



HEALTH POLICY PROFILES

The 12 Freshman Members to
Watch in the 119th Congress

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C U R A
S T R A T E G I E S

HEALTH POLICY PROFILES

The 12 Freshman Members to Watch in the 119th Congress

CURA Strategies' bipartisan government relations team is proud to present our biennial Health Policy Profiles, spotlighting 12 standout legislators joining the 119th Congress. With the narrow Republican majority in the House of Representatives, having won 220 seats to the Democrats' 215, each member will have sway over which policies reach the finish line and land on the President's desk for his signature.

With more than 60 new Representatives making up this dynamic incoming class, narrowing our list of those to watch was challenging. These 12 bring diverse experiences, perspectives, ideologies and policy priorities to Capitol Hill. Drawing on their experiences as health care providers, state legislators and local government leaders, veterans and active service members, along with other backgrounds and lived experiences, these leaders are poised to make a significant impact on the health care debates in the halls of Congress—supporting their party's priorities along with bipartisan solutions forged behind the scenes in negotiation and compromise.

We've cited specific sources when necessary. Most of the information in Health Policy Profiles has been gathered from news articles, campaign websites, state legislative databases, LinkedIn and other publicly available professional profiles and Wikipedia pages of the members-elect as of December 2024. When webpages were no longer accessible, CURA used the Internet Archive to access previous versions.

Launched in 2020 and, after a strong reception, brought back after the 2022 midterms, CURA's Health Policy Profiles are part of the Advocacy Accelerator—a resource hub designed to help advocates and advocacy professionals do their job better so together we can accelerate health care transformation and help more patients live longer and healthier lives.

We hope the 2025 edition of CURA Strategies' Health Policy Profiles helps mobilize your mission in the 119th Congress.



Government Relations Core Team

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Anne Woodbury", written over a horizontal line.

Anne Woodbury

Founder and CEO

Anne.Woodbury@curastrategies.com

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Scott Leezer", written over a horizontal line.

Scott Leezer

SVP of Government Relations and Partner

Scott.Leezer@curastrategies.com

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Claire Grant", written over a horizontal line.

Claire Grant

Vice President of Public Affairs

Claire.Grant@curastrategies.com

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sydney Shepherd", written over a horizontal line.

Sydney Shepherd

Sr. Government Relations Manager

Sydney.Shepherd@curastrategies.com

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Patrick Meade", written over a horizontal line.

Patrick Meade

Government Relations Manager

Patrick.Meade@curastrategies.com



ABOUT CURA STRATEGIES

CURA Strategies is an award-winning bipartisan strategic communications and public affairs agency focused on one thing: transforming health care. Our name, CURA—Latin for care, concern and attention to others—exemplifies our mission to take exceptional care of our clients so they can transform the health care system and improve lives. In short, we help Mobilize Your Mission. Using our client-centric, customized communications and advocacy approach, we have helped over 100 clients, guided the launch of 10 national coalitions and received 20 industry awards.

CURA’s government relations team is composed of former staffers who worked at all levels of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate for both Democratic and Republican members. Our registered lobbyists work seamlessly with our communications team to shape legislation and health policy. Visit our website to read [case studies](#) and meet our bipartisan [team](#).



New Resource Spotlight

In May 2024, CURA launched [the Advocacy Academy](#), an online training platform designed to teach volunteers in under 90 minutes what they need to know about advocacy at the federal and state level and how to tell their story to a policymaker to make the most impact. Take the course yourself and [contact us](#) if you are interested in making the Academy available to your advocates.

I love it!



Very simple to understand, easily laid out and directly communicated with reinforced talking points—excellent!

Erin Callahan, COO



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REPRESENTATIVE | R-WA-05

MICHAEL BAUMGARTNER

An Informed Eye on Drug Supply

A former economics officer who worked abroad in Iraq and Afghanistan, Michael Baumgartner served as a Washington State Senator and County Treasurer, and will bring a counter-narcotics officer's eye to veterans health, health care price transparency and health care workforce expansion.

AGE

49 (December 13, 1975)

RACE/ETHNICITY

Caucasian/White

GENDER

Male

FAMILY

Married, five children

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

B.A. Economics
(Washington State University)

M.P.A. International Development
(Harvard University)

INCUMBENT REPLACED

Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R), retired

X HANDLE

@VoteBaumgartner

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND AND GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

During the Iraq War (2007-2008), Baumgartner served as an economics officer in the Office of Joint Strategic Planning & Assessment (JSPA) at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. After this, Baumgartner worked as a civilian contractor in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, working to encourage local poppy farmers to grow food instead.

Returning home to Washington after working abroad, Baumgartner was recruited by local political stakeholders to run for office, ultimately winning election to the Washington State Senate in 2010. Baumgartner won election to become Spokane County Treasurer in 2018, serving until his election to the U.S. House.

In 2012, Baumgartner challenged incumbent Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA), losing in the general election.

FUN FACT

[Baumgartner was longtime friends with former college football coach Mike Leach.](#) During Leach's time at Washington State University, the two co-taught a course, "Leadership Lessons in Insurgent Warfare & Football Strategy," designed to "explore strategy and tactics common in both Guerilla Warfare and college football to provide a backdrop for critical thinking...[and how] insurgent forces facing a larger conventional force develop and utilize asymmetric advantages to prevail in battle."

STANCE ON KEY HEALTH ISSUES

VETERANS HEALTH

During his campaign, Baumgartner [met with various veterans groups](#) and [worked with local advocates](#) to raise awareness for veterans mental health.

Baumgartner believes there is excessive bureaucracy and limited care options for veterans within the VA system and has called for solutions to physician burnout. Baumgartner has stated that he will “work tirelessly as a champion for veterans, making sure the focus of the VA is where it needs to be.”

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Acknowledging the Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization ruling, which allowed states to restrict access to abortion services, Baumgartner has stated that he “support[s] the right of the people and legislatures of each state to make their own abortion laws as consistent with the U.S. Constitution.”

As a Catholic, Baumgartner identifies as pro-life, though he supports access to IVF treatment for those in need of it and opposes abortion restrictions that don’t include exceptions for cases of rape, incest or the health of the mother. Baumgartner supports access to contraceptives and generally feels that laws restricting individuals from traveling across state lines to access an abortion [“in many cases would probably do more harm to the pro-life cause than good.”](#)

Baumgartner is a supporter of Crisis Pregnancy Centers.

PRICE TRANSPARENCY

[Baumgartner supports](#) “better price transparency so people can understand the costs hospitals are charging for procedures and expanding or creating new health savings account plans.”

MARIJUANA

During his 2012 run for U.S. Senate Baumgartner [endorsed Washington’s Initiative 502](#) to legalize recreational marijuana for adults. He cites his time working in Afghanistan as informative on his thoughts on drug legalization and regulation.

More recently, Baumgartner has said that “I am a little disappointed at how marijuana has impacted Washington state. I’m interested in the spread between the black-market rate and the licit rate, and what teenage use rates are going to be. Because of federal prohibition, we didn’t have much good science or data. There have been more significant health impacts than we knew of ahead of time, and the potency is higher and higher.” Baumgartner still, however, favors legalization with restrictions: “We should redirect a lot of funding toward education about the health costs of regular, potent marijuana use and programs to keep it away from children. It shouldn’t be in public spaces ... It’s off-putting to me when you smell it in parks and other places where it is technically prohibited, but, in the post-George Floyd era, we don’t enforce basic laws.”

ADDICTION AND ILLEGAL DRUGS

[Baumgartner has stated that he thinks](#), “We have to look at the total drug trail ... It’s not just law enforcement. But a counterinsurgency paradigm is appropriate, whether you’re talking about cocaine in Colombia and Bolivia or the precursors to fentanyl that come from China and feed into the drug gangs that bring them forward,” developing an “in-depth, multifaceted strategy, similar to how we looked at Islamic terrorist networks, to get at the drug problem,” that would both limit the supply of illegal drugs coming to the U.S. from abroad and help treat those living with addiction at home.

