



NON-PARTISAN ELECTION MATERIAL
DOCTORS FOR CHANGE VOTERS GUIDE 2014
On healthcare-related issues



Our guide contains 1) candidate answers to health care related questions and 2) candidate beliefs on health issues (as found on candidate websites). We sincerely hope that this guide will foster discussion on how we as a community can improve the access to and the quality of health care in Houston and Harris County.

Please visit our website at **doctorsforchange.org** for more information on our organization, a 501©(3), non-partisan organization of over 1000 health care professionals who are committed to improving the health of all Houstonians.

All candidates were asked the following questions:

- 1) What can we do improve the support and care for human trafficking survivors?
- 2) What should be done (if anything) to improve access to health care in our community?
If applicable, what changes (if any) would you make to the Texas Medicaid program?
- 3) What can we do to better support the health of Texas elders?
- 4) In your opinion, what can we do to improve access to mental health care?

Texas Governor

Greg Abbott (R)

Response to DFC questions:

1) What can we do improve the support and care for human trafficking survivors?

As Attorney General and Chairman of the Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force, I worked closely with law enforcement officials, legislators, and nonprofit organizations to provide a coordinated response to fighting human trafficking. Of the task force's 48 recommendations, 42 have been passed into law since 2011.

Still, I believe there is more we can and must do to support the victims of this abhorrent crime. My "Securing Texans" plan will provide comprehensive care to minor domestic sex trafficking victims. This statewide initiative will create a single point of contact, from which survivors of human trafficking will be able to access to a full array of support services, including victim services, encouragement, and assistance with family reunification. The full details of the plan may be read here: [pages 4-6](#)

Additionally, while distinct from human trafficking, human smuggling is another major problem that has not received the same

level of attention as trafficking. My “Securing Texans” Plan would give law enforcement the means to combat the growing problem of human smuggling and strengthen state human smuggling law. Smuggling is not a victimless crime, and many perpetrators enact terrible harm on the persons they transport. The state has an obligation to ensure that laws against smuggling adequately deter would-be human smugglers. My plan, [available here](#), will do just that.

¹ Human trafficking involves force labor or sexual services and must be involuntary, while human smuggling may be voluntary. In addition, smuggling involves a violation of international immigration laws, whereas trafficking may occur domestically.

2) What should be done (if anything) to improve access to health care in our community? If applicable, what changes (if any) would you make to the Texas Medicaid program?

Included in my “Healthy Texans” plan are proposals that will:

- Increase funding for women’s health programs by \$50 million to cover follow-up testing and care;
- Cover screening and treatment for postpartum depression for new mothers enrolled in CHIP Perinatal and Medicaid;
- Expand loan forgiveness to mental health professionals in underserved areas of the state;
- Raise wages for personal care attendants for seniors and people with disabilities;
- Provide no-cost mental health screens to veterans and servicemembers;
- Increase the number of residency positions available in Texas for medical school graduates.

Read the plan here: [Healthy Texans](#)

3) What can we do to better support the health of Texas elders?

As Attorney General, I've cracked down on exploitation of seniors. For example, I took emergency action and successfully obtained a temporary restraining order against an assisted living center to protect more than 40 seniors living in squalid conditions. I've taken action against unscrupulous care providers who attempted to financially prey on vulnerable seniors. I've acted against scam artists and service providers harming seniors such as Matchmaker, an internet dating service for seniors, which violated debt collection laws. As Governor, I will support changes to the law that would facilitate action against repeat offenders.

Additionally, my “Healthy Texans” plan supports pay raises for personal attendants in Texas. Attendants make it possible for those in need to live at home independently. An elderly person may have a higher quality of life with this option, and many prefer it to institutional living as they can choose the attendant who best fits their lifestyle.

Read the plan here: [pages 20-21](#)

4) In your opinion, what can we do to improve access to mental health care?

My “Healthy Texans” plan will extend the Physician Education Loan Repayment Program to mental health professionals, such as licensed professional counselors, licensed clinical social workers, and licensed psychologists (the program is already available to psychiatrists). Texas has 333 mental health professional shortage areas, with only 46.75 percent of the need met. The need in these underserved areas must be met to ensure access to mental healthcare for all Texans.

I would require that those that participate in the program practice in underserved areas, serve for five years, and provide direct care to Medicaid patients (and CHIP patients if the practice includes children).

My plan also includes mental health screening days for veterans with providers outside the military, so that service members can quickly and discreetly be referred to for proper care without fear of stigma. In the military population, experts believe that 11-20 percent of veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, ten percent of Gulf War veterans, and 30 percent of Vietnam veterans suffer from PTSD. Only half of service members returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have sought treatment. This also ensures that our service members will not have to wait for care due to Veterans Administration backlog.

Read the plan here: [pages 15-20](#)

² Mental Health Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), Kaiser Family Foundation. <http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/mental-health-care-health-professional-shortage-areas-hpsas/>

³ <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/PTSD-overview/basics/how-common-is-ptsd.asp> and <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/PTSD-overview/epidemiological-facts-ptsd.asp>

⁴ “One in Five Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans Suffer from PTSD or Major Depression,” RAND, Apr 17, 2008. <http://www.rand.org/news/press/2008/04/17.html>

Campaign Website:

Stop Human Trafficking Bringing Traffickers to Justice: Human life is not an asset. It’s not a commodity. Life is a gift from God, and we must do everything we can to defend Texans’ most basic rights endowed by our Creator and guaranteed in the Constitution. As chairman of the Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force, Greg Abbott has worked closely with legislators, law enforcement authorities, and victim service providers to combat human trafficking across Texas. In 2013, Greg Abbott was honored to be the recipient of the New Friends New Life “Protect-Her Award.” Working with the Texas legislature, Greg Abbott has fought to increase penalties for traffickers, enhance coordination within the law enforcement community, and improve victims’ access to important services. Human trafficking is modern day slavery, and it a serious problem that afflicts not only Texas, but the rest of the nation. Greg Abbott will continue to crack down on this vile crime. - See more at: <http://www.gregabbott.com/issues/#sthash.7k2d56qb.dpuf>

End ObamaCare: Committed to Fighting and Repealing an Unconstitutional Tax: Democratic Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi infamously said about ObamaCare that, “we have to pass the bill so that you can find out what is in it.” Congresswoman Pelosi was right, and now Texas and the rest of America are beginning to see the consequences – from rising healthcare costs to businesses being forced to lay off employees.

Greg Abbott knew this was a bad law from the beginning. So on the day ObamaCare was signed into law, he filed a lawsuit challenging its constitutionality. The Supreme Court agreed with General Abbott that Congress illegally tried to seize the states’ Medicaid systems. Although, the Supreme Court upheld other onerous parts of ObamaCare, General Abbott has not given up the fight. He continues to challenge this unworkable law and the unprecedented tax it imposes on Americans. - See more at: <http://www.gregabbott.com/issues/#sthash.7k2d56qb.dpuf>

Source: <http://www.gregabbott.com/issues/> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Wendy Davis (D)

Response to DFC questions:

1) What can we do improve the support and care for human trafficking survivors?

Health care providers play an extremely important role in identifying and caring for those involved in human trafficking because these providers are some of the only people to interact with victims during or immediately following their captivity. I believe that the first step needs to be providing health care workers with the training and information they need to best identify

and help patients in these complex situations. Specially trained social workers and patient navigators could also assist these survivors by guiding them through the health care system, connecting them with valuable resources, and providing support.

Human trafficking is an issue I have prioritized as a Senator and will continue to prioritize as governor. Recently, I sponsored and wrote my own version of a law that requires Texas Crime Stoppers Council to develop a specific program to facilitate the reporting of human trafficking incidences. I also supported the creation and expansion of Texas's Human Trafficking Prevention Taskforce that is housed in the Office of the Attorney General.

2) What should be done (if anything) to improve access to health care in our community? If applicable, what changes (if any) would you make to the Texas Medicaid program?

As governor, I will work to expand Medicaid in Texas. Expanding Medicaid will extend insurance coverage to over one million hardworking Texans who are currently uninsured. It will also bring \$100 billion taxpayer dollars back to Texas over the next decade, and create an estimated 300,000 jobs per year. Medicaid expansion will also reduce Texas hospitals' bills for uncompensated care. Currently, hospitals absorb more than \$5 billion annually in uncompensated care, a loss that is passed on in the form of higher prices, as well as direct tax areas that have hospital districts.

