

As your Representative in Congress, Lisa Atkins will work to:

Strengthen our economy through job creation.

I support targeted tax cuts to stimulate economic growth, savings and investments. However, as helpful as tax cuts can be, it is very difficult to create a tax cut strategy that will encourage both individuals and businesses to engage in the kinds of activity that will produce short *as well as* long-term benefits to the economy. Therefore, our economic policies need to go beyond simply cutting taxes and include other key incentives for economic growth. To this end, one of the things I believe Congress and the private sector must do is make an increased commitment to research and development.

Half of the economic and job growth over the past ten years is attributable directly to improvements in technology. These improvements don't just happen overnight. Rather, they are the result of long-term investments by the government and the private sector – investments that pay off in new industries, new jobs, higher wages and a higher standard of living. Improvements in technology also offer hope for solutions to a host of problems in areas such as transportation, energy, the environment, health care and our national defense. I strongly believe that it is essential that Congress pursue an economic policy that contains, as a major element, an increased commitment to research funding and a permanent Research and Experimentation Tax Credit.

Reducing regulatory tax burdens on small business.

Small business is the engine that drives our economy. Ninety-eight percent of new businesses are small businesses. They account for seventy percent of the new jobs created in this country and forty percent of our Gross Domestic Product. Yet, despite the importance of small businesses to our economy, they continue to be burdened by excessive regulation, high taxes and expensive government mandates. These burdens, imposed by Congress, are in addition to the challenges small firms face in the marketplace – challenges such as a general lack of access to capital and the inherent competitive advantages of large companies.

To its credit, Congress has made some efforts over the years to recognize the important role small entrepreneurial companies play in our economy. Congress has not completely ignored the fact that these firms are very often the breeding ground for important technological innovations and the opportunities small business provides for women and minorities. Yet, more needs to be done.

There are a number of things I think we should do to truly realize the potential small business represents for national economic growth, job creation and technological advancement. A good place to start is by developing a tax and regulatory structure that encourages the formation of new businesses, the expansion of existing ones, and which recognizes that small companies do not have the same ability as large ones in meeting complex and inflexible federal mandates. Encouraging and promoting the

entrepreneurial spirit possessed by small business owners can only lead to higher employment, economic growth and increased prosperity for all Americans.

Protecting homeowners from fluctuating energy prices.

The United States imports more than half of its domestic energy needs from overseas, most of it in the form of crude oil from the Middle East. Our reliance upon foreign oil subjects consumers to economic uncertainty and represents a weakness in our national defense that some countries have and will continue to exploit. We should build a defense against this threat as we would any other risk to our national security.

I believe the best way to protect consumers from devastating price hikes, and to defend ourselves against the use of oil as a weapon, is to establish a national energy policy that makes us more dependent on our own sources of energy and less susceptible to supply disruptions engineered by others. To do that, we will have to make full use of our existing supplies of oil, natural gas and coal, make them cheaper and more readily available by expanding and modernizing our energy distribution and production systems and extend the life of our energy supplies through conservation and increased efficiencies. We must make greater use of nuclear and hydroelectric power and we must develop new energy technologies for the future. We should continue to encourage the development of new fuel technologies through government research and through extending and making permanent the Research and Experimentation Tax Credit. Federal support of research is essential if we are to realize the potential of fuel cells, solar, wind turbine, and biomass systems that could one day replace fossil fuels as our chief source of energy.

Establish a concrete transportation plan to move people, improve air quality and reduce regulation.

The last two reauthorizations of our surface transportation programs recognized that highways and freeways were not the only transportation programs worthy of attention and support by the federal government. Those reauthorizations, along with other measures passed over the last few years, have moved the federal government towards a more balanced surface transportation policy that recognizes the potential of transit and high-speed rail to relieving congestion on our roads and highways. We are also moving towards providing greater technical and economic assistance to local governments in an effort to help them resolve their congestion problems.

It is estimated that the economic and environmental costs of traffic congestion in the United States reaches \$100 billion per year. While the federal government should rightfully continue to concentrate on highway infrastructure improvements, we should not ignore congestion mitigation approaches that can extend the life of our roads and save us billions in lost productivity costs.

