able to compare health care policies that provide the same benefits. Currently, it is impossible to determine which policy provides more value for the money due to the enormous amount of fine print and the existence of literally thousands of different policies. We need to be able to compare apples to apples and oranges to oranges. This can only happen if we have standardized health care policies. These would range from the basic standard health care plan that would provide decent health care for everybody to the gold-plated policies that people of means might decide to buy.

Tax Credits For Businesses Who Provide Standardized Health Insurance Plan. The U.S Government should help small and medium sized businesses by providing tax credits for funds expended to purchase basic health care for their employees. Standardization of health insurance policies would make that possible. Only the basic health insurance plan would be credited. If companies want to provide more health benefits than contained in the basic plan, they would be able to do so, but would not receive a tax credit for the extra expenditure. Small businesses need help. Victor Forsy believes that we must help them create jobs.

Make U.S. Business More Competitive Around The World By Reducing Health Care Expenses. Reducing health care costs and giving tax credits for health insurance would make U.S businesses more competitive in international trade because all of our main trade competitors, the industrialized countries of the world, subsidize their industry by providing health care to workers free of charge to those companies.

Prohibit Pre-Existing Condition Clauses In Insurance Policies. The Congress should pass laws that would ban health insurance companies from writing pre-existing condition clauses into their policies. These pre-existing rules create uncertainty in what insurance companies cover, adding to the complex and confusing nature of health insurance policies. When a patient does have a pre-existing condition, they are left to pay for their care on their own. Out-of-pocket expenses have been rising at an alarming rate. Some patients have co-pays as high as \$50 for an office visit. Health care costs are the leading cause of bankruptcy, responsible for half of all bankruptcies.

A National Platform for Integrated Health Care Records. A Platform for Medical Computer technology should be developed by the government in cooperation with companies like Microsoft and Google. This would be released as a non-proprietary system and available to all health care providers – doctors, hospitals, imaging centers, nursing homes, pharmacies, public health departments, the CDC – so that everyone will be on the same page and connected; Windows for Medicine! We need a medical information account that patients can access themselves and could then share with their caregivers if they choose. Patients would control the information and decide

to whom and what information they would divulge. These individual health records would have to be secure and patient controlled.

Support Nurses and Nursing Education. Nurses are asked to work harder and harder, with more and more responsibly due to decreased staffing levels (nurse to patient ratio). They are leaving the profession in droves. Nursing education is under funded and even those people who would put up with the rigors of the job cannot be trained due to the fact that there aren't enough nurse educators and nursing programs. We are robbing other countries of their nurses. As globalization proceeds and as other countries living standards improve, this may stop being an option. We must improve the nurse to patient ratio and the federal government must encourage expansion of nursing education programs so that our country can train and fill the need for these vitally important health care givers and provide good paying jobs to our citizens.

Insuring The Self-Employed. The self-employed are often uninsured because they simply cannot afford to pay for health insurance. They cannot get group coverage because it is just them and under individual plans, they will pay higher rates. By implementing standardized health insurance plans, we can lower costs for individual coverage. Those people who are self employed, the real-estate agents, accountants, artists, consultants and writers, will be covered. Allowing them to expand their business, hire other workers and purchasing new equipment. Consistent health insurance coverage, regardless of work status, would give individuals the opportunity to start small businesses without the fear of being uninsured. Dependable health insurance would allow them to start new businesses that would hire employees, pay taxes and help grow our economy.

Change The Medical Malpractice System. We must scrap the current medical malpractice system. It does not provide justice or help eliminate medical mistakes. Dr. Forsy proposes to reform it totally and develop a system like the Workers Compensation Commission. The courts system is a punitive system. Simply capping malpractice awards will not solve the problem either. We need to take medical malpractice completely out of tort law and into a setting like the Workers Compensation Commission. Representatives from all interests would be represented and experts would determine the failures of the care. Patients would be compensated fairly. Experts would be able to make a judgment about what went wrong and with mistakes, whether they result from dangerous systemic causes or individual mistakes.

How do you propose we fix Social Security?

I oppose any privatization of Social Security. We must increase long-term health of Social Security trust fund. I support a bi-partisan commission to examine Social Security that will represent all stakeholders and not allow privatization. Social Security is solvent for decades to come, that does not mean we should put off doing something now. We should act sooner, not later.

Flooding has been a persistent problem in some areas of the 5th District. As its congressman, what steps would you take to help your constituents?