3) What can we do to better support the health of Texas elders?

As Texans, we are only as strong as the care and respect we show our parents and grandparents. We must honor our aging population by ensuring seniors are treated with the dignity and level of care they deserve. In the legislature, I authored a bill that would have required the Department of Aging and Disabilities Services (DADS) to establish a checklist for inspectors to use when investigating abuse in a nursing home. I also fought successfully, alongside groups such as the Texas Medical Association, to make sure that elderly cancer patients were not denied treatment after severe cuts to the state budget in 2011. As governor, I will continue to fight for the health and dignity of our elderly Texans.

4) In your opinion, what can we do to improve access to mental health care?

Medicaid is the nation's largest payer of mental health services, so expanding Medicaid will improve access to mental health care services for Texans. In addition to Medicaid expansion, increased mental health care access for children and adolescents has the potential to make a profoundly positive impact on the juvenile justice system. Veterans are also in need of more effective mental health care, support, and after-care services. As part of my Fighting for Veterans and Military Families Plan, I have proposed conducting an emergency review of mental health among veterans, improving our suicide prevention programs, and strengthening peer-to-peer counseling programs for veterans in need of care.

Campaign Website:

Stopping Human Trafficking: Wendy Davis has been a leader in the fight against human trafficking throughout her time in the Senate, including making improvements to Texas Crime Stoppers, creating the Human Trafficking Prevention Taskforce, and increasing penalties and offenses under the criminal code.

Medicaid Expansion: Wendy Davis believes we cannot let \$100 billion of Texas tax dollars leave the state and pay for healthcare in other states like California, New York and Florida. We need to keep those dollars here at home to relieve the burden on local governments and create 300,000 new jobs.

Source: <http://www.wendydavistexas.com/issues/> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Kathie Glass (L)	Response to DFC questions: No response received.
	Campaign Website: http://kathieglass.org/issues (accessed 10/21/2014)
Brandon Parmer (G)	Response to DFC questions: No response received.
	Campaign Website: https://www.facebook.com/Parmerforgov (accessed 10/21/2014)

Lieutenant Governor

Robert Butler (L)	<p>Response to DFC questions: No response received.</p> <p>Campaign Website:</p> <p>Free Market Healthcare: The federal government is the single biggest reason that medical care is so expensive. 1) The Federal Trade Commission has to approve the construction of new hospitals in over half of all states. Limiting the number of hospitals drives up prices. The federal government also strictly limits the number of new interns who get a chance to become practicing doctors. Federal rules prohibit the public advertisement of prices. This limits competition on price. Avoiding the ultra-high income taxes in the 20th century created our current system of fringe benefits – including the modern medical insurance industry. Insurance company policies also drive up the cost of healthcare. The federal government also underpays doctor’s bills for Medicare and Medicaid. The cost of this underpayment is shifted to everyone else, increasing prices. The most important way to allow more people better healthcare is to remove the federal government’s participation completely.</p> <p>Source: http://robertdbutler.org/personal-freedom/ (accessed 10/21/2014)</p>
Chandrakantha Courtney (G)	<p>Response to DFC questions:</p> <p><i>1) What can we do improve the support and care for human trafficking survivors? Treat them more like victims and less like criminals.</i></p> <p><i>2) What should be done (if anything) to improve access to health care in our community? If applicable, what changes (if any) would you make to the Texas Medicaid program? 1) We need to sign onto the expansion of federal support. 2) We need a much greater representation of the public sector in health care.</i></p> <p><i>3) What can we do to better support the health of Texas elders? Expand in-home services.</i></p> <p><i>4) In your opinion, what can we do to improve access to mental health care? Stop expecting the police to be the first providers for dealing with the mentally ill.</i></p> <p>Campaign Website: No website identified.</p>
Dan Patrick (R)	<p>Response to DFC questions: No response received.</p> <p>Campaign Website: http://www.danpatrick.org/home/ (accessed 10/21/2014)</p>
Leticia Van de Putte (D)	<p>Response to DFC questions:</p> <p><i>1. What can we do improve the support and care for human trafficking survivors?</i></p>

For the past 10 years I have led the fight against the vile crime of human trafficking, modern-day slavery, in the Texas Senate.

I passed the law that required hotline postings along Texas highways, created the Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force and in 2011 I passed Senate Bill 24, which increased the penalties for traffickers and provided protections for victims.

During the last legislative session, I passed House Bill 1272 which requires the Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force to create a curriculum for doctors, nurses, emergency medical services personnel, educators and child protective services employees on how to identify and assist victims.

I also passed a bill that provided a process for minors involved in prostitution to be a part of a diversion court where they could be referred to services instead of punishment. We have seen some shelters open that serve human trafficking victims such as Freedom Place in Harris County and a shelter near Traffick 911 in Dallas/Fort Worth.

As Lieutenant Governor, I will continue to lead in ensuring victims are able to access the current services available and how caseworkers and victim service groups can connect them to those services. Identifying where the services already exist will also help identify where the service gaps exist.

2. What should be done (if anything) to improve access to health care in our community? If applicable, what changes (if any) would you make to the Texas Medicaid program?

As a practicing pharmacist for over thirty years, I have seen the successes and shortcomings of the healthcare system firsthand. After decades of experience serving my community, I know that access to healthcare is a right that all Texans deserve, not just the ones who can afford it.

I understand that healthcare is a costly and complex system in our state, but also realize that Texas simply cannot thrive when 1 out of every 4 Texans has no health insurance coverage. With the highest rate of uninsured in the country, Texas hospitals struggle to provide over \$4 billion per year in uncompensated care, while county and local governments spend roughly \$2.5 billion in local tax dollars on indigent care. We need a solution that will better utilize our resources and increase access to effective services, so that millions of hard-working Texans can have the opportunity to care for themselves and their families.

I'm committed to work with all stakeholders to develop a plan that will incorporate personal responsibility without sacrificing care. I will put politics aside and encourage collaboration to expand Medicaid eligibility to up to 138% of the federal poverty line through a customized solution designed to meet the unique needs of our state. I will facilitate negotiations between the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and the federal government to reach reasonable compromises and obtain approval of a Texas Solution.

I will ensure that Texas maintains the flexibility to make significant reforms to the Medicaid program. A Texas solution could include cost-sharing provisions found in plans already negotiated by other conservative states, such as manageable co-pays and premiums based on income, contributions to health savings accounts, healthy lifestyle incentives, and even using federal funds to buy private insurance.

3. What can we do to better support the health of Texas elders?

It is important that Texas elders know what programs they are eligible for and receive those services in a timely manner. Education on programs, services, and enrollment must be available and easily accessible for Texas elders.

I also believe in adequately funding those programs that effectively support elderly Texans, specifically those that provide

assistance with local guardianship, in-home care and support services, and medicaid reimbursement to aging service providers. I would lead the legislature to put a greater emphasis on long term services and care, so that we can better care for our most vulnerable populations.

I will use my pharmacy background to ensure that the delivery of care for prescriptions is as efficient and cost effective as possible, so that any changes in the healthcare system do not pass costs on to consumers, and our most vulnerable Texans are able to have access to life sustaining medications.

Additionally, I understand that many of our senior citizens rely heavily on their hard earned retirement dollars, and I will work hard to protect the pensions of our hardworking teachers and other state employees.

4. In your opinion, what can we do to improve access to mental health care?

Mental health has always been an important issue for me. In the Senate, I worked to create a program that provides a system of care, including a behavioral health treatment placement, for children and youth in Bexar County who are at risk of placement in an alternative setting for behavior management. The program has successfully helped identify child mental health-related issues in the community and has been successful in addressing these issues more quickly and efficiently for the families involved.

During the last legislative session, there was a 15% budget increase in mental health and substance abuse services. This included \$332 million in new funds specifically for the expansion of statewide mental health services for children and adults, substance abuse services, and behavioral health services. I am especially proud of the \$4 million in General Revenue for the Veterans Mental Health program. This appropriation will help establish and fully fund peer to peer counseling and suicide prevention networks, along with other services, for Veterans and their families.

As Lieutenant Governor, I will continue to support funding for mental health services, substance abuse services, and behavioral health services.