MEDICAL EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

[Baumgartner has acknowledged](#) the need for additional doctors in Washington State, especially noting their need in rural areas.

As a state Senator, [Baumgartner played a role](#) in securing funding for the Washington State University Medical School, acting as the primary sponsor of the Senate bill establishing the school.

Baumgartner’s claim to have “brought [a] medical school to Spokane” [was brought up during his 2024 campaign](#), with some criticizing him for taking sole credit for a joint effort. The primary sponsor from the State House of Representatives, Rep. Marcus Riccelli (D), weighed in with nuance, stating, “I do feel Mike Baumgartner was a strong partner and I am not going to rewrite that history just because he is a member of a political party I do not belong to and running for Congress ... However, it is again wholly inaccurate for him to claim he solely brought the WSU Medical School to Spokane.”



REPRESENTATIVE | R-SC-03

SHERI
BIGGS

Providing High-Flying Hands-on Healing to Heroes

Sheri Biggs brings over two decades of health care experience, including as a family and psychiatric nurse practitioner, alongside her military service as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Air Force. Her background uniquely positions her to advocate for veterans health care, mental health services and improving access to care in rural areas, with a focus on practical, frontline solutions.

AGE

54 (March 28, 1970)

RACE/ETHNICITY

Caucasian/White

GENDER

Female

FAMILY

Married, two children
(One biological child, one stepchild)

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Bachelor's Christian
Ministries (Carolina Bible
College)

D.N.P. (Samford University)

INCUMBENT REPLACED

Jeff Duncan (R), retired

X HANDLE

@VoteSheriBiggs

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND AND GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

Biggs is a Board-Certified Family Nurse Practitioner and Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner with over two decades of experience in health care. Biggs' roles throughout her career include working as an ICU nurse, nursing home administrator, and health services consultant, [performing oversight and executive functions for veterans homes and organizations](#).

Inspired by her work caring for veterans, Biggs was commissioned into the Air Force at 40. About this experience, [Biggs said](#), "I was probably a little older than most of the candidates, they were about half my age." A Lieutenant Colonel, Biggs has served as an Aerovac Nurse, leading medical crews during combat missions and "operating in hostile environments" while supporting Operation FREEDOM'S SENTINEL in Afghanistan.

Biggs is pursuing a master's degree in professional military education at the Air War College.

STANCE ON KEY HEALTH ISSUES

BRINGING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE

During her 2024 campaign, Biggs stressed how her background in health care would influence her work, saying in a [2024 interview](#):

“My life has been a testament to service and leadership, defined by over three decades in the healthcare industry and distinguished service in the Air National Guard. These roles have provided me with a deep understanding of the critical issues facing our community ... healthcare, to veteran’s issues and support, and more ... my medical career goes beyond treating individuals. As a licensed administrator, I have overseen multi-million-dollar budgets and have had to work within the constraints of state, and federal mandates. I have volunteered to help address the mental health needs of our district, including that of veterans, law enforcement, and first responders. This experience makes me uniquely equipped to address the comprehensive health of our nation at a legislative level.”

“My extensive background in healthcare positions me to bring a critical focus to the ongoing healthcare issues affecting our district and nation, particularly that of our veterans. Unlike traditional approaches, I plan to leverage my firsthand experience as a nurse practitioner and healthcare administrator to implement solutions that are not only policy-driven but are also practical and directly informed by frontline experiences. This includes expanding mental health services, improving veterans’ healthcare accessibility, and ensuring that rural areas of our district receive the same quality of care as urban centers. These are pressing issues that require not just legislative attention but also an intimate understanding of healthcare delivery systems.”

MENTAL HEALTH

Biggs volunteers with the [When Life Sucks \(WLS\) Foundation](#), a South Carolina-based non-profit “dedicated to helping veterans, active-duty military, and first responders heal from trauma and live well.”

Biggs [has published writings](#) raising awareness around depression and suicide, especially for military community members in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

VETERANS HEALTH

Biggs [has included veteran support](#) as one of her three most pressing issues facing Congress. She hopes to reduce VA wait times and improve the quality of care, increase funding for veteran mental health services, and “streamlin[e] the bureaucratic processes that often delay or deny veterans’ benefits.”

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Biggs is pro-life, saying that she is “committed to advocating for policies that protect the unborn, support families, and ensure our values are not just preserved but cherished.”

While trying to grow her family, Biggs experienced multiple miscarriages and received several bed rest orders during her pregnancy with her son. Biggs [described a visit](#) by Vice President Kamala Harris to an abortion clinic as “despicable.”

REPRESENTATIVE | D-NJ-03

HERB CONAWAY

**New Jersey's Airman, Physician and
Longtime Legislator**



Herb Conaway is a physician and long-serving New Jersey legislator with a career spanning health care leadership in both education and the military, as well as political office, where he has advanced policies to expand health care access, protect reproductive rights and support mental health and addiction treatment initiatives.

AGE

61 (January 30, 1963)

RACE/ETHNICITY

Black

GENDER

Male

FAMILY

Married, two children

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

B.A. Politics (Princeton University)

M.D. (Jefferson Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University)

J.D. (Rutgers School of Law)

INCUMBENT REPLACED

Andy Kim (D), successfully ran for U.S. Senate from New Jersey

X HANDLE

@herbconaway

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND AND GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

Conaway served in the U.S. Air Force Medical Corps, reaching the rank of Captain. He served in the primary care clinic at McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey, rising to assistant director.

After completing his residency in internal medicine, Conaway continued practicing as a primary care provider before transitioning to become a professor at an inner-city teaching hospital.

Conaway currently serves as director of the internal medicine clinic at St. Francis Medical Center in Trenton, New Jersey, and has previously worked at Cooper University Hospital in Camden, New Jersey.

Conaway was first elected to the New Jersey General Assembly in 1997, serving until his election to Congress. During his time in the Assembly, Conaway achieved a role in Party leadership, serving as Deputy Speaker from 2002-2005, Majority Whip from 2014-2017, and Deputy Speaker again beginning in 2022.

Additionally, Conaway laid his mark on various state policies during his tenures on the Budget committee, Military and Veterans' Affairs committee and Health committee, the last of which he served as Chair.

During his time in office, Conaway was the only member of the New Jersey legislature to hold both M.D. and J.D. degrees. Conaway additionally serves as [director of the Burlington County Health Department](#).

STANCE ON KEY HEALTH ISSUES

VACCINATIONS

Conaway has long supported vaccination against preventable diseases. In 2010, he opposed efforts to allow parents to claim a [“conscientious objection”](#) from having their children vaccinated when chairing an Assembly hearing on the issue, calling it a “recipe for disaster.” Additionally, he introduced [an adopted amendment to a 2019 bill](#), which prevented religious exemptions from mandatory immunization requirements for students.

In 2022, [Conaway sponsored legislation](#) that would add the COVID-19 vaccine to the list of required vaccinations for college students to attend classes in person.

Looking ahead to potential future pandemics, [Conaway supported various preventative measures](#) in September 2024, including a controversial measure “that would make it a crime for health care professionals to disseminate misinformation... [When doctors or nurses spread falsehoods about vaccines or potential treatments] and do not seem to take their responsibility [as a clinician] seriously, it makes it harder for us to do the job we’re assigned to do, which is to protect public health.”

HEALTH COVERAGE

Conaway has focused on expanding access to health care by establishing New Jersey’s Affordable Care Act health insurance marketplace and building on the ACA’s reforms over time.