I believe that we must act to stop these persistent floods that have hurt our communities. I will push for increased funding for flood mitigation, sewer and storm water systems so that homeowners can feel safe in their homes and not worry about their homes being damaged every time there is a large storm. We must also make sure that the national flood insurance system is solvent.

What should Congress do about immigration? Should it pass a border-enforcement bill first and then vote on a guest worker program and a measure to provide a means to legalization for illegal immigrants? Or should it pass one comprehensive bill?

I believe that we must work on a comprehensive, systematic reform of our immigration system first. If we still need a fence after a comprehensive bill, then we can build it and reassess our new guest worker system.

The elements of my immigration plan are below.

The U.S. Immigration system is broken. We should have a rational immigration policy that is not racist. Far too often people of color are singled out and persecuted.

Our nation needs workers. Other countries in the world are dealing with depopulation. Thankfully, the U.S. population is growing. We need an immigration system that allows good, hardworking people to come to our country and become productive members of our society and our economy. We need a comprehensive immigration solution that will reform the entire system, not just one piece at a time. People should be treated with dignity. Since September 11th, some immigration authorities have become unreasonable and unfair towards travelers entering this country.

Create A Dependable and Workable Guest Worker Program. A Guest worker program is vital to preserve our agriculture businesses and other businesses that rely on foreign or migrant labor. Companies need seasonal employees and those individuals who were seasonal employees when our nation had borders that were more open to migration need to be able to depend on a new guest worker system. Not only is it an economic issue, it is a human issue. We must stop senseless deaths of people trying to cross borders in desolate areas risking their lives to become seasonal workers.

End the Backlogs Of People Who Have Applied to Come To The U.S. From Other Counties. We must work to quickly end the years-long backlog of applications for those people who have followed the law and are waiting. Too many people who want to become productive members of our society and economy are waiting for years to come to this country.

Pass The DREAM Act. We must pass the DREAM Act. The DREAM Act allows students who are the American-born children of undocumented workers to receive the in-state tuition rates that children whose parents are citizens receive.

Stop Families From Being Torn Apart. All too often, families are torn apart because of government crackdowns. This should end. No one benefits from tearing families apart. Families are also split apart by the backlog of immigration applications which can take years to process.

Ensure Immigration Applicants Are Treated With Dignity. We must make sure that the people who apply to come to this country are treated with dignity. Many people who apply for citizenship or apply to come to this country are treated as inhuman by the system. These are people and they must be treated as people. There should be a system put in place that will allow the complaints of people who are being processed to be investigated without jeopardizing their status or application.

To reduce carbon emissions, do you favor a carbon tax or a cap-and-trade system or neither? Explain.

I favor a cap and trade system in addition to setting higher standards for fuel economy and energy efficiency in all areas that consumer energy. We must reduce our carbon emission and I favor increasing the use of renewable fuels in our energy portfolio.

Cap and trade is more flexible while a carbon tax is would penalize industries where reducing carbon emissions detrimental to the economy and provide incentives to those industries where carbon emissions reduction could be done quickly and cheaply.

FOREIGN POLICY

What is your timetable for withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq?

I was opposed to sending troops to Iraq in the first place. Now that we are there, we need to withdraw as rapidly as military tactics allow. Keeping American troops in Iraq creates problems. The sooner we pull them out, the sooner those problems will be resolved.

What role should the United States have in bringing about peace in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?

I support a two-state solution as outlined in the Oslo Accords. I think we need to use 'Smart Power' and remain engaged in the peace process. We must remain a fair broker so that both sides can trust our diplomacy.

Do you support a proposed troop surge in Afghanistan? How long are you willing to have troops stay there? How do you propose to bring stability to the nation once most of the troops are withdrawn?

Afghanistan is different than Iraq. The people who harbored and still likely help Al-Qaeda and Bin Laden are at large. They are the enemy we must defeat, not just militarily but ideologically. However long that takes, we should keep U.S. troops working to defeat them.

Once the Taliban is defeated it appears clear to me that the people of Afghanistan want to live in peace, educate their children and enjoy a decent standard of living. It is they who have to ensure their own stability.

What steps should the United States take to reduce its dependence on foreign oil?

We must have a comprehensive energy plan that reduces our reliance on foreign oil. We must increase CAFE standards. We must develop plug-in electric vehicles. Large natural gas fields have been discovered in the U.S., which we need to utilize to fuel our economy until renewable energy sources are developed and sufficiently abundant to do so.

We must work to increase the use of renewable sources of energy: solar, wind, biofuels all must be part of the solution. Nuclear power must also be part of the package.