Campaign Website:

HUMAN TRAFFICKING: Human Smuggling: Combating Illegal Activity on the Border

Leticia has led Texas' fight to combat this modern day slavery. Leticia created the Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force, which increased penalties for criminals that have committed repeat offenses against children and improved services for victims. Leticia knows that ending this horrendous crime so that Texas can be a safer place to raise a family. As a legislator, Leticia has seen the effects of human smuggling and other illegal activities on the border. Human smuggling, distinct from human trafficking, is on the rise in Texas. Hundreds of undocumented men, women and children are held against their will in some of the most unhealthy and "squad-like" conditions. Leticia understands the issue at hand and knows Texas must apply the same commitment in combating human trafficking to combating human smuggling. As Lieutenant Governor, Leticia will:

- Work to pass legislation strengthening the penalties for human smuggling and providing prosecutors and law enforcement with the tools to track down after smugglers.
- increase the penalties for crimes associated with human smuggling, and especially when the case involves children, and for the criminals that commit them.g
- Ensure appropriate and effective treatment and services for minor victims of human trafficking in the juvenile justice system and/or in the child protection system

HEALTH CARE: Increasing access to care for all Texans.

As a practicing pharmacist for over 30 years, Leticia has witnessed the difference good health care can make in the lives of Texas families. She knows that access to health care is essential to ensuring that children can attend school and parents are healthy to work. With the highest rate of uninsured in the country, Texas hospitals struggle to provide per \$4 billion per year in uncompensated care, while county and local governments spend roughly \$2.5 billion in local tax dollars on indigent care. Leticia is committed to putting the needs of Texans before politics. As Lieutenant Governor, Leticia will:

- Fight for Texans to have access to affordable health care.
 - Promote a healthy workforce by securing a Texas Solution to close the coverage gap that Texas faces today.
 - Protect Texas businesses from devastating tax penalties that threaten the Texas economy.
 - Promote economic growth by drawing down billions of dollars in federal funds and use the funds to benefit Texas.
- <https://leticiavandeputte.com/healthcare/>

Source: <https://leticiavandeputte.com/issues/> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Attorney General

Jamie Balagia (L)

Response to DFC questions:

1) What can we do improve the support and care for human trafficking survivors? Human trafficking is such an abuse of humanity. I used to work for the Austin police department where I was a part of the Vice squad and we worked human trafficking cases. It is such a complicated problem, there is no simple solution because it crosses so many barriers of culture and economics. Once we saw that it was teenagers and women of limited educational background, or women with mental illness, we got involved with social networking, church groups and other organizations and we formed a program called HOPE to help these women. We tried to provide them with health care, housing, child care. I left the police force in 1990 and I have not been involved since then, but I have to believe that today with the more advanced resources that we that we can do something to stop this problem. How do you help a million people? Start by helping one at a time.

2) What should be done (if anything) to improve access to health care in our community? If applicable, what changes (if any) would you make to the Texas Medicaid program? When I was in college (1978) I did not have insurance and I had to go to the People's clinic if I had a medical problem. Now I have insurance, but the thought of what people do if they don't have insurance is disturbing. We have to provide people with basic health care. People who are sick, are in pain -- it is not right to not take care of them because they don't have money. We need to take experts' recommendations about what we can do about this.

3) What can we do to better support the health of Texas elders? We need to get them off medications as best we can -- break that bondage. I believe in a holistic approach. Do what we can naturally -- eat healthier if you are overweight. Do those things first before we get on a bunch of medications. If we get people's weight under control then that makes the high blood pressure, diabetes, and joint problems go away too. We shouldn't shelve people in assisted living homes, we should help them maintain active lifestyles. Better education is the key.

4) In your opinion, what can we do to improve access to mental health care? I have a lot of compassion for people. We have to get some government incentive programs to get some help out to these people. As a police officer, I saw all these homeless people and people incarcerated because they have mental health issues. We cannot continue to abandon people in jails and homeless centers -- the problem is not going to go away. Let's bring psychologists, medical people, social services and legal assistance -- bring all these things together and try that for a change.

Sam Houston (D)

Campaign Website: <https://www.facebook.com/Dude4TXAG> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Response to DFC questions:

1) What can we do improve the support and care for human trafficking survivors? In the area of human trafficking as well as some other areas affecting public safety, the Attorney General's office could aid and assist local law enforcement in addressing some of these crimes. For example, the cyber division and white-collar crime division could help local law enforcement agencies with developing effective approaches to prosecute these crimes.

2) What should be done (if anything) to improve access to health care in our community? If applicable, what changes (if any) would you make to the Texas Medicaid program? The Attorney General's office may not have a lot of direct power to change some of these issues. As the Attorney General, I would enforce any of the laws and honor laws that allow dollars to come into Texas to improve health care. I would make sure that we are not impeding health care delivery by being too zealous or too lax in prosecuting issues such as fraudulent billing. Overall, we need to take advantage of ways to get more money into Texas and not take positions that work to the detriment of Texans.

3) What can we do to better support the health of Texas elders? One way that the Attorney General's office can support the health of Texas elders is to take a stronger role in protection against elder abuse. We can work to protect elders from entities that use fraudulent or abusive practices against elders. This encompasses health care as well as many other arenas.

4) In your opinion, what can we do to improve access to mental health care? Again, the Attorney General's office may not have a lot of direct power to change some of these issues. I have done a lot of work with mental health care providers for years. From an Attorney General's standpoint, I would work to ensure that laws are being followed and that oversight is being done to make sure dollars we can get in Texas are being used to help and support mental health care services for Texans.

Campaign Website: <http://samhoustonfortexas.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Jamar Osborne (G)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: No website identified.

Ken Paxton (R)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website:

Human trafficking and sexual assault crimes are violations of individual liberties in the most malicious and violent ways. I will work with district attorneys and law enforcement across the state to aggressively prosecute crimes against individuals that rob victims of their fundamental rights and freedoms.

We must not give up the fight to repeal Obamacare. To implement that system in our state would crush the very people it purports to help: the poor, the sick, and the elderly. I am proud of my role in working to defeat the expansion of Obamacare in Texas, but we must continue to fight. As your Attorney General, I will fight to protect Texas against the red tape, bloated bureaucracies, and skyrocketing costs associated with the so-called Affordable Care Act. I have the ability, skill, and experience to lead this fight and have no reservations about using the Office of the Attorney General to do so.

Source: <http://kenpaxton.com/issues/> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Federal Government Races

U.S. Senator

David Alameel (D)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: <http://alameelforsenate.com/issues> (accessed 10/21/2014)

John Cornyn (R)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website:

Senator Cornyn believes that the President's health care law must be repealed and replaced with patient-centered reforms that lower costs and increase access. Under the President's health care law, Texans continue to face skyrocketing premiums, employers are abandoning plans to expand and laying off workers, and Washington bureaucrats – not patients and their Doctors – are making treatment decisions.

No issue more personal to Texans than their health care. Under Obamacare, Texans face skyrocketing premiums, employers are laying off workers and abandoning plans to expand, and Washington bureaucrats—not patients and their Doctors—are making treatment decisions.

Senator Cornyn has introduced the Healthcare Bureaucrats Elimination Act to protect access to Medicare for Texas seniors by repealing Obamacare's unelected panel of government bureaucrats who are tasked with making decisions that could severely limit patient care.

Following the discovery of evidence that the IRS has been targeting Texans, Senator Cornyn also introduced the Keep the IRS Off Your Health Care Act, a bill that will prohibit the IRS from implementing or enforcing any provisions of Obamacare.

Senator Cornyn believes the Obamacare must be repealed and replaced. Texans deserve patient-centered reforms that lower costs and increase access – without bankrupting families and small businesses.

Source: <http://www.johncornyn.com/issues/> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Emily Sanchez (G)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: <https://www.facebook.com/VoteSpicyBrown> (accessed 10/21/2014)

U.S. Representative, District 2

Niko Letsos (D)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website:

Higher Education and Healthcare: The problem: College tuition and health insurance costs are both rising and breaking middle class budgets all over the country. What do both of these two have in common? Both the higher education and healthcare industries receive enormous subsidies from the federal government. Instead of lowering their costs and passing those subsidies onto you, these industries have become obsessed with profit-maximization. Colleges, universities, hospitals, pharmaceutical

firms and health insurers are fleecing the federal government. In addition, the federal government does not engage in enough quality control to make sure they are subsidizing entities that will benefit the nation. For example, certain online colleges offer degrees without proper accreditation but get government subsidies. On the medical side, big pharmaceutical companies get subsidies for research and development and usually increase their profits instead of bringing new items to the market. This must stop. The solution: If I am elected to Congress, not one day will go by where I do not fight to lower higher education and healthcare costs. Oversight, hearings, withholding money from stubborn companies that are only about profit—you name it, I will do it to make sure government dollars are not being wasted. Accountability.gov will be essential here so we can all follow the money. Subsidies are going to these companies so they can lower costs as they provide a public service. Being for-profit is fine as long as you are not charging an inexcusably high price to customers to get your profits. We need a focused effort to bring higher education and healthcare costs under control.

Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid: The problem: Government deficits are mounting after ill-advised wars, the deregulated-financial-industry-caused recession, and zero accountability in government spending. Republicans have been looking at entitlements and pensions that hard-working Americans have paid into for decades as something to cut. The solution: It is terrible that this is even an issue. Americans dutifully paid taxes to pay for these programs and planned on having them in the future. I believe in sticking to one's word. We need to do everything in our power to make sure these programs are in place and viable for generations to come—as we promised tax-payers they would. Social Security belongs to the American people not to irresponsible politicians who mismanage government funds. The main issue of my campaign is accountability and transparency for just this reason: so we can make sure government works efficiently. Cutting out waste and corruption will provide the savings needed to keep Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid going strong.

Source: <http://www.nikoletsos.com/policies-and-commitments.html> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Ted Poe (R)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website:

A Dedicated Advocate Against Human Trafficking: The scourge of human trafficking isn't isolated to some foreign land. It plagues our community and our nation. In the U.S., the average age of an adolescent victim is just thirteen years old. I have worked with survivors, churches, shelters, law enforcement and advocacy groups to propose effective and meaningful solutions to combat human trafficking in our nation. I also authored the bipartisan Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, which passed the House of Representatives unanimously, I am dedicated to addressing all three aspects of human trafficking: going after the buyers to end demand, prosecuting the sellers who force women and children into sexual transactions and helping to restore the victims. It's time to end this form of modern day slavery.

Healthcare: Patient-Centered, not Government-Driven: I opposed the government takeover of healthcare bill because it was unconstitutional, unworkable and too expensive. Our healthcare system should prioritize the doctor/patient relationship, not insert the government between doctor and patient. An individual must retain a choice in determining his/her doctor.

I voted against the Affordable Care Act – “Obamacare” – and have voted repeatedly for its repeal. I was one of the first Members to introduce a bill to prohibit the use of federal funds for the implementation and enforcement of any federal mandate to purchase health insurance. I was deeply disappointed with the Supreme Court's ruling on Obamacare. If the federal government has the power to force Americans to do something with threat of a tax, what is next? A government-approved house or green car? I will continue to fight to repeal this expensive, government takeover of health care and replace it with a patient-centered, cost-effective system that keeps the federal government out of our doctor's office and out of our private lives.

Source: <http://www.tedpoe.com/issues/> (accessed 10/21/2014)
Mark Roberts (G) **Response to DFC questions:** No response received.
Campaign Website: No website identified.

U.S. Representative, District 7

James Cargas (D) **Response to DFC questions:**

1) *What can we do improve the support and care for human trafficking survivors?* The first step is to reduce the number of victims of human trafficking. Comprehensive immigration reform will result in fewer people seeking assistance to enter the country illegally with the help of criminals who then enslave them or extort payments from their families. The second step is to expand, not repeal, the 2008 William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act to Mexican and Canadian minors. This is not an amnesty provision, but a requirement that each minor is given American due process to determine their individual eligibility to remain legally. The end result, whether they remain in the United States or not, is to reunite them with their families, not quick deportation and return to the slave trade. All minors, regardless of country of origin, should be treated in the same manner.

2) *What should be done (if anything) to improve access to health care in our community? If applicable, what changes (if any) would you make to the Texas Medicaid program?* As a federal legislator, I am not in a position to amend the Texas Medicaid program. My colleagues in Austin must do that. It is deeply troubling that this past Texas Legislature did not accept Medicaid expansion thereby leaving millions of Texans uninsured. I believe they will eventually do the right thing and accept the \$79 billion being offered by Washington.

3) *What can we do to better support the health of Texas elders?* Senior citizens under Medicare pay higher copayments for mental health care compared to physical health care. Mental health care should have parity with other health care costs. The Government Accounting Office has estimated the extra cost will be offset by a reduction in physical health care costs.

4) *In your opinion, what can we do to improve access to mental health care?* For the most part Americans enjoy decent health care. However, one glaring deficiency is the lack of mental health care. I would like to see the Affordable Care Act expanded to set minimum standards for mental health care.

Campaign Website: <http://www.jamescargas.com/home> (accessed 10/21/2014)

John Culberson (R) **Response to DFC questions:** No response received.
Campaign Website:

Healthcare: Since President Obama and then-Speaker Pelosi pushed through their health care reform law, the House has voted numerous times to repeal part or all of Obamacare. Some critics of House conservatives have argued that we are wasting time with these votes and should focus on more important issues. What these critics don't tell you is that the President has signed seven of our repeal bills into law. The seven repeal bills that the President has signed into law directly repeal or reduce funding from at least eight different Obamacare programs. House conservatives won't stop there; we will continue to pursue strategic opportunities to get other defunding and repeal bills to President Obama's desk because if we don't premium costs will increase 30-50 percent for people in the individual insurance market beginning in 2014. I am fully committed to repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act. House conservatives have tackled Obamacare on all fronts and share the same end goal: full repeal. I believe we need to fix the broken network of government policies that have made such a mess of health care in America. Badly designed government policies are to blame for much of what is wrong with health care today.

This Congress, House Conservatives have introduced more than 200 health care-related bills, which include patient-centered solutions like:

- Making health insurance companies compete nationwide, across state lines. Americans residing in a state with expensive health insurance plans are locked into those plans and do not currently have an opportunity to choose a lower cost option that best meets their needs. Americans should have the freedom to buy health insurance from any provider.
- Guaranteeing people with pre-existing conditions can get affordable coverage. Health care should be accessible for all, regardless of pre-existing conditions or past illnesses. Creating high risk pools with premium caps and expanding Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) protections will ensure access to coverage.
- Providing a universal tax deduction for buying health insurance. Whether Americans buy health insurance independently or through an employer, the tax code should treat everyone equally and fairly.
- Empowering families with tax-free Health Savings Accounts (HSAs). Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) are popular savings accounts that provide cost effective health insurance to those who might otherwise go uninsured. Letting families save more for health care expenses will encourage financial stability. House conservatives support improving HSAs by making it easier for patients with high-deductible health plans to use them to obtain access to quality care. We also support repealing the Affordable Care Act, which prevents the use of these savings accounts to purchase over-the-counter medicine.
- Increasing transparency in billing so consumers know what they are paying for. In the age of the Internet, everyone can see prices and reviews of anything before buying—except when it comes to health care. Informed choices are better choices.
- Enabling small businesses and other groups to pool their coverage. Letting employers partner together to get the same insurance rates as large corporations will lower costs.
- Cracking down on junk lawsuits. Skyrocketing medical liability insurance rates have distorted the practice of medicine, routinely forcing doctors to order costly and often unnecessary tests to protect themselves from lawsuits, often referred to as “defensive medicine.” In Texas, our physicians were being sued at twice the national average and doctors practicing in high-risk specialties like obstetrics either left the state or gave up the practice of medicine. Two-thirds of Texas’ 254 counties had no OB-GYN. Sixty percent of Texas counties had no pediatricians. But in 2003, the Texas legislature enacted sweeping medical liability reforms that started to fix the problem. Since then, claims and lawsuits in most Texas counties have been cut in half. And, the number of doctors applying to practice medicine in Texas has increased by 60 percent. The Texas model would work in other states.
- Reducing the doctor shortage. Physician shortages are expected to reach 62,900 by 2015 and 91,500 by 2020. Incentivizing primary care physicians to work in underserved areas will increase access and improve quality of care.
- Giving states flexibility to improve Medicaid through innovation. After it was freed from some federal mandates, Rhode Island increased choice and expanded access for low-income Americans while reducing costs. Other states should be able to do the same.

