

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BROWN COUNTY

Questionnaire for District 9 Congressional Candidates

Name: Russell Brooksbank Please return no later than September 14, 2016

Address: 1716 Whittier Dr TO: League of Women Voters of Brown County

Clarksville, In 47129 P.O. Box 74

Phone: 502-494-9943 Nashville, IN 47448

E-Mail: rpbrooksbank@aol.com or e-mail to: shari.r.frank@gmail.com

Please type/print your responses.

1. Please describe the occupations, training and experience that qualify you for this office. What is the issue you would most like to pursue if elected?

I bring to the table a wide range of pertinent skills and experience. These include:

I am a veteran of the U.S. Army Reserve. I joined when I was 17, and served honorably for 6 ½ years. This experience left me with a sense of duty, a love of country and a real idea of what self sacrifice means. These are all qualities I would want in a representative.

I'm a Teamster, and I've been the Chief Steward at my place of employment since 2006. As Chief Steward, I have fought for the rights of my co-workers, written countless company policies and negotiated contracts. I've also been the mediator when conflict has arisen between the workers or between a worker and management. As Congressmen, we have to be able to understand the laws we are voting on or proposing. We have to have the fortitude to stand for what is right. We have to be able to work with others to find compromise. My time as Chief Steward has taught me those skills, and I believe they will serve the people of the 9th District very well.

As a former business owner, I understand the challenges facing small business. I understand how difficult it is to start and run a business. I understand how bureaucracy and regulations can keep our businesses from thriving and hiring more people. I also understand the challenge of finding and retaining good employees. I understand these things because I have experienced them for myself.

Even my job as a Qualified Diesel Mechanic has honed skills that I can use as a Congressman. As a Mechanic I can't be afraid to roll up my sleeves and get dirty. When you fix things for a living you tend to concentrate on finding the solutions to problems rather than the problems themselves. From day one I will dive in to fix what is broken in our government.

The most pertinent issue I would like to pursue, the place I believe our government is most broken, is our loss of liberty. We have a Federal Government that is steadily encroaching on the rights of the citizens and the rights of the states to govern themselves. Legislation like the Patriot Act, the indefinite detention clause of the NDAA, the incessant spying on our own people by the NSA, and the assault on our first, second and fourth amendment rights are all liberty killing measures I want to fight against. As your Congressman, I will fight this with a twofold attack. First, I will vote against any piece of legislation that infringes on our liberty. That's the easy part. The second, and more difficult part, will be to work to have all the liberty killing legislation repealed and removed from our books.

2. In an uncertain and volatile world, what are three things the US should do to protect the security of our people and homeland?

I believe that the best thing we can do for the security of our people and our homeland would be to get out of the business of regime change. We need to quit meddling in the affairs of other countries. It creates massive blowback which, in turn, creates a very real security threat for our people and the homeland. The mess in the Middle East will not be solved by us constantly creating a vacuum of power. Each time we remove one government a worse one fills the void. We need to leave them to fight their own wars and attack only after we, ourselves, are attacked. Then we attack to win and destroy the enemy. Nothing more. Nothing less.

The second thing I would do is bring our troops home from these ungodly expensive bases. Japan and Germany can pay for their own defense. I would then put them on our border. Let's let our soldiers do what they were trained to do and protect the homeland.

The third thing I would do, as your Congressman, is protect our 2nd amendment and encourage everyone to become proficient in firearm safety and marksmanship. The way to stop a bad guy with a gun is to have a good guy with a gun take him out. A well armed populace creates a large militia able to be called to the defense of the homeland with a moments notice. It also helps to stop terrorist attacks and active shooter scenarios like we experienced in Orlando. One good guy with a weapon could have provided a much different outcome.

3. Are there flaws in our campaign finance laws? What are they and how would you address them?

The clamor over the Citizens United ruling is misplaced in my opinion. I do not want to limit free speech. Like it or not, the ability to donate money, or collect money, and use it to advertise for a candidate or measure you support is free protected speech. Is there too much money in politics? Absolutely. Limiting speech is not the solution to that problem though. It would be like putting a Band-Aid over a festering wound. The problem isn't PAC's. The real problem is the amount of influence government has over our lives. That is the root cause of corruption. As long as there is influence to buy there will be people lining up outside your Congressman's door and around the block to buy it. Want to get money out of politics? Eliminate the influence government has over our lives. A government that concerns itself with securing our rights and protecting us from force and fraud has very little influence to peddle. My goal, as your Congressman, is to reduce that influence as much as possible and, as a result, reduce corruption.

4. Please address your views with regard to climate change, and the role of the federal government (and Congress) in environmental protection and mediation of damage?

In my opinion climate change is a natural, cyclical occurrence that has nothing to do with mankind or the industrial revolution. There is too much evidence out there for me to not draw that conclusion. The "global warming", then "global cooling", and now "climate change" issue is nothing more than a control issue and has nothing to do with saving the environment.

What role does the government have in environmental protection and mediation of damage? Well, as a Libertarian, I believe we have the right to do whatever we wish, provided we don't violate other people's rights in the process. It's the job of government to protect our rights and protect us against force or fraud. If I am polluting my property then the government should have no say in it, but the moment it leaves my property (either airborne, carried downstream, leaked into ground water, or the various other means) then the government has a role. The government has an interest in protecting my neighbor's rights, and anybody else my pollution touches. The government should provide for courts where injunctions can be issued and damages recovered.

The problem I have is when farmers are not allowed to farm their land because of a toad or an insect. Rules like that within the EPA need to be thrown out. We need to start respecting private property rights once more. I will defend the private property owner from their polluting neighbor and their overbearing government.

5. Do you support goals of the Affordable Care Act? How would you change it or if you want to repeal it, what would you replace it with?

If the goals of the Affordable Care Act are to help people afford insurance so that their lives are not ruined by the heavy financial burden of seeking medical care in this country, or to make it easier for people to purchase insurance then I support those goals 100%. However, it is not my opinion that those are the goals. I believe that the goal of the Affordable Care Act is to make private insurance more expensive and less available to the people who need insurance. I believe the goal is to move us towards a government run health care system. This I vehemently oppose.

I would repeal the ACA and replace it with common sense reform. The best reform measure we could implement would be to allow insurance companies to sell insurance across state lines. The cure for high prices and bad service is more competition, not less. Freeing up the market in health care is the only viable solution I see to our problems. Free markets work.

6. Please suggest three concrete steps to grow the number of jobs that pay a living wage here in Indiana and in the country at large.

The first concrete thing I would do to help the economy grow jobs (government doesn't create jobs, the marketplace does) is eliminate the corporate income tax. We would have corporations pounding on our door wanting to be let in if we had no corporate tax. Besides, the corporations never paid the tax to begin with. They just passed that cost onto the end consumer.

The second thing I would do would be to vote against any national "Right to Work" legislation. Right to Work is a misnomer. There is no such thing as a right to work. You have a right to be paid for work performed, but nobody has to hire you. Right to Work legislation is nothing more than union busting legislation. I stand with people's rights to form associations and negotiate from that strengthened position, whether it's a group of truck drivers forming a union or a group of business owners forming a trade association.

The third thing I would do to help grow jobs is, besides eliminating corporate income tax, make it easier to open, own, and operate a business in this country. There is just too much red tape. There are too many hoops to jump through. There are too many regulations. I want to return to a time when people who had an idea, a vision, and the drive to make it a reality were not opposed by their government. Freedom and free markets is the solution.