In 2019, during the first Trump Administration, [Conaway sponsored successful legislation](#) to create a State-Based Exchange (SBE) instead of remaining on the Federally-Facilitated Exchange (FFE) to “protect” the State’s consumers from potential “discriminatory changes prohibiting residents with preexisting conditions and limiting women’s access to contraceptives.”

[Conaway has supported efforts to reduce drug costs for patients](#), including establishing a New Jersey program to provide prescription drugs to low-income seniors, and he intends to support efforts to advance similar policies at the federal level. Conaway has criticized pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) [for “exorbitant markups and restrictive formularies.”](#)

CANCER SCREENING

Conaway has used his unique position as a physician legislator to raise awareness around cancer screening and the importance of early detection.

In addition to [using his social media presence to raise awareness](#), Conaway has used his legislative platform to introduce resolutions recognizing awareness months, including March 2022 as [“Triple Negative Breast Cancer Awareness Month,”](#) alongside [a September 2024 resolution](#) calling on Congress to pass the federal [Find it Early Act](#) and [a May 2024 bill](#) that would provide innovative prostate cancer screening at no cost for high-risk men.

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION CARE

[Conaway supports](#) early identification and intervention for mental illness in young people, backing legislation to provide access to mental health resources and suicide hotlines, track youth suicide rates and improve overall support for vulnerable populations.

[Conaway has also introduced legislation](#) to require depression screenings for public school students from grades 7-12, with parents being informed of the screenings and enabled to opt their children out. Additionally, Conaway cosponsored legislation that would create a commission to study the effects of smartphone and social media usage on kids in school.

Conaway has raised concerns about the rise in youth vaping saying “Twenty percent of high school students, according to the foundation upon which I serve, have used one of these electronic devices during the last 30 days. That’s alarming...There’s a threat that there will be another generation of kids who are addicted to cigarettes just as we’re trying to end the scourge of cigarettes. Phillip Morris, which is one of the biggest tobacco producers and cigarette makers in the world has a 35% stake in Juul, one of the largest and most profitable of these companies. And they’re not doing it out of the goodness of their heart.”

[Conaway has supported various legislation](#) to address the opioid and addiction epidemics in New Jersey, including bills that would permit certain paramedics to administer buprenorphine, consider placement of children with relatives or other guardians when needed, and require certain health insurers to cover naloxone without imposing prior authorization requirements.

Conaway also [introduced a bill](#) that would require insurance companies to include abuse-deterrent opioids in their least expensive class of prescriptions.

Conaway has applauded local organizations for attempting innovative care solutions, [such as Catholic Charities Diocese of Trenton’s](#) Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic.

WOMEN’S HEALTH

Conaway is pro-choice and supports codifying Roe v. Wade into federal law. Conaway has pledged to support the federal Right to Conception Act, introduced by Congresswoman Kathy Manning (D-NC), “which would set out statutory protections for an individual’s right to access and a health care provider’s right to provide contraception.”

PSYCHEDELICS

[Conaway sponsored legislation to legalize psilocybin therapy for some patients](#), saying that the proposal intended to “deal with and address the very real deficiencies that we are finding in terms of treatment for those who are in distress and not yet able to obtain therapeutic benefit by alternate means.”



REPRESENTATIVE | R-CO-05

JEFF
CRANK

For Abundance and Prosperity in
American Health Care

With a deep interest and wide variety of relationships across the health care sector, Jeff Crank is a staunch advocate for free-market reform, promoting policies that expand the supply of health care services and competition among providers, reduce inefficiencies, and prioritize individual choice and patient control.

AGE

57 (January 28, 1967)

RACE/ETHNICITY

Caucasian/White

GENDER

Male

FAMILY

Married, two children

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

B.A. Political Science
(Colorado State University)

INCUMBENT REPLACED

Doug Lamborn (R), retired

X HANDLE

@JeffCrank

**PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND AND
GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE**

From 1991 to 1998, Crank worked as a legislative staffer and administrative director for former Representative Joel Hefley, also of Colorado's Fifth Congressional District. In 1998, Crank joined the Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce. He left in 2006 having risen to Senior Vice President of Government Affairs.

Throughout the 2000s, Crank served in various political roles, including as Chairman of Colorado's 5th Congressional District Republican Central Committee, as an appointed member of the Colorado Emergency Planning Commission, the El Paso County, Colorado Citizens Corps Council, and as the El Paso County Co-Chair for President George W. Bush's 2004 reelection campaign.

From 2009 to 2013, Crank served as Colorado State Director for the national conservative advocacy group, Americans for Prosperity. After leaving Americans for Prosperity, Clark founded Aegis Strategic, a political consulting firm, to support Republican candidate recruitment efforts in Colorado. Additionally, Crank has worked as Vice President, Government Sales for XAware Corporation.

Crank has hosted various radio shows, including The Jeff Crank Show from 2008 to 2021, a program on KVOR in Colorado, [choosing to leave](#) after a vaccine mandate was put in place by the show's parent company, and *American Potential*, an Americans for Prosperity-supported podcast.

On [American Potential](#), Crank interviews conservative-leaning public officials, influencers and "ordinary Americans" who've

decided “enough is enough.” Guests have included sitting Members of Congress, state legislators and, notably, [Mike Rowe](#) of Dirty Jobs fame. Many of Crank’s guests are legislative and policy staffers for Americans for Prosperity, providing a free-market perspective on health care reform.

Many of Crank’s conversations have been around health care reform, including a [September 2024 interview with Dr. Marty Makary](#), a gastrointestinal surgeon and professor at Johns Hopkins University that President-elect Trump has chosen as his presumptive nominee to be Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration.

STANCE ON KEY HEALTH ISSUES

HEALTH COVERAGE

Crank supports a “Personal Option” in health care. An [Americans for Prosperity website](#) describes a Personal Option as “offer[ing] a robust menu of policy reforms that will give Americans more choice and control over their own health care, saving them money while expanding access to the doctors they want to see.”

Crank [has interviewed Congressman Pete Sessions \(R-TX-17\)](#), sponsor of [The Health Care Fairness for All Act](#), legislation which would “Let every American open a tax-free health savings account, a powerful tool that saves you money by enabling you to pay and save for health care, tax-free, by repealing the legal requirement that HSA owners must have a high-deductible health plan” and is endorsed by Americans for Prosperity as part of their “10 actions lawmakers can take to advance a Personal Option in health care.”

Crank supports health savings accounts (HSAs), viewing them as a tool that gives patients more control over their care.

Crank has expressed support for the direct primary care (DPC) model, where patients directly pay physicians instead of sending claims to insurance providers, as an alternative to traditional health insurance models.

MILITARY FAMILIES

During his time with the Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce, [Crank worked](#) to keep Fort Carson open in the district and support the various other local military installations. While working for former-Congressman Hefley, Crank worked on the Military Family Housing Privatization Act, [“which privatized over 110,000 housing units at over fifty military installations, providing better quality housing for our military and their families.”](#) Additionally, Crank has supported efforts to provide in-state tuition for military families serving in Colorado.

VETERANS HEALTH

Crank has extensively discussed veterans health care with guests on *American Potential*, interviewing U.S. Senator Marsha Blackburn to discuss her [Veterans Health Care Freedom Act](#), which would expand managed care in the VA health system. Crank has met with veterans, inviting them to share their challenges in getting care through the VA, highlighting excessive wait times, limited treatment options and lack of veteran input.

In conversations with veteran [Nate Banks](#) and with [Dan Caldwell](#), [John Byrnes](#) and [Herb Ford](#) of Concerned Veterans for America (CVA), Crank discussed the VA Mission Act, 2018 legislation which intended to “[empower] Veterans with more health care options.” However, CVA has raised criticisms toward the VA around the Mission Act’s implementation.

TELEHEALTH

Crank supports expanding access to telehealth services.