House conservatives recognize that patient-centered reforms rooted in free markets are the best way to lower costs and solve problems in our health care system. That is why House conservatives have introduced a comprehensive bill that combines these pragmatic, practical, and portable free-market alternatives into one legislative package. I am an original cosponsor of H.R. 3121, the American Health Care Reform Act:

- Fully repeals President Obama’s health care law, eliminating billions in taxes and thousands of pages of unworkable regulations and mandates that are driving up health care costs.
- Spurs competition to lower health care costs by allowing Americans to purchase health insurance across state lines and enabling small businesses to pool together and get the same buying power as large corporations.
- Reforms medical malpractice laws in a commonsense way that limits trial lawyer fees and non-economic damages

while maintaining strong protections for patients.

- Provides tax reform that allows families and individuals to deduct health care costs, just like companies, leveling the playing field and providing all Americans with a standard deduction for health insurance.
- Expands access to Health Savings Accounts (HSAs), increasing the amount of pre-tax dollars individuals can deposit into portable savings accounts to be used for health care expenses.
- Safeguards individuals with pre-existing conditions from being discriminated against purchasing health insurance by bolstering state-based high risk pools and extending HIPAA guaranteed availability protections. Protects the unborn by ensuring no federal funding of abortions.

Source: <http://culberson.house.gov/issues/> (accessed 10/21/2014)

U.S. Representative, District 8

Kevin Brady (R)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: <http://www.bradyforcongress.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

U.S. Representative, District 9

Al Green (D)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website:

I am committed to fighting for affordable, comprehensive coverage for all Americans. Rather than a health care system, we have a sickness care system. People seem to only be able to seek treatment when their health is in disrepair. Our emergency rooms are inundated with patients, many of our physicians and nurses are overworked and underpaid, and those who most deserve care are unable to receive it until the last possible moment. We have a system of urgent treatment rather than preventative care. We have a system where people must choose between providing for the basic needs of their families and necessary health care.

I strongly believe that we need to focus on the importance of community-based clinics, reasonably priced health coverage opportunities, solutions to the skyrocketing prescription drug prices, and initiatives that promote healthy living to communities that have limited opportunities to partake in such events. That is why I am working hard to secure federal funding to build more community health clinics, Federally Qualified Health Care Clinics (FQHC), in the 9th Congressional District.

Source: <http://www.algreen.org/issues/health-care/> (accessed 10/21/2014)

U.S. Representative, District 10

Michael McCaul (R)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website:

Healthcare: Our health care system is in need of reform, but the \$1.2 trillion legislation the Democrats passed is not the reform needed. I will fight to repeal and replace this government takeover of 1/6 of our economy and the coverage mandates that I believe are unconstitutional. Every American should have access to quality care that is more affordable and accessible regardless of pre-existing conditions. This can be done largely by allowing Americans without employer-sponsored care to buy their own plan on

the same tax-advantaged system employers enjoy, by pooling businesses and groups to lower costs, and without new taxes that kill jobs. H.R. 3218, which I co-sponsored, is among the Republican alternative plans that would help to achieve this goal. My stance on the healthcare debate:
http://michaelmccaul.com/sites/default/files/content/images/McCaul_healthcare_response.pdf?phpMyAdmin=5tKhGo8jWNcz8JT-X2dKmUWr%2CV6

Source: <http://michaelmccaul.com/issues/health-care> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Tawana Walter-Cadien (D)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website:

Healthcare: The assurance of a fair and balanced system in regards to health care is a very important factor for the constituents of District 10. A healthy America should be the goal of all, especially those elected as representatives in the United States Congress. A denial of health care for citizens is an indication of the true devaluation of the lives of American citizens. Our future as a global competitor will be dependent upon the health of our nation. Our children are depending on us to make decisions that are people based and not party based. Children are being diagnosed daily with cancer and other debilitating diseases. We owe it to them to make the best decision. I have dedicated my life in action to cancer education. I have supported in a variety of facets cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and other disease awareness initiatives and projects. I have a proven record in action of enhancing the lives of citizens. As an RN Educator and public speaker on breast, testicular, and prostate cancer, I know the importance of preventative health screenings. Preventive health care screenings do help to save lives. The opportunity for Americans to obtain preventative health screenings should never be denied. Anyone still living with a late cancer diagnosis is sure to echo me in saying that preventative health screenings are vital. Decisions made in regards to the health of all Americans young and old alike must be made with a heart for people and not party. A healthy America is a whole America.

Source: <http://tawanacadienforcongress.com/cadien-cares/> (accessed 10/21/2014)

U.S. Representative, District 18

Sheila Jackson Lee (D)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: <http://www.sheilajacksonlee18.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Sean Seibert (R)

Response to DFC questions:

1) What can we do improve the support and care for human trafficking survivors? First we have to build awareness and educate. Second we must educate healthcare providers to recognize possible victims. Third Emergency rooms need to develop protocols for possible victims. Finally we must provide for the mental health of the victims to assist them in their recovery.

2) What should be done (if anything) to improve access to health care in our community? If applicable, what changes (if any) would you make to the Texas Medicaid program? Schools should have a mandatory course that educates students on health care, healthy living, and how to obtain health care. Introduce new technology that can have healthcare providers see those that normally do not visit an office. In addition using technology, such as apps, that allow people to access care guides.

3) What can we do to better support the health of Texas elders? Communications and developing positive relationships between healthcare providers and the elders as well as between the family members and the elders in regards to their wellbeing and care. Allow the elders to be places on their adult children's insurance.

4) *In your opinion, what can we do to improve access to mental health care?* First we most remove the stigma that society attaches to mental health. Education is a key element to teach people that their mental health is as important as their physical health. Mental health providers should be included in all insurance plans just like an orthopedic doctor.

Campaign Website: <http://seanseibert.com/issues> (accessed 10/21/2014)

U.S. Representative, District 22

Frank Briscoe (D)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website:

Health Care: Healthcare coverage for everyone is a SMART GOVERNMENT decision. Preventative healthcare, inability for insurance to deny coverage because you have preexisting conditions, no life-time limits and coverage for your children until the age of 26 are essential to keep people in our district healthy. Texans pay taxes for Affordable Care Act expansion of state health insurance programs. However we don't have that expansion. I will work on making sure this expansion is achieved. Its not enough to say repeal the Affordable Care Act, we need to work together to make the Act work for us.

Source: <http://www.briscoeforcongress.com/issues> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Pete Olson (R)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: <http://www.olsonforcongress.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

U.S. Representative, District 29

Gene Green (D)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: <http://www.genegreencampaign.com/index.html> (accessed 10/21/2014)

U.S. Representative, District 36

Brian Babin (R)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website:

Obamacare: I will work tirelessly to repeal it and replace it with policies that work. It's destroying jobs, the economy, and causing millions to lose their promised healthcare policies. Government can never replace the doctor-patient relationship. We should replace it with federal tax credits and free market solutions.

Source: <http://www.babinforcongress.com/issues/> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Michael Cole (D)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: <http://www.michaelcole.us> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Texas Government Races

Texas Senate, District 7

Paul Bettencourt (R)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: <http://www.paulbettencourt.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Whitney Bilyeu (L)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: <http://whitneybilyeu.com/index.html> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Jim Davis (D)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: No website identified.

Texas Senate, District 15

Ron Hale (R)

Response to DFC questions:

1) What can we do improve the support and care for human trafficking survivors? First having trusted doctors on call for law enforcement when making busts. Second improving our mental health outpatient services to be more accessible to victims.

2) What should be done (if anything) to improve access to health care in our community? If applicable, what changes (if any) would you make to the Texas Medicaid program? Finding way to lower the cost of health care like bulk purchase of medical items by hospitals in the same region. I would make penalties more extensive for those who try and making false billing claims to the system.

3) What can we do to better support the health of Texas elders? Allow for doctors to become more involved in HUD projects and retirement home throughout Texas. Most of the time it's a nurse at the facility or they have to call 911 when there is an emergency on property.

4) In your opinion, what can we do to improve access to mental health care? Building an easy to use online data base and give local law enforcement access to the data base. Allowing them to have drop off points for mental health issue victims. It's always about ease of access and it's the first step in making our communities more tolerant to mental health patients.

