



Kathleen
Thomas

Daily Chronicle questionnaire: Kathleen Thomas

Election primary: U.S. senate (Republican)

Age: 61

Bio: Married 35 years with three children; master's degree in clinical psychology and a doctorate in humanities; taught at major universities; writings appear in publications as varied as Wall Street Journal and Sports Illustrated; traveled and lived temporarily in places from Moscow to Central America; spent time with the Contras in mountains of Honduras; currently a historical researcher for Illinois Historical Preservation Agency.

What should be the key components of health care reform? Among the ideas being considered, what should not be part of health care reform?

It is not health care that needs reforming, it is the cost of care. The cost can be reduced by reforming medical litigation. Doctors order many unnecessary procedures to protect themselves from lawsuits. This defensive medicine practice raises the cost of the doctors' insurance, thus raising our costs. The Pacific Research Institute estimates that billions of dollars can be saved doing this. If the government would lift some mandates and regulations from insurance, it would become cheaper and portable. All of this reform can be done in 10 pages or less. The current health care bill does not properly address either of these issues. The 2,000 pages of the current bill will raise our taxes, decrease our health care and infringe on our personal liberties. Legislators need to spend time rooting out the waste, inefficiencies, mismanagement and fraud that currently exist in Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.

What is your position on the cap-and-trade bill that passed the U.S. House this past summer? If you oppose the bill, what should Congress do, if anything, about carbon emissions and climate change?

This bill could give us the largest tax increase in American history, and it won't accomplish its stated purpose of protecting the environment. The Congressional Budget Office, MIT, and Wharton Econometric indicators all show anywhere from \$1,000 to \$3,000 increases per average household in the cost of living. Cap and trade is, essentially, an energy tax. Cap and trade was beneficial for sulfur dioxide emissions from power plants in the 1970s and 1980s because technology was readily available to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions from smokestacks. The same cannot be said about reducing carbon dioxide emissions, which under current technologies are expensive to reduce. We must prioritize, and according to Nobel laureate economists that have studied this subject, money spent on carbon dioxide reductions is not a good investment for the environment.

What kinds of new regulations of the banking industry do you support? What don't you support that is being proposed?

The new Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act rules that took effect the first of this year. While it is commendable to attempt to protect the consumer, at some point, consumers must take responsibility to research, and determine for themselves, what risks they can or cannot take. It is just more government bureaucracy and more government red tape, leading to more of a nanny state.

Immigration reform has taken a back seat to other priorities of the Obama administration during his first year in office. Should immigration reform be more of a priority? What do you propose?

Undocumented immigrants by definition are illegal. The INA expressly refuses stowaway aliens entry into the U.S. Estimates range that 12 million to 20 million undocumented workers are in the U.S. I do not think the American people have the collective will, nor does the U.S. have the resources, to deport 12 million to 20 million people. Paramount is the need to secure the borders

and begin the arduous task of documenting those undocumented immigrants. As quickly as possible, they need work permits so those not currently paying taxes will be easier to track and contribute to the tax system. Fines should be imposed and deadlines set for either citizenship or deportation.

What should the U.S. do in Afghanistan?

Afghanistan has been decimated by war for decades and has become a perfect breeding ground for terrorists. Many Afghans desire freedom and are willing to take the risk of having their ears and/or nose cut off by the Taliban just for carrying a voting card. We cannot police or bring peace to the entire world, but in this situation, it is worth a try. We have a window of opportunity to show progress and reverse the momentum of the insurgency. Hopefully, we can create an atmosphere for the insurgents to stop fighting and reintegrate into Afghan society. We need to help the Afghans establish home rule, reform their government and control corruption to the extent their nation will not be able to be used as a base to train those that would attack America or her allies. It is best to state specific goals and have a vague timetable.

Do you support the government bailouts of the financial and auto industries? Why or why not?

I do not support bailouts of the financial arena or the auto industries under any party. Free markets work best and are self-correcting. If something fails, the government should not step in to bail it out or prop it up, but rather a new business will rise in its place or some entrepreneur will take over and enable it to be successful.

What are your top priorities in the state?

Stimulating the economy and creating jobs. A business-friendly environment begins with low taxes. Currently, China taxes businesses at an approximate 25 percent rate, while Illinois taxes at 40 percent. If you are an entrepreneur, you will choose China. Our real challenge in increasing employment and reviving the economy is to keep an educated and competitive labor market force that can adapt and move to new jobs when current jobs are lost to new innovation. If the U.S. wants to grow its economy, it needs to cut unnecessary red tape and regulation and untie the hands of the private sector. The question becomes: do you want the government picking the most viable labor standard or do you want the market to do it?

What should Congress do about the nation's growing budget deficit?

Stop spending. Ronald Reagan said to "stop feeding the beast." It will not do any good to increase taxes. History shows that every time there is an increase in taxes, the revenue is never used to pay down the debt. We must make across-the-board budget cuts. Hundreds of billions of dollars could be saved by preventing waste, inefficiencies and fraud in major programs such as Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid; so these could be spared the budget cuts.

What distinguishes you from the other candidates in this primary?

I have read the major legislation currently in Congress. My staff is composed exclusively of volunteers. I don't have hundreds of thousands and millions of dollars, which I think is obscene in our economic situation. I am conducting a green campaign by using minimum of paper materials and trying to utilize the Internet as much as possible. I have the confidence and courage of my convictions and my conservatism. I will not apologize for them or back off from them. I believe in what I am doing. I am not being manipulated by any party or special interest group. I see the current administration and the majority of Congress as putting forth a specific ideology. We are fighting for our liberties, our freedoms and our constitution (democracy and capitalism), while the current administration is fighting for power and control (more federally driven programs and an ultimate nanny state).