HEALTH CARE SUPPLY

Crank supports eliminating Certificate of Need (CON) laws at the state level. CON laws require proposed health systems of hospitals to demonstrate community needs before being approved. Crank argues that these policies increase prices and limit patient access due to reduced competition and supply of health care providers.

Crank supports repealing a provision in the Affordable Care Act that has prevented physicians from owning hospitals, [arguing that it stifles competition](#).

CHILD CARE

Crank supports [reducing government-imposed barriers](#) on child care providers.

MENTAL HEALTH

On an episode of *American Potential*, [Crank met with Grace Lattz](#), a teenage advocate raising awareness on PTSD who shared her story of getting involved in legislative advocacy.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

[Crank is pro-life, saying](#), “I’m always going to vote to save unborn babies, period ... That’s just where I’m going to be. I owe it to voters to tell them that, so that they know that when they decide to vote for me or against me. That’s where I am on the life issue. You know, I believe that we ought to probably – we should have an exception for rape and incest, even though, look, I believe that abortion is murder no matter what.”

Crank added that abortion is a “convenience” for women, saying, “So it’s convenience; ‘Well, I got pregnant, and therefore I want to abort the child,’” and that 97% of abortions in the U.S. are “nontherapeutic; they are for convenience.”



REPRESENTATIVE | D-OR-03

MAXINE
DEXTER

The Pulmonologist Putting Public Health Policy Into Practice

Maxine Dexter is a practicing pulmonologist and public health advocate who has leveraged her health care expertise to champion policies to reduce costs, expand access to reproductive health and tackle the opioid crisis.

AGE

52 (December 5, 1972)

RACE/ETHNICITY

Caucasian/White

GENDER

Female

FAMILY

Married, two children

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

B.A. Political Science
and Editorial Journalism
(University of Washington)

M.D. (University of
Washington)

INCUMBENT REPLACED

Earl Blumenauer (D), retired

X HANDLE

@doctormaxine

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND AND GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

Dexter received her M.D. from the University of Washington School of Medicine and completed her residency in internal medicine at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. After her residency, Dexter completed a postgraduate pulmonary and critical care medicine fellowship and earned a Certificate in Public Health—both from the University of Colorado Denver.

Since completing her education, Dexter has practiced with Kaiser Permanente Northwest and now serves as Chair of the Northwest Permanente Board of Directors.

Dexter has served on the Oregon Medical Association's task force to reduce gun violence and on Kaiser Permanente's national task force on firearm injury prevention.

Bringing her background as a physician to her campaign, Dexter said: "I knock on the doors of strangers every day, when I knock on the door of an exam room and need to establish trust."

Dexter first ran for office to succeed a retiring member of the Oregon House of Representatives, Mitch Greenlick, in 2020. After Dexter had won the primary, Greenlick passed away, and Dexter was appointed to complete his term. In 2022, Dexter won reelection to her seat. In August 2024, Dexter resigned her seat in the Oregon House of Representatives to focus on her congressional campaign.

STANCE ON KEY HEALTH ISSUES

HEALTH COVERAGE

Dexter supports the transition to a single-payer health care system, saying that she'll work to "pass legislation to ensure every American has access to high-quality, affordable health care with the ultimate goal of a single-payer model."

In the State Legislature, Dexter has supported efforts to move toward "value-based" payment models, moving away from the dominant "fee-for-service model," and voted in favor of legislation establishing health care as a right in the State Constitution.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Dexter has worked to reduce costs for consumer medications, including capping the price of insulin at \$35. She has sponsored multiple bills to reform pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) practices and intends to carry forward this work in Congress.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Dexter practiced as a pulmonologist throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, [The New York Times](#) wrote, "The pandemic has given front-line physicians like Dr. Dexter a clear view of the life-or-death stakes of government decision making, whether on social distancing or contact tracing. At work, Dr. Dexter has seen how even healthy, young patients can rapidly devolve, some spending enough time on a ventilator to cause lifelong physical damage," with Dexter adding that, "People who aren't in health care wouldn't necessarily understand what we're seeing in the same way."

In [the summer of 2021](#), Dexter spoke out in favor of COVID-19 vaccine mandates, saying, "It's time to mandate vaccinations to participate in society. Those who choose to be unvaccinated are sacrificing the health of our communities. I will be criticized for taking this position and I will take it. We must get control of this before winter."

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Dexter is pro-choice and supports access to birth control and other reproductive health care services. She has advocated for Roe v. Wade to be codified into law and the Hyde Amendment to be repealed.

In Oregon, Dexter has supported legislation protecting doctors and medical professionals from prosecution for providing abortions or gender-affirming care.

In Congress, Dexter intends to continue her support for access to reproductive health care and work to expand teaching programs for clinicians who provide abortions and other reproductive health services.

Dexter has publicly shared that she is a sexual assault survivor.

ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH

Dexter sponsored [Oregon's Opioid Harm Reduction Package](#), 2023 legislation that expanded access to naloxone and other harm reduction tools. In [a 2024 interview](#), Dexter described herself as "being the first lawmaker in Oregon to raise the alarm about the fentanyl crisis we find ourselves in."

MARIJUANA

During her time in the State Legislature, Dexter has supported legislation easing restrictions on legal cannabis businesses to conduct their activities.

HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE

Dexter expressed concern for the country's health care workforce shortage, promising to "innovate how we attract, train and retain healthcare professionals, making sure we have a workforce that meets the needs of our communities."

LGBTQ+ HEALTH

Dexter supports access to gender-affirming care and has worked to streamline suicide reporting "to prevent harm from spreading in the community." Dexter has worked to expand access to PEP and PrEP medications for people at risk for HIV. Dexter supports a ban on "so-called conversion therapy."

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Dexter's husband, Robert, is also a physician, practicing internal medicine at Kaiser Sunnyside Medical Center near Portland, Oregon.



REPRESENTATIVE | R-MT-02

TROY DOWNING

Bringing Down(ing) Costs for Prescription Drugs

Troy Downing brings a background in business, military service and public office to offer a pragmatic approach to health care policy in Congress. With a focus on transparency in prescription drug pricing and experimentation with innovative health care delivery models, he aims to champion policies that improve access and affordability.

AGE

57 (March 4, 1967)

RACE/ETHNICITY

Caucasian/White

GENDER

Male

FAMILY

Married, four children

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

B.S. Mathematical Sciences (New York University)

INCUMBENT REPLACED

Matt Rosendale (R), retired to run for U.S. Senate, dropping out during the Republican primary

X HANDLE

@DowningForMT

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND AND GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

Downing began his career as a research scientist and educator at New York University. He later founded a technology startup that merged with Yahoo! Inc., positioning him to help other startups with their journeys.

Inspired to enlist after the 9/11 attacks, Downing spent eight years in the U.S. Air Force/California Air National Guard as part of the 129th Rescue Squadron, primarily supporting search and rescue missions as an aviator/flight engineer. Downing was deployed twice to southern Afghanistan. During "downtime" while in Afghanistan, Downing volunteered in the military hospital in Kandahar and on outreach missions elsewhere in the country.

After completing his military service, Downing founded, led and invested in several companies, including DeFeet International, a high-tech sock company for athletes, AC Self Storage Solutions and Wildrye Distilling in Bozeman, Montana, among others.

Downing won election to become Montana State Auditor in 2020, forgoing reelection in 2024 to run for Congress.

STANCE ON KEY HEALTH ISSUES

HEALTH COVERAGE

In 2018, Downing stated his opposition to the Affordable Care Act, saying that [his plan for health care](#) would be to “repeal Obamacare and let the free market work,” adding “we need to enlist more transparency to see what the real costs of healthcare are.”