Campaign Website: <http://ronhalefortexas.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

John Whitmire (D)

Response to DFC questions:

1) What can we do to improve the support and care for human trafficking survivors? As a member of the Joint Interim Committee on Human Trafficking, helping human trafficking survivors remains a top priority. While we have increased penalties for human traffickers, we must do more to help the survivors especially with increased access to services including education, treatment, health care, and job training. We must also do more to punish violators and to educate potential victims through intervention and prevention programs.

2) What should be done (if anything) to improve access to health care in our community? If applicable, what changes (if any) would you make to the Texas Medicaid program? With our vast resources, it is unconscionable that Texas ranks first in the number of uninsured. I strongly support Medicaid expansion in Texas and will continue to urge my colleagues to do what is

right. I will also continue to educate Texans on the importance of the ACA.

3) *What can we do to better support the health of Texas elders?* Increase access to quality health care services. Provide adequate funding for programs which assist our elderly in remaining in their homes. Provide assistance to families in caring for their loved ones. Adequately regulate nursing homes to ensure quality care, staffing, and oversight.

4) *In your opinion, what can we do to improve access to mental health care?* Ensure funding is available in the community. While we have restored mental health funding over the last two sessions, there is still tremendous need. Access to mental health services in the community saves lives, families and money and helps prevent people suffering from mental illness from ending up in the criminal justice system.

Campaign Website:

Health and Human Services: From his first job in college at the local welfare office, Senator Whitmire is painfully aware of the critical need for access to health and human services in Texas.

In his position on Senate Finance, Senator Whitmire continues to push for an end to waiting lists for crucial programs for our most needy citizens. Mental health, family planning, attendant and nursing home care for the disabled and elderly, vocational and rehabilitation services are just some of the programs that Texans rely on to survive and prosper.

With Texas ranking #1 in uninsured, access to quality, affordable health care is a top priority of Senator Whitmire's. He continues to work with his colleagues and federal counterparts toward Texas full participation in the Affordable Care Act.

Source: http://www.johnwhitmire.com/health_and_human_services (accessed 10/21/2014)

Texas Senate, District 17

David Courtney (G)

Response to DFC questions:

1) *What can we do improve the support and care for human trafficking survivors?* This is for you to tell me.

2) *What should be done (if anything) to improve access to health care in our community? If applicable, what changes (if any) would you make to the Texas Medicaid program?* At the State level we need to sign on to the Medicare/Medicade expansion.

3) *What can we do to better support the health of Texas elders?* Again, that is for you to tell me.

4) *In your opinion, what can we do to improve access to mental health care?* If by "we" you mean Texas, then there are several things. The first of which is to stop expecting police and the courts to be first providers for mentally ill.

Campaign Website: No website identified.

George Hardy (L)

Response to DFC questions:

1) *What can we do improve the support and care for human trafficking survivors?*

I am very sympathetic to victims of human trafficking. Criminals that abuse children or adults like this should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Perhaps the penalties for this kind of criminal behavior should be even tougher. The perpetrators of these crimes should be forced to pay for any and all mental and physical therapy that may be needed by the victims.

2) What should be done (if anything) to improve access to health care in our community? If applicable, what changes (if any) would you make to the Texas Medicaid program?

We have the best health care in the world right here in Texas. If we didn't have to surrender so much of our money to the federal government, just to have it sent back to Texas as long as we "play ball", then we could do a better job of taking care of our own citizens.

3) What can we do to better support the health of Texas elders?

I'll simply restate my answer to question 2. Less federal intervention, keep the money in Texas so we can spend it where we see fit.

4) In your opinion, what can we do to improve access to mental health care?

Obviously, find out where the holes are in the system where people aren't finding the help they need and solve these problems one-by-one. I don't think that more tax dollars will help, since government is notoriously inefficient. Let's involve the private communities and solve these issues locally.

Campaign Website: No website identified.

Joan Huffman (R)

Response to DFC questions:

1) What can we do improve the support and care for human trafficking survivors? We know that if we fail to get the victims away from the control of their traffickers, it's almost certain that they'll remain in a vicious cycle of abuse and intimidation, preventing them from ever getting the help they so desperately need.

As a former prosecutor, former criminal district court judge, current state senator and Co-Chairwoman of the Joint Select Interim to Study Human Trafficking, I have worked extensively for many years on this issue. It's encouraging to see the increase in public awareness of human trafficking because not many people know that it's essentially a form of modern day slavery. This past year, the Committee held hearings around the state and we've heard from many advocacy organizations, victims, and law enforcement about what they need to effectively address human trafficking in their communities, and throughout the state.

This is a bipartisan issue. Next session, under my leadership, the Legislature will focus on developing innovative and effective solutions to address the needs of victims such as better psychological support, medical care, and the need for more safe houses. As Vice Chairwoman of the Senate Criminal Justice Committee I will continue to advocate for policies focused on ensuring that the State of Texas prosecutes those perpetrating this heinous crime to the utmost extent.

2) What should be done (if anything) to improve access to health care in our community? If applicable, what changes (if any) would you make to the Texas Medicaid program? I've been a member of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee since I first took office in 2009. It is critical to understand that providing appropriate access to health care to a diverse population of over 26 million presents many challenges to the state of Texas, and to those administering and receiving medical care.

In order to increase access to care, we need to continue to develop innovative and effective ways to use the federal funds available. The 1115 Waiver Program is a great start. It issues incentive payments to hospitals and other providers that develop programs or strategies to enhance access to health care, increase the quality of care, the cost-effectiveness of care provided, and the health of the patients and families served. It also issues block-grants that are designed to help offset the costs of uncompensated care provided by hospitals or other providers in the community.

We know that our state will need more doctors and health care professionals to keep up with the current population boom in Texas. That is why we must work to develop incentives to encourage doctors to participate in underserved specialties and geographical areas in order to reduce logistical and economic barriers to care that many Texans face every day. If we are to

accomplish this, it is critical that the Legislature also find ways to increase the number of GME slots available at Texas medical schools so that the doctors that learn in Texas, earn in Texas.

3) *What can we do to better support the health of Texas elders?* As the current chair of the Joint Interim Committee on Aging, I've held hearings this interim focused on the issues that affect Texas' elderly population. A critical fact we must consider as legislators is that Texas is home to the third-largest population of adults over the age of 60, and by 2025 this group will comprise almost 20% of Texas' entire population. I've listened to testimony from numerous groups, experts, and members of the community about what our seniors need. What I hear, is that we must find ways to increase access to care and transportation, while addressing the dire shortage of geriatric physicians. Unless we find ways to incentivize physicians to participate in this field, our elderly population will fail to receive the care that they need.

The Legislature must also continue to fund organizations and hospitals conducting state-of-the-art Alzheimer's and dementia research. In Texas, we have the best medical facilities in the country, especially in the Houston Medical Center. Unless we support those working diligently to end these and other diseases, we will fail to be prepared for the increase in the number of future cases as our population continues to age.

I think it's also important to note that the Legislature will have an opportunity to improve the Department of Aging and Disability Services this upcoming session because of its Sunset status, meaning that the Legislature will critically look at a variety of recommendations, focused on increasing the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the agency.

4) *In your opinion, what can we do to improve access to mental health care?* We must continue to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness. One way, which I have advocated, is to start increasing awareness in our schools so that we can identify those suffering from a mental illness early on while simultaneously teaching our youth that a mental illness can be treated, like any other illness.

Sadly, most individuals suffering from mental illness in Texas at some point come into contact with the criminal justice system. For example, on any given day a quarter of the Harris County Jail's population is on some sort of psychotropic medication. We cannot sit idly by and allow for those suffering from a mental illness to live on the streets and repeatedly cycle through our jails. Last session, I wrote legislation that created and funded the Harris County Jail Diversion Pilot Project. It is now up and running and many involved believe that it will be a model for the state. It provides medical care, housing, and comprehensive casework for those with a mental illness, helping them to "navigate life" so that they can be productive contributors to society.

Another impediment to care, are the problems caused by shortages facing our mental health workforce. Not only do we need more psychiatrists and other mental health professionals but we also must address the underlying causes for high employee turnover rates. Next session, the Legislature will continue to work on these issues and I plan to lead the fight for those suffering from mental illness in Texas.

Campaign Website:

Human Trafficking: A former prosecutor and judge, Joan Huffman has become a leader in the fight against human trafficking, child sexual assault and abuse, and online sex predators – authoring laws that make it easier to prosecute and imprison criminals who sexually assault or abuse children.