When Congress looks at reauthorizing the current highway program, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21,) I believe it should do two things. First, it must give fast growing states such as Arizona a fairer share of highway dollars by reforming the formula used to allocate highway funding. Second, it should allow the states the flexibility to use their transportation dollars to not just build new roads, but to also fix congestion problems on existing ones.

Protect and preserve Social Security.

Social Security's Board of Trustees has predicted that while Social Security currently receives enough payroll taxes to cover its benefit obligations, that situation is only temporary. Starting in about the year 2017, the System will start to pay out more than it takes in, and will have to begin tapping its trust funds in order to pay benefits on time and in full. The amount needed each year from the trust funds to cover benefit obligations will grow from about \$70 billion in the early years, to more than \$300 billion in the 2030s. By the year 2041, the trust funds will be empty and Social Security will technically be bankrupt.

The System's deteriorating financial condition is due to demographic factors. The "baby boom" generation will begin to retire over the next several decades leaving fewer people in the workforce contributing to Social Security. In fact, over the next 20 years or so, the number of retirees will grow by seventy-three percent while the number of workers will grow by only thirteen percent.

The prospect of Social Security running out of money has prompted Congress and the Administration to begin looking at ways to head off the System's possible bankruptcy. Hearings have been held, Commissions formed and bills introduced. No consensus has emerged yet on what exactly should be done. Suggestions have ranged from fully or partially privatizing the System (letting workers divert all or a portion of their payroll taxes to individual investment accounts), to cutting benefits and increasing taxes, to doing nothing for the time being.

While it is clear that Social Security will face economic pressures over the next several decades, we should not be rushed into making extreme decisions such as cutting benefits, or privatizing the System. Instead, we should look to a variety of smaller steps that over time will produce significant savings. It is important to remember that these smaller steps do not necessarily have to be limited to the Social Security program. For instance, increasing economic growth by only a few percentage points can extend the life of Social Security for several years. Similar improvements in wage growth, inflation and even in the decision of workers to stay in the workforce longer will produce similar economic benefits for Social Security.

Eliminate the Clinton Tax increase on Social Security.

Despite promises to only increase taxes on the “rich,” the Clinton Administration in 1993 pushed through Congress a tax increase on thousands of middle class retirees. By increasing the percentage of Social Security benefits subject to tax from fifty percent to eighty-five percent, the Clinton Administration and Congress imposed a special tax on retirees that will amount to more than \$100 billion over the next ten years. The people targeted to pay this tax are Social Security recipients with more than \$34,000 a year in income (couples with more than \$44,000). The proceeds from the tax are credited to the Medicare Trust Fund.

While some might consider retirees who have annual incomes above \$34,000 to be “rich,” I do not. I certainly do not think the people targeted by this tax should be punished because they saved and invested in order to be self-sufficient during their retirement.

Repeal of the 1993 tax increase on Social Security recipients was an element of the “Contract with America” that was brought up and passed through the House after the Republicans gained control in 1995. However, the Senate did not approve the House action and thus the issue remains unresolved to this day. If elected, I intend to join in the effort to once and for all repeal this tax.

Strong Supporter of Second Amendment rights.

When our Founding Fathers included the Second Amendment in the Bill of Rights, they were not seeking to create a new right for the people to keep and bear arms – they were protecting an existing one. At the time of the drafting of the Constitution, lawful people already had the right to bear arms. Our Founding Fathers wanted to make sure that they kept that right.

With the exception of the 1986 Firearm Owners Protection Act, lawful gun owners have been subjected to a systematic assault upon their rights to keep and bear arms. Despite the fact that gun control had never been shown to reduce crime (indeed, quite the opposite was oftentimes true), law after law continued to be passed until there was not a single aspect of gun ownership, possession, transfer or purchase that was not governed by one law or another. By some estimates, there are now 30,000 gun laws in effect in our country. What all these laws have in common is that ninety-nine percent of the people to whom they apply are lawful gun owners. The one percent of gun owners who are criminal couldn't care less about gun laws.

Criminals ignore our gun laws not only because they have contempt for the law in general, but also because they know the likelihood of ever being prosecuted for a gun law violation is extremely slim. It is time we changed that.