In 2023, Downing [described](#) Mountain Health Co-op—a Helena, Montana-based health insurance cooperative financed by federal government loans as part of the Affordable Care Act—as a “viable player” that had outperformed many other co-ops nationwide. He acknowledged their role in increasing health insurance competition for Montanans, stating, “We’re supportive of that and want them to continue to succeed. They’ve worked with regulators, both here and in other states, to ensure reasonable growth and a sustainable business.”

In 2024, [Downing stated that](#) “Congress should prioritize policies that encourage personal responsibility and empower individuals to save and plan for their retirement healthcare needs,” including promoting Health Savings Accounts and 401(k) plans. He expressed “Congress should also explore innovative solutions for delivering healthcare more efficiently and effectively, such as telemedicine and value-based care models, to ensure older adults receive quality care while controlling costs.”

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

[Downing supports securing](#) “most favored nation status to lower drug costs.”

In 2021, [Downing supported state legislation](#) enabling him, in his role as State Auditor, who doubly serves as Commissioner of Securities and Insurance, to license and regulate PBMs, saying, “if it’s simply a black box, it’s harder for plans to negotiate for better services and lower prices,” referring to PBM rebates.

Enabled by this legislation, in 2024, [Downing released a report](#) on PBM rebate practices, stating, “The goal of this law is to lower prescription drug prices for Montanans...By requiring PBMs to report rebates and fees, it helps health plans see behind the curtain and negotiate better contracts which may help lower the ultimate cost to the Montana consumer.”

VETERANS HEALTH

In 2022, Express Scripts, the PBM overseeing the prescription drug formulary for TRICARE, the health program for the Department of Defense, active-duty military members, military families and veterans, made a change that could have left Montana veterans without an in-market pharmacy. [Downing wrote to the White House](#), criticizing this move and emphasizing the impact it would have on rural military families.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In March 2020, early in the COVID-19 pandemic, Wildrye Distilling, which Downing co-owns, [repurposed their facilities to manufacture thousands of gallons of hand sanitizer](#), which was then provided to first responders and other community members.

In September 2021, [Downing released a statement](#) urging Montanans to vaccinate against COVID-19 but did not endorse a vaccine requirement.

LOCAL HOSPITALS

Downing has toured hospitals in Montana, including St. Vincent Regional Hospital in Billings, Montana, [stating](#), “We must do all we can to support and sustain these great facilities.”

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE

Downing is pro-life and [has said that abortion policy is an issue he feels strongly about](#) because he was born as the result of an unplanned pregnancy to an unmarried mother, adding, “Me personally, I’m going to bring God into it—I think God has a plan for every life, and it’s not the purview of man to deny that plan for any innocent life.”

CANCER CONNECTION

In 2021, [Downing helped a cancer patient achieve a bucket list item](#) by helping them fly aboard a fighter jet.



REPRESENTATIVE | D-TX-32

JULIE JOHNSON

Everything's Bigger in Texas, Including Health Care Agendas

Julie Johnson brings over two decades of legal experience to her legislative work, where she's championed Medicaid expansion, prescription drug affordability and efforts to expand access to medical marijuana and psychedelic therapies while also advocating for reproductive rights and a modernized elder care system.

AGE

58 (May 2, 1966)

RACE/ETHNICITY

Caucasian/White

GENDER

Female

FAMILY

Married, two children

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

B.A. History/Government (University of Texas at Austin)

J.D. (University of Houston)

INCUMBENT REPLACED

Colin Allred (D), retired to pursue unsuccessful U.S. Senate bid

X HANDLE

@JulieJohnsonTX

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND AND GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

Johnson is an attorney who "specializes in personal injury cases, family law, and mediation. She has represented thousands of clients in the DFW area and has been in practice since 1991."

Johnson won election to the Texas State House of Representatives in 2018, where she served through her election to the U.S. House.

Johnson sits on the House Committee on Insurance, is Vice Chair of the Women's Health Caucus, serves as Treasurer of the Texas House LGBTQ Caucus, and is a member of the Innovation & Technology Caucus.

Johnson's work has led to her recognition as Champion of Medicine by the Texas Medical Association and the 2019 Freshman of the Year by Texas Monthly.

PERSONAL NOTES

Johnson is one of Dallas County, Texas's first two openly gay elected officials and the first Texas State Representative with a same-sex spouse.

STANCE ON KEY HEALTH ISSUES

HEALTH COVERAGE

Johnson supports “building upon the Affordable Care Act and exploring options for a public healthcare option to ensure everyone can get the care they need when they need it.”

In 2021, [Johnson acted as a leader](#) during bipartisan efforts to expand Medicaid in Texas, serving as House sponsor of legislation that would have created a “Live Well Texas” program, a compromise to expand Medicaid while including “incentives for adults to work and manage their own health care responsibly.” Ultimately, the Medicaid expansion effort did not pass, and Texas has yet to expand Medicaid and accept expanded federal subsidies established under the Affordable Care Act.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Johnson has supported legislation to limit prior authorization by insurance companies and authored legislation to “[end] prior authorization by insurance companies for drugs prescribed to treat autoimmune diseases like HIV, arthritis, hemophilia, or Von Willebrand disease more than once annually.”

Johnson has additionally co-authored successful legislation which established a wholesale prescription drug importation program “to provide lower cost prescription drugs available outside of the United States to consumers in Texas at the lower cost.”

Johnson [has celebrated the Medicare drug price negotiation efforts](#) established under the Inflation Reduction Act.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Johnson is pro-choice and supports efforts to codify Roe v. Wade into law. Johnson has voted against efforts by Texas Republicans to ban abortion in the state and [SB 8, Texas’s “Abortion Bounty Law,”](#) which allows private citizens to sue anyone who performs or aids and abets an abortion procedure for at least \$10,000. Additionally, Johnson has voted against funding for crisis pregnancy centers.

Johnson has co-authored legislation “protect[ing] pharmacists from the state when prescribing abortion medication,” allowing “Texas women with birth control prescriptions to finally get a 12-month supply of birth control instead of 3-month supplies,” and “end[ing] the state sales tax on feminine hygiene products.”

In 2023, Johnson co-authored successful legislation that provided 12 months of Medicaid coverage for new mothers in Texas.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In July 2020, Johnson [participated in a virtual town hall](#) on coping with addiction and stress during the COVID-19 pandemic, featuring representatives from the National Alliance on Mental Illness North Texas.

Throughout the pandemic, Johnson urged caution and supported various non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) to limit spread. Johnson has encouraged Texans to get vaccinated and [criticized Texas Republicans](#) for banning vaccine mandates in the state.

ELDER CARE

Johnson has acknowledged elder law and care as being among “the greatest challenges we will face in the coming years.”

MEDICAL LEAVE

In Congress, Johnson intends to “work to modernize the FMLA and support a minimum of 12 weeks of paid leave for American workers.”

PSYCHEDELICS

In 2023, Johnson sponsored legislation that [would have created an “Alternative Mental Health Therapy Research Consortium”](#) in Texas, tasked with researching “the efficacy of providing mental health care through the provision of psychedelic drugs and ketamine, focusing on the provision of mental health care to veterans in this state through the use of those alternative therapies.” Additionally, this bill would direct the commission to conduct “a study on the efficacy of using substances like ibogaine and 5-MeO-DMT to treat veterans who suffer from PTSD, depression and mild traumatic brain injury.”

MARIJUANA

Johnson supports “decriminalizing and legalizing cannabis, expunging past convictions, and implementing responsible regulations to ensure safe access and address social justice issues related to the War on Drugs.”

As a legislator, Johnson has supported efforts to expand access to medical cannabis in Texas, including expanding the types of patients who can access medical cannabis, and raising the allowed THC limit in products.

Johnson has authored legislation that would allow veterans with PTSD to qualify for medical marijuana and allow patients to use marijuana instead of opioids to treat pain.