Source: <http://www.electjoanhuffman.com/issues/> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Rita Lucido (D)

Response to DFC questions:

1) *What can we do to improve the support and care for human trafficking survivors?* As many survivors of human trafficking in the Houston area are not legal residents or citizens of the United States, they may be ineligible for Medicaid or other health and mental health services provided through the federal government. Finding services that may be available, especially mental

health services, can be a daunting task, even for someone not traumatized by the experience of human trafficking. With the huge number of victims of trafficking coming through our community, I believe that at the state or local level we need to find ways to fund mental health care services for those survivors as well as social service providers to help them navigate the system to access that care.

2) What should be done (if anything) to improve access to healthcare in our community? If applicable, what changes (if any) would you make to the Texas Medicaid program? Refusal to expand Medicaid along with budget cuts to the health care infrastructure result in passing the costs to local governments, and ultimately, the taxpayer. Local property taxes as well as private insurance premiums will rise in order to cover the costs of uncompensated health care at our county indigent care programs and hospital emergency rooms. The primary care needs of the low income population in our area currently are only partially met. Projections based on population growth and newly insured under the ACA show a widening gap in access to primary care. Investing strategically in the health care infrastructure and finding a way to access federal dollars available under the ACA will save money and help ensure a healthy workforce for our communities.

3) What can we do to better support the health of Texas elders? Most elderly people are on Medicare but still may not get the care they need for good health due to isolation or lack of transportation. Our social service agencies need the support of local and state government to help those elderly people access regular care. Our retired teachers in Texas do not have Medicare if they are in the TRS system. The health insurance provided through TRS is crucial to their long term care and support. The state legislature needs to honor the commitment to our retired teachers and maintain a high level of health benefits for them through proper funding and planning.

4) In your opinion, what can we do to improve access to mental health care? I believe the most important thing the Texas Legislature can do to improve the health, both mental and physical, of the greatest number of Texans is to pursue federal dollars available through the Affordable Care Act to the state. It is estimated that 652,000 Texans would be eligible for Medicaid coverage, including mental health services, if Texas accepted these funds.

Campaign Website:

Healthcare Crisis: Texas has the highest rate (25%) of uninsured residents in the United States. The problem is even worse in Harris County with a third of all residents uninsured. Investing in human capital by ensuring a healthy workforce is good for Texas' economy. Children cannot learn and adults cannot work when they are in poor health. It makes sense to promote the health and well-being of all Texans.

Medicaid: Governor Perry and the Republican leadership in the legislature have adamantly and repeatedly refused to accept Medicaid expansion as part of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), even though hundreds of millions of federal dollars would flow into Texas to help pay for it. These are our tax dollars, now going to other states rather than help our own neighbors receive health and medical care. It's time for us to get on board with the Affordable Care Act and expand Medicaid. Refusal to expand Medicaid along with budget cuts to the health care infrastructure result in passing the costs to local governments, and ultimately, the taxpayer. Local property taxes as well as private insurance premiums will rise in order to cover the costs of uncompensated health care at our county indigent care programs and hospital emergency rooms. The primary care needs of the low income population in our area currently are only partially met. Projections based on population growth and newly insured under the ACA show a widening gap in access to primary care. Investing strategically in the health care infrastructure will save money and help ensure a healthy workforce for our communities.

Healthcare Providers: Texas has a doctor shortage. Even if everyone were insured, the shortage of medical providers would constrain the access to care. We need to develop innovative programs and incentives to bring physicians and other health care

providers to Texas, and the Texas legislature must be part of this solution. Increasing medical residency programs is one way to do this because doctors frequently set up practice where they complete their residency. Allowing advanced practice nurses and physician assistants to practice to the full authority of their licenses and training will both increase access as well as lower costs.

Texas Must Do Better: Texas has to do better. With twenty-five percent of our neighbors lacking health insurance our leaders have to do more. An astounding 852,000 Texas children live without health insurance. 126 of our 254 counties do not have enough primary care providers because the state does not fund residency programs adequately. Instead of working to help insure more of our neighbors Republican leaders like Gov. Perry and Sen. Huffman blocked Texas from receiving \$7.7 billion in federal healthcare funding. It's time our leaders solve this problem.

Source: <http://www.ritalucido.com/healthcare> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Texas Representative, District 126

Patricia Harless (R)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: <http://patriciहारless.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Cris Hernandez (L)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: <http://www.hernandezfortexas.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Texas Representative, District 127

Dan Huberty (R)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: <http://www.danhuberty.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Texas Representative, District 128

Ken Lowder (L)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: No website identified.

Wayne Smith (R)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website:

Health Care: Oppose President Obama's national health care plan • Oppose rationing of care, especially as it pertains to seniors
• Support insurance reform to drive down the costs of health care

Source: <http://waynesmithcampaign.com/on-the-issues/> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Texas Representative, District 129

John Gay (D)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: <http://www.johngayfortexas.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Paul Dennis (R)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: <http://dennispaul.com/index.html> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Texas Representative, District 130

Art Browning (G)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: No website identified.

Allen Fletcher (R)

Response to DFC questions:

1) What can we do to improve the support and care for human trafficking survivors? As a member of the Human Trafficking Committee I believe legislation to increase the penalty on the perpetrators and not the victims should occur.

2. What should be done (if anything) to improve access to health care in our community? If applicable, what changes (if any) would you make to the Texas Medicaid program? I have carried legislation to help the O.I.G. curtail Medicaid fraud.

3. What can we do to better support the health of Texas elders? Make sure the limited funds on their fixed incomes are not wasted bureaucratically.

4. In your opinion, what can we do to improve access to mental health care? Cut back on the expensive incarceration of mental patients in our criminal justice system.

Campaign Website: <http://fletcherfortexas.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Texas Representative, District 131

Alma Allen (D)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: <http://almaallen.org/home/> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Texas Representative, District 132

Luis Lopez (D)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: <https://www.facebook.com/LopezforHD132> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Mike Schofield (R)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: <http://www.mikeschofield.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Texas Representative, District 133

Jim Murphy (R)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: <http://www.votejimmurphy.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Laura Nicol (D)

Response to DFC questions:

1) *What can we do to improve the support and care for human trafficking survivors?* Well obviously It would be horrible to just turn them out on the street and say "good luck." They need to be housed, fed, and treated for all their physical and mental issues. That might be something existing charities could do, but there should be social workers tracking each victim, to be sure they are getting what they need.

2. *What should be done (if anything) to improve access to health care in our community? If applicable, what changes (if any) would you make to the Texas Medicaid program?* First of all, accept the Federal Medicaid Expansion money and make that happen so truly everyone can get medical coverage. Next, let's look at easing the access to care itself, w/o sacrificing quality of care. My daughter went to a neighborhood emergency clinic on a weekend, and the staff repeatedly tried to give her a medicine she's allergic to. She finally walked away without treatment, but with a \$100 invoice! That's the sort of thing that will kill the poor; it's just shameful.

3. *What can we do to better support the health of Texas elders?* Medicare and Social Security have gaps that leave elders without the meds they need. We can work to cover those gaps, as we also work to improve the lot of the whole family so that they can better care for their elders.

4. *In your opinion, what can we do to improve access to mental health care?* Make mental screening part of regular physical exams, and make mental health care accessible w/o special insurance permission & limits.

Campaign Website: <http://www.lauranicol.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Texas Representative, District 134

Sarah Davis (R)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website:

Keeping Government Out of Your Health Care: On December 9, 2008, at the age of 32, Sarah heard news no Texan ever wants to hear, "you have cancer." In her case, it was an aggressive form of breast cancer, which required surgeries, six weeks of daily radiation, and six months of chemotherapy. Sarah believes in two important health care principles:

- Protecting the sanctity of the doctor-patient relationship.
- Stopping government intrusions into the practice of medicine and budget-busting schemes like ObamaCare that will bankrupt the state and lead to the rationing of care.

Sarah opposed the expansion of Medicaid program under ObamaCare, which would cost us \$18 billion and add more than one million Texans to the Medicaid rolls. Her philosophy is straight-forward: adopt market-oriented solutions to control health care costs and keep the government from meddling with the doctor-patient relationship. Sarah will always take a stand for principle, even if she has to stand alone. She knows the doctors that provided life-saving care for her should not be exposed to rules that harm their ability to provide proper medical advice to patients.