In addition to being prosecuted for the crimes they commit, criminals should also be prosecuted for any and all gun laws they violate. Prosecuting and putting armed criminals in jail is a far better use of our time and criminal justice resources than continually passing new laws restricting the Constitutional rights of lawful citizens.

Support privacy protections and limits on the uses of social security numbers.

The original Social Security Act did not specifically provide for the Social Security Number (SSN), but instead left it to the Treasury Department to decide how best to keep track of the contributions made by workers under that Act. The Treasury Department by regulation created the SSN in 1936 to identify individuals for purposes of the Social Security System. Within a short period of time however, other federal agencies were authorized to use the SSN as a personal identifier for their programs as well.

The Privacy Act of 1974 limits to some extent the uses and disclosures of the SSN by federal agencies. However, it does not restrict the use of the number by private entities. Thus, in the private companies can use the SSN to compile and disseminate information on individuals, and require individuals to disclose their SSN's as a condition of doing business. The growing use of Social Security numbers in both the public and private sectors has rightfully alarmed people and caused them to wonder just what is Congress's commitment to protecting our personal and financial information.

In my opinion, while the Constitution does not expressly provide for a right to privacy, the Bill of Rights and Supreme Court decisions do give a constitutional basis to a reasonable expectation of such. Congress can and should legislate within the framework of this reasonable expectation to limit the government collection of information by Social Security number, and to promote increased disclosure by private companies if personal or financial information is to be shared or sold to others.

Supports protecting private property rights.

The Bill of Rights provides that private property cannot be taken for public use without just compensation. Our Founders considered this one of the most basic of rights, and in some ways central to the exercise of other rights and freedoms. It was through the ownership of property, and the wealth that property provided, that people could truly exercise their liberties. Conversely, the loss of property or the loss of the use and enjoyment of that property restricted the power of the people, their independence and their ability to oppose the power of the state. Thus, the so-called "takings clause" was meant to keep our government from doing what kings and emperors had been doing for hundreds of years - control the power and independence of their people by controlling their property.

Today, Federal agencies are controlling the use of private property for public purposes by abusing laws intended to protect the environment. In issuing regulations that limit the

uses of private land, the government is very much “taking” property from its owners. In my opinion, the government should be required to carefully review the ramifications of their regulations on private property, and pay just compensation in situations where those regulations deprive property owners of their ability to earn a living on their land.

Establish a cost effective prescription drug and long term care program

Because Medicare provides very little coverage for prescription drugs or long-term custodial care, seniors must either pay these expenses out of pocket or purchase a supplemental insurance plan. While large numbers of Medicare recipients have some kind of additional insurance coverage to help fill the gaps in Medicare, that coverage is typically expensive and requires substantial out of pocket payments. In fact, seniors with supplemental coverage still pay more than forty percent of their prescription costs out of pocket, while two-thirds of all non-government long-term care payments are paid directly by patients and their families. Considering the impending retirements of the “baby boomers,” the need for some kind of additional coverage in these areas will only grow.

Most people want to be self-sufficient and not rely upon family or welfare to sustain them in retirement. But unless we do something, even those who carefully planned for retirement could be wiped out financially or pushed below the poverty line by a single illness. We must improve Medicare with a prescription drug benefit that is available to all, but 100% voluntary to preserve the right of those who want to keep whatever coverage they already have. We also need to create better long-term and in-home care choices by developing new private/public partnerships to fund long-term care services, expand tax benefits to encourage people to buy and employers to offer long-term care insurance, and new tax credits for those with long-term care needs or caring for family members with such needs.

Increase Emphasis on medical research, home health care and preventative medicine

The early detection of disease can lead to more successful treatment and improve the quality of life for patients coping with chronic ailments. However, despite the importance of early detection, Medicare and private insurance plans typically are biased against preventative and diagnostic medical services.

I support reforms in Medicare and other programs that increase the emphasis on routine physicals and screenings. I also support promoting research into the treatment and prevention of health problems such as cardiovascular and cerebrovascular disease, cancer, arthritis, Alzheimer's disease, osteoporosis and delirium.

To its credit, Congress has recognized the important of medical research by increasing funding for programs through National Institutes of Health. We must make sure these efforts continue with an increased emphasis on geriatrics.