CANCER CARE

In 2023, [Johnson introduced a resolution](#) recognizing March as Colorectal Cancer Prevention Awareness Month.

REPRESENTATIVE | R-UT-03

MIKE
KENNEDY



A Shot of Conservative Values in Health Care

Mike Kennedy brings a unique blend of medical practice, legal expertise and conservative values to his work in Congress, where he'll focus on personal responsibility and limited government. Kennedy is dedicated to expanding access to health care, including access to telehealth, while also volunteering his time to provide care to uninsured Utahns.

AGE

55 (February 2, 1969)

RACE/ETHNICITY

Caucasian/White

GENDER

Male

FAMILY

Married, eight children

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

B.S. General Studies
(Brigham Young University)

M.D. (Michigan State
University)

J.D. (Brigham Young
University)

INCUMBENT REPLACED

John Curtis (R), retired to
successfully run for U.S.
Senate from Utah

X HANDLE

@KennedyforUtah

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND AND GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

After completing medical school and his residency in Michigan, Kennedy moved to Utah, where he has since practiced family medicine. Today, Kennedy practices at Premier Family Medical and volunteers his time to uninsured Utahns at the Provo Volunteer Care Clinic.

In addition to his work in medicine, Kennedy has practiced as an attorney in Utah. Discussing his involvement in these two disparate careers, [Kennedy said](#), "They're all related ... Medicine is about the individual and helping him heal. The law heals society—it involves the one and the framework for the many. Politics is a different version of societal healing."

Kennedy [has been a Board Member](#) for the Dyslexia Center of Utah and Timpanogos Regional Hospital.

Kennedy first won the election to Utah's House of Representatives in 2012, where he served until he chose to forgo reelection to unsuccessfully challenge Mitt Romney in the 2018 Republican Primary for the U.S. Senate from Utah.

Kennedy has served as Chair of the Utah State Senate Health and Human Services Committee.

STANCE ON KEY HEALTH ISSUES

HEALTH COVERAGE

As a state legislator, Kennedy has opposed Medicaid expansion efforts in Utah. During a 2014 Utah Health Reform Task Force meeting, [Kennedy stated](#) “Sometimes access actually can mean harm.”

In 2015, [Kennedy wrote](#), “Medicaid expansion is about control. It is not about health insurance, and it is not about health care ... If we as a state choose to expand Medicaid, we give up state autonomy. We more deeply commit ourselves to Federal benefits and Federal obligations. Once these commitments are made, we can never turn back from them. More disturbingly, we encourage more of our citizens to give up their own autonomy. Another Federal entitlement program expansion means more of our people will be dependent on the Federal government for their personal daily needs.”

In 2022, Kennedy [voted against](#) expanding Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program to include all Utah children, while in 2023, he [voted in favor](#) of legislation to expand Medicaid coverage to cover postpartum care for 12 months.

While campaigning for Congress, Kennedy expressed support for expanding health savings accounts and promoting cost transparency.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Kennedy supports “free-market” solutions to address high prescription costs, such as “fostering competition and increasing the availability of generic drugs,” and allowing patients to purchase prescriptions from other countries.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Kennedy is pro-life and, as a state legislator, [voted in support of legislation](#) requiring that the state Department of Health report annually on abortions performed, and bar abortions based on Down syndrome diagnoses.

In 2021, [Kennedy voted in support](#) of legislation requiring jails “to allow prisoners access to medically prescribed contraceptives.”

ADDICTION

In 2015, [Kennedy stated](#), “That’s part of the beauty of America ... People have the opportunity to succeed if they work hard and stay away from damaging things such as alcohol, drugs and cigarettes. I’ve spent my professional life helping people fill their personal objectives by encouraging them to be free and not bound by sickness and addiction. They’re the captain of the ship; I’m the first mate. I can’t make decisions for them.”

In 2018, [Kennedy voted in favor](#) of legislation requiring physicians to provide patients receiving opioids designated as Schedule II or Schedule III substances with a warning while voting against legislation requiring prescribers “to discuss the risks of using an opiate with a patient or the patient’s guardian before issuing an initial opiate prescription.”

Kennedy “opposed the bill because he believes it goes too far in micromanaging the best practices of Utah doctors, who he said have been receiving training on helping patients avoid opioid addiction

for some time,” and stated, “I can think of fewer professional things that would make me more appalled ... in my practice [than finding that out, and that is *motivation* enough].”

CANCER RESEARCH

An avid runner, in October 2024, [Kennedy and his family ran](#) in the Big Cottonwood Canyon Half Marathon to raise money for cancer research.

FUN FACT

Kennedy is one of eight siblings. He and his four brothers are all Eagle Scouts. In high school, Kennedy competed on the gymnastics team.

MENTAL HEALTH

In 2023, Kennedy [voted in favor of a grant program](#) to establish “appropriate response to individuals experiencing mental health crises through new or expanded crisis intervention or mobile crisis outreach teams.”

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In 2021, [Kennedy voted to end](#) COVID-19 emergency powers and public health orders instituted by state and local officials.

[Kennedy sponsored legislation](#) that would ban employers from requiring employees to be vaccinated against COVID-19, stating that, “I feel really strongly that each individual, we have a right to direct our lives in ways that we see fit. And we make not-so-good decisions sometimes, other times we make really good decisions.” Emphasizing that the legislation was intended for businesses who were not accommodating exemptions from being vaccinated, Kennedy stated that “This bill is targeting (those businesses), and frankly I think it’s a very modest request because most employees want the vaccine, most employees are happy to wear masks.”

MARIJUANA

While Kennedy [has supported legislation](#) authorizing certain patients with terminal conditions to try medical cannabis, authorizing cultivation of medical cannabis, and expanding the ability of doctors to recommend marijuana, he [was the only Republican state legislator](#) to vote against Utah’s Medical Cannabis Act in 2018.

TELEHEALTH AND DIGITAL HEALTH

Kennedy supports expanding access to telehealth services, which he sees as “especially crucial for improving healthcare access in underserved areas.” Additionally, Kennedy is “committed to enforcing strict protections against data breaches, ensuring personal health information stays secure.”



REPRESENTATIVE | D-MN-03

KELLY MORRISON

Bringing Compassion as an OB to the House Floor

Kelly Morrison is a practicing OB/GYN and former Minnesota state Representative and Senator. Dr. Morrison has championed reproductive rights, veterans health and mental health reform across her state and will bring these priorities to Congress.

AGE

55 (February 2, 1969)

RACE/ETHNICITY

Caucasian/White

GENDER

Female

FAMILY

Married, three children

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

B.A. History (Yale University)

Doctor of Medicine (Case Western Reserve University)

INCUMBENT REPLACED

Dean Philips (D), retired to run in the 2024 Democratic Presidential Primary

X HANDLE

@morrison4MN

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND AND GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

An OB/GYN who's practiced in Minnesota for over two decades, Morrison jumped into politics by running for the state's House of Representatives in the 2018 election. Her election that year helped to end an over 15-year drought of physicians serving in Minnesota's House of Representatives. In 2022, Morrison won an election to Minnesota's Senate.

During her time in the state legislature, Morrison lent her expertise to key health care committees and served as assistant majority leader for the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party (DFL) Caucus during her time in each chamber.

Throughout her time in office, Morrison's work has been recognized by patient advocacy organizations and other health care stakeholders, including the Minnesota Psychiatric Society, the Minnesota Children's Hospital, the Minnesota Psychological Association, and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

STANCE ON KEY HEALTH ISSUES

MATERNAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Morrison will join Senator Roger Marshall ([A fellow Senator recognized in CURA's Health Policy Profiles](#)) as one of only two OB/GYNs in the 119th Congress. [Morrison has argued that the](#) “field has undergone a sea change in recent decades, becoming more progressive and diverse, and ... hopes that is reflected on the Hill.” [In 2021, Morrison said](#), “As an OB/GYN, it’s my job to care for the reproductive health of my patients. It is essential that patients are free to make the reproductive health decisions that are right for them, free from government interference. Politicians should not be making reproductive health care decisions for Minnesotans. Birth control, pregnancy and vasectomies are personal health care decisions that a Minnesotan makes with their faith, family and doctor.”

An ally of Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, Morrison led efforts to pass the *Protect Reproductive Options Act*, which was passed into law, establishing various protections on access to reproductive health care.

MILITARY AND VETERANS HEALTH

Morrison’s husband is a former Army Ranger and combat veteran. Additionally, Morrison’s father, grandparents and father-in-law all served in the military.

Morrison began her career working at a VA hospital in Cleveland, providing care to veterans while in medical school. During her time in the state legislature, Morrison co-authored and worked to pass legislation to provide 9/11 veterans and their families with service bonuses. She has stated that “she will continue to advocate on behalf of veterans in Congress.”

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION

Named the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)’s Legislator of the Year for 2023, Morrison has worked to enact bipartisan solutions to expand access to mental health services, from removing restrictions on telehealth services and care across state lines to dedicating funding for children’s residential mental health facilities. Morrison sits on the Opioid Epidemic Response Advisory Council in the Minnesota legislature and supports access to medication-assisted treatment for those living with substance use disorder. During her time in the Minnesota Senate, [Morrison partnered with Colleen Ronnei](#)—Executive Director of an opioid addiction awareness nonprofit, Change the Outcome, whose son died from an accidental heroin overdose—to pass a proposal establishing funding for Narcan in schools, along with training for school employees.

ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE CARE

Morrison supports efforts to rein in “out-of-control health care costs that rise every year.” These efforts have included [the Alec Smith Insulin Affordability Act](#), which capped the price of insulin at \$35/month (down from \$600 monthly) and [multiple attempts](#) to create a state Prescription Drug Affordability Board.

PSYCHEDELICS

In 2023, [Morrison supported successful efforts to establish a Minnesota State Psychedelic Medicine Task Force](#) to advise lawmakers on “the legal, medical, and policy issues associated with the legalization of psychedelic medicine in the state.”

REPRESENTATIVE | R-MO-03

BOB
ONDER



From Allergies to Conservative Health Care Advocacy

Bob Onder brings a unique blend of medical expertise and legislative experience to Congress, with a career spanning clinical practice, research and state government. Onder is poised to significantly influence health care policy, particularly across telehealth access, the opioid epidemic and various conservative health care reform priorities, including potential reductions in federal Medicaid funding.

AGE

62 (January 6, 1962)

RACE/ETHNICITY

Caucasian/White

GENDER

Male

FAMILY

Married, six children

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

B.S. Biology/Economics
(Washington University in
St. Louis)

M.D. (Washington University
in St. Louis)

J.D. (Saint Louis University
Law School)

INCUMBENT REPLACED

Blaine Luetkemeyer (R),
retired

X HANDLE

@BobOnderMO

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND AND GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

Onder founded his private medical practice, Allergy and Asthma Consultants, in 1992. Since 2000, Onder has acted as President & Principal Investigator at Midwest Clinical Research, “a dedicated research site focusing on phase 2, 3, and 4 clinical trials in the fields of respiratory medicine, allergy and immunology, and internal medicine.” Onder has also served as an Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine at the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis.

Onder was elected to the Missouri House of Representatives in 2006, where he served for one term. In 2015, he took office in the Missouri Senate and won a second term in 2018. During his time in the State Senate, Onder co-founded the Missouri Senate Conservative Caucus.

Onder [has earned a reputation](#) “as one of the most vocal members of the self-styled conservative caucus, upending the chamber by filibustering a litany of bills.” During his time in the State Senate, Onder acted as Chair of the Health and Pensions Committee.

In recognition of his work, Onder received a legislative award from the Missouri Academy of Family Physicians for his help in passing legislation “[relating to Direct Primary Care options in Missouri](#)” and a legislative excellence award from the Missouri Dental Association.

STANCE ON KEY HEALTH ISSUES

HEALTH COVERAGE

Onder has opposed efforts to expand Missouri's Medicaid program using federal support through the Affordable Care Act, despite Missouri voters choosing to amend the State Constitution in 2020 to do so.

While in the Missouri Senate, [Onder worked to oppose](#) efforts to implement taxes on Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) enrollees to fund Medicaid rates.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Onder has supported efforts to reduce the costs of prescription drugs, including increasing physician power to prescribe less expensive biological products.

MILITARY FAMILIES

Onder [has supported efforts](#) to reduce licensing restrictions on military family members, enabling those from various industries, including medical professionals, to more easily work in the state if they're already licensed elsewhere.

TELEHEALTH

Onder has supported efforts to expand access to telehealth services in Missouri.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Onder has been critical of efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19 and has called for restrictions on local officials' power during health emergencies.

[Onder has criticized Dr. Anthony Fauci](#), former Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, for his framing around the COVID-19 vaccine.

During his 2024 campaign for Congress, [Onder was disparaged](#) in an opponent's ad that alleged that he had taken "millions" from pharmaceutical companies to test vaccines. The ad stated that Onder "profited from our pain," and told the public that, "you suffered the consequences." A spokesperson for Onder responded that he had never done vaccine research and opposed COVID-19 vaccine mandates, though clarified that Onder had "'conducted' one study sponsored by AstraZeneca on preventing COVID-19 in high-risk patients using monoclonal antibodies, not vaccines."

Onder himself [received the COVID-19 vaccine](#) in January 2021.

OPIOID AND ADDICTION TREATMENT

Onder [has opposed efforts](#) to decriminalize needle exchange programs.

Onder has supported efforts to address the opioid addiction epidemic, including [limiting initial prescriptions](#) to no more than a seven-day supply and [increasing penalties for drug traffickers](#).

MARIJUANA

Onder has opposed efforts to legalize both medical and recreational marijuana in Missouri. In 2018, [Onder stated that](#), “I really believe there’s a lot of money for the pot entrepreneurs to be made, and I really think patients are being exploited to get their ultimate goal—which is to full legalization and to make money.”

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Onder is pro-life and formerly served as a Missouri Right to Life board member.

Onder was the principal author of Missouri’s [“Heartbeat Bill”](#) in 2019, banning abortions after fetal heartbeat is detected, which typically occurs after eight weeks of pregnancy. The legislation “included a trigger clause that enabled Missouri to be the first in the nation to protect all innocent human life.” Onder has supported several other pieces of legislation that place restrictions on access to reproductive health care, including abortions, in Missouri.

Onder has [supported efforts to bar Planned Parenthood](#) from participating in Missouri’s Medicaid program.

CANCER CARE

In 2021, [Onder expressed skepticism](#) about the connection between firefighting and cancer, saying that “it’s unclear whether firefighters are at an increased risk of cancer, firefighters as an aggregate.. If you or I don’t die from cardiovascular disease, odds are we will die of cancer. The reason firefighters get cancer is the same reason you or I get cancer,” adding that firefighters may develop cancer for reasons outside of their work, like “smoking a pack a day for 20 years.”

FUN FACT

Onder holds a private pilot’s license. He also previously hosted [The Onder Prescription with Dr. Bob Onder](#) on NewsTalkSTL, where he discussed various political topics and issues, including health care.



REPRESENTATIVE | D-WA-06

EMILY RANDALL

Trailblazing LGBTQ+ Legislator Advancing Health Access and Equity

The first openly LGBTQ+ Representative and former state Senator from Washington State, Emily Randall has worked to expand reproductive justice, protect Medicaid, lower prescription drug costs and support the well-being of LGBTQ+ veterans.

AGE

39 (Born in 1985)

RACE/ETHNICITY

Hispanic/Latina, Caucasian/White

GENDER

Female

FAMILY

Married

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

B.A. Spanish and Women's Studies (Wellesley College)

INCUMBENT REPLACED

Derek Kilmer (D), retired

X HANDLE

@EmilyRandallWA

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND AND GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

Randall's career has been tightly intertwined with health care advocacy, having held positions at Children's Hospital Boston, the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, and the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

This journey was inspired by Randall's late sister, Olivia, who lived with microcephaly, which Randall referred to as a "severe developmental and physical disability." Randall credits Washington State's Medicaid expansion for enabling her family to secure the help Olivia needed without going bankrupt.

After winning election to Washington's State Senate by just 104 votes in 2018, Randall quickly rose to Deputy Majority Leader, working to pass legislation on health care and other issues as part of the Senate Higher Education & Workforce Development, Health & Long Term Care and Ways & Means Committees.

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Randall's father [lived with Hepatitis C](#) and passed away due to liver cancer.

STANCE ON KEY HEALTH ISSUES

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Randall has been an active supporter of access to reproductive health care, sponsoring the [Reproductive Health Access for All Act in 2019](#) and subsequent legislation to preserve access to mifepristone and other abortion medications, block religious hospital mergers, extend postpartum coverage support for a year post-birth, expand the types of providers who can perform abortions, and require all plans to cover reproductive health care and contraception.

In 2023, Randall sponsored successful legislation removing barriers for youth seeking protected health care services, such as gender-affirming care and reproductive health care.

Randall has also made critical steps to strengthen essential maternal health professions, sponsoring successful legislation expanding prescriptive authority for licensed midwives, as well as championing efforts to define "birth doulas" under state law and formalize competency and certification requirements to establish "lactation consultants" as a new health profession.

DISABILITY CARE

Randall sponsored several bills related to disability care, including legislation that would authorize payments to some parental caregivers for minor children with disabilities and increase access to respite care for those with disabilities and their caregivers.

In February 2020, Randall sponsored a resolution celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

HEALTH COVERAGE

Randall credits her family's first-hand Medicaid experience as her reason for supporting Medicaid expansion, protecting and strengthening the Affordable Care Act and increasing flexibility in how states use Medicaid funding.

Randall believes that "no one should go bankrupt to pay for lifesaving or palliative care" and sponsored legislation to create Washington's Universal Healthcare Commission.

Randall sponsored successful legislation that banned balance billing of consumers with fully insured regulated health plans for out-of-network ground ambulance services and required the State's insurance commissioner to review the reasonableness of payment rates and reports to the legislature about the impact of this policy on ground ambulance services.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Randall has supported efforts to reduce prescription drug costs for patients, including serving as a primary sponsor of a 2022 bill establishing a Prescription Drug Affordability Board in Washington State, which was passed by the legislature and signed into law that year.

Randall also sponsored successful legislation that requires hospitals to have policies and procedures for dispensing a 28-day supply of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) drugs—antiretroviral medications that can prevent HIV infection after exposure—unless medically contraindicated and prohibits health carriers from imposing cost sharing or prior authorization for these drugs.

VETERANS HEALTH AND MILITARY FAMILIES

Randall's grandparents on both sides worked at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, in addition to her father, who worked there for over 25 years.

During her time in the State Senate, Randall supported legislation to establish an LGBTQ Veteran Coordinator position within the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs. In addition, [Randall has introduced various bills aimed at improving quality of life for military families.](#)

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Randall has supported legislation that would reduce barriers to becoming a nurse and broadening the scope of practice for optometrists.

HEART HEALTH

Signed into law by Washington Governor Inslee in 2024, Randall sponsored legislation requiring fitness centers to acquire and maintain at least one external defibrillator on the premises.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION

Randall sponsored multiple bills related to mental health care in the Washington Senate, including legislation to expand access to behavioral health care for students, support young adults following inpatient behavioral health treatment, and ensure continuity of coverage for patients taking prescription drugs for behavioral health conditions.

Randall sponsored successful legislation that created the profession of "certified peer specialists" in Washington, requiring health carriers and Medicaid to provide access by 2026, and supported legislation to reduce penalties for possession of controlled substances and expand access to addiction treatment.

MARIJUANA

Randall sponsored successful legislation that prohibits employers from discriminating against applicants based on off-the-job use of cannabis.



REPRESENTATIVE | D-CA-12

LATEEFAH SIMON

Riding the Rails to Universal Health Care

Lateefah Simon is a disability rights advocate and social justice leader with a strong focus on health equity, criminal justice reform and expanding access to health care. A proponent of a public option and single-payer health care, Simon’s personal experience with the high costs of medical care fuels her dedication to improving the system for all, particularly marginalized communities.

AGE

47 (January 29, 1977)

RACE/ETHNICITY

Black

GENDER

Female

FAMILY

Widowed, two children

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

B.A. Public Policy (Mills College)

M.P.A. (University of San Francisco)

INCUMBENT REPLACED

Barbara Lee (D), retired

X HANDLE

@lateefahsimon

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND AND GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

Simon has worked in leadership roles at various social services and advocacy organizations throughout her career, focusing on women’s rights, criminal justice reform and supporting disadvantaged individuals. She is currently president of the Meadow Fund.

FUN FACT

In 2003, at 26 years old, Simon became the youngest woman to receive a MacArthur “Genius” Fellowship.

From 2005 to 2008, Simon worked at the San Francisco District Attorney’s Office under then-District Attorney Kamala Harris. Simon led a public/private partnership aimed at reducing recidivism among young adults charged with low-level felony drug sales.

In 2016, Simon was appointed to the California State University Board of Trustees. Additionally, in 2016, Simon was elected to serve on the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) District Board of Directors, and in 2020 was elected president of the Board of Directors.

STANCE ON KEY HEALTH ISSUES

DISABILITY RIGHTS

Simon intends to “fight for full ADA compliance across all public spaces” and advocate “for stronger enforcement of disability rights, expanded resources, and the removal of barriers to self-determination,” envisioning “a future where disabled people can live with dignity, independence, and equal opportunities to shape their own lives.”

HEALTH COVERAGE

Simon’s late husband Kevin Watson, passed away from leukemia in 2014. [Simon has shared that](#), even with insurance, her husband’s hospital bills left her nearly \$1 million in debt.

Simon supports the creation of a public option and ultimately a single-payer health care system. Simon supports “clos[ing] the Medicaid coverage gap, expand[ing] Medicare to include dental, vision and hearing, and lower[ing] the Medicare eligibility age.”

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Simon supports expansion of the Medicare drug price negotiations established under the Inflation Reduction Act.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Simon is pro-choice and supports a federal law codifying the right to abortion, contraceptives and IVF access.

Simon hopes to invest in improvements in maternal and infant mortality, particularly for communities of color.

LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

Simon supports protections for LGBTQ+ individuals and those with HIV from discrimination and codification of rights for transgender, nonbinary and intersex people, “including gender-affirming care and health care,” and “prohibit[ing] conversion therapy.”

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION

Simon hopes to increase investment in mental health and substance abuse treatment and prevention services.

In 2018, [Simon joined Rev. Al Sharpton](#) and others to discuss mental health in the black community after the killing of Antwon Rose by a police officer in Pennsylvania.

PERSONAL NOTES

Simon was born legally blind and is unable to drive. Her reliance on public transportation has informed her work in disability advocacy and transportation equity.

At 16, Simon had given up school and was on probation for being a “habitual shoplifter” and working at Taco Bell before she became a street outreach worker with San Francisco’s Center for Young Women’s Development, an organization that “helps women drug dealers, prostitutes and to those in the juvenile justice system, to become self-sufficient and develop self-esteem.”