Source: <http://www.sarahdavis134.com/issues> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Alison Ruff (D)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: No website identified.

Texas Representative, District 135

Moiz Abbas (D)	<p>Response to DFC questions: No response received.</p> <p>Campaign Website: http://www.abbasfortexas.com (accessed 10/21/2014)</p>
Gary Elkins (R)	<p>Response to DFC questions: No response received.</p> <p>Campaign Website: http://www.garyelkins.com (accessed 10/21/2014)</p>

Texas Representative, District 137

Morad Fiki (R)	<p>Response to DFC questions: No response received.</p> <p>Campaign Website: http://www.fikifortexas.com (accessed 10/21/2014)</p>
Gene Wu (D)	<p>Response to DFC questions: No response received.</p> <p>Campaign Website: http://genefortexas.com (accessed 10/21/2014)</p>

Texas Representative, District 138

Dwayne Bohac (R)	<p>Response to DFC questions: No response received.</p> <p>Campaign Website:</p> <p>AGAINST Obamacare & Federal Government Intrusion</p> <p>Source: http://www.bohac.com (accessed 10/21/2014)</p>
Fred Vernon (D)	<p>Response to DFC questions: No response received.</p> <p>Campaign Website:</p> <p>Fred Vernon stands strongly for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tougher laws on the growing human trafficking epidemic in our area <p>And against:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased government intrusion in the bedroom, school, marketplace, and doctor's office <p>Source: http://www.fredvernon.com/the-issues/ (accessed 10/21/2014)</p>

Texas Representative, District 139

Sylvester Turner (D)	<p>Response to DFC questions: No response received.</p> <p>Campaign Website:</p> <p>Sylvester Turner on Healthcare: There are an estimated 1.5 million uninsured children in Texas, making our state first in the nation with the highest percentage of children living without health coverage for more than 10 years running. While Texas enjoys being first in a number of areas, lack of health coverage is not one we should aspire, or accept. Children without health insurance are more likely to miss school due to an illness because they do not have access to preventative health care provided through regular physician visits; as a result parents are more likely to miss work caring for them, impacting our state's</p>
----------------------	--

economic well-being. A lack of health insurance coverage for our poorest children affect us all, and jeopardizes our state's most valuable asset, our children and our future.

Source: <http://sylvesterturner.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Texas Representative, District 140

Armando Lucio Walle
(D)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: No website identified.

Texas Representative, District 141

Senfronia Thompson
(D)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: No website identified.

Texas Representative, District 142

Harold V. Dutton Jr. (D)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: No website identified.

Texas Representative, District 143

Ana Hernandez (D)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: <http://anafortexas.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Texas Representative, District 144

Gilbert Pena (R)

Response to DFC questions:

1) What can we do improve the support and care for human trafficking survivors? I would need more information before I could think about changes or improvement.

2) What should be done (if anything) to improve access to health care in our community? If applicable, what changes (if any) would you make to the Texas Medicaid program? I think that our Doctors are in a better position to make these types of decisions.

3) What can we do to better support the health of Texas elders? Do more health care inspections.

4) In your opinion, what can we do to improve access to mental health care? We need to let family with mental health children be more inform about the type of help that are available to them.

Campaign Website: <http://www.takeback144.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Mary Ann Perez (D)

Response to DFC questions:

1) *What can we do improve the support and care for human trafficking survivors?* We need to ensure human trafficking survivors are provided with counseling and supportive services; and made eligible for healthcare coverage.

2) *What should be done (if anything) to improve access to health care in our community? If applicable, what changes (if any) would you make to the Texas Medicaid program?* I believe that we should be working together to expand Medicaid to those less fortunate as access to healthcare is a vital human right.

3) *What can we do to better support the health of Texas elders?* Our seniors need advocates and I hope to continue to be one on their behalf in the legislature. I believe that we need to fight for their health care protections and find ways to encourage doctors to continue to serve Medicare patients.

4) *In your opinion, what can we do to improve access to mental health care?* We can start by working on the social stigma that goes along with mental illness. Then, we should be allocating more funds to treatment facilities and preventative care.

Campaign Website: <http://votemaryannperez.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Texas Representative, District 145

Carol Alvarado (D)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website:

Promoting a healthy Texas: A healthy Texas is a prosperous Texas. We need to expand access to affordable, quality health care and focus on preventive care, which will save billions over the long term.

Source: <http://www.carolalvarado.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Texas Representative, District 146

Morgan Bradford (G)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: No website identified.

Borris L. Miles (D)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: No website identified.

Texas Representative, District 147

Garnet F. Coleman (D)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website:

Healthcare: As the senior member of the Texas House Public Health Committee and member of President Obama's Working Group of State Legislators for Health Reform, Representative Coleman is one of the most well-known and respected healthcare voices in the state. Ever since becoming elected, he has been working toward achieving universal access to affordable healthcare for all Texans. This dream has come closer to being realized with the help of President Obama and the Affordable Care Act. He will continue working to ensure that we have the best, most affordable care possible. Addressing health

disparities, in the areas of primary care and mental health is and will continue to be one of his top priorities

Source: <http://garnetcoleman.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Texas Representative, District 148

Chris Carmona (R)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: <http://www.chriscarmona.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Jessica Farrar (D)

Response to DFC questions:

1) What can we do improve the support and care for human trafficking survivors? First, human trafficking survivors need to know that they are physically safe, and that a system is in place that will see them through a comprehensive process of recovery. This system should be culturally sensitive and involve social workers, healthcare professionals, mental health professionals, housing options, education/training programs, job placement, and immigration attorneys to guide survivors to legal permanent resident status. These steps would go a long way towards stabilizing and repairing the lives individuals.

2) What should be done (if anything) to improve access to health care in our community? If applicable, what changes (if any) would you make to the Texas Medicaid program? The step that Texas legislators can make that would improve healthcare most today is to expand Medicaid, which would help about one million Texans right away.

3) What can we do to better support the health of Texas elders? An issue that has not received enough attention is the mental health of seniors. This causes too many seniors to be isolated, and therefore, disconnected from available services and programs that offer healthcare and much more. A major reason for isolation stems from untreated and undiagnosed depression. Mental health funding should be increased with an aim to reach these seniors. Additionally, funding for programs that reach seniors needs to be increased so that more seniors can be checked in on a regular basis.

4) In your opinion, what can we do to improve access to mental health care? To improve access to mental health care requires an increase in funding for services and outreach, as well as continued work to eliminate the stigma around mental health treatment.

Campaign Website: <http://www.jessicafarrar.org> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Texas Representative, District 149

Al Hoang (R)

Response to DFC questions:

1) What can we do improve the support and care for human trafficking survivors? Human Trafficking is real and it is a problem here in Texas. To help the survivors of human trafficking; first, to co-ordinate with local law enforcement officers to prevent such heinous crime; second, to train specialists such as special psychiatrists helping out the victims; third, create programs to help victims back to normal life.

2) What should be done (if anything) to improve access to health care in our community? If applicable, what changes (if any) would you make to the Texas Medicaid program? I believe in free-market value. To me, Obamacare does not work and it is a disaster to the health care system as well as our economy. To repeal Obamacare is to improve the access to health care.

3) What can we do to better support the health of Texas elders? To support Quality of Life environment for the elders such as

Seniors Civic Club.

4) *In your opinion, what can we do to improve access to mental health care?* Advocate for funding of better facility and programs in this matter.

Campaign Website: <http://www.votealhoang.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Hubert Vo (D)

Response to DFC questions:

1) *What can we do improve the support and care for human trafficking survivors?* In the last legislature, we addressed some of the problems but there is a lot to do. These survivors need counseling and access to services for mental and physical services and we need to make it a priority in the budget.

2) *What should be done (if anything) to improve access to health care in our community? If applicable, what changes (if any) would you make to the Texas Medicaid program?* I want to expand Medicaid as provided for by the ACA

3) *What can we do to better support the health of Texas elders?* We should not cut services that help seniors like the legislature has done in the past. Older people often need help in working through the system.

4) *In your opinion, what can we do to improve access to mental health care?* Again, the state has cut services which push people out of facilities. Also limits severely the options for those seeking care.

Campaign Website: <http://hubertvo.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Texas Representative, District 150

Amy Perez (D)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: <http://www.voteamyperez.com> (accessed 10/21/2014)

Debbie Riddle (R)

Response to DFC questions: No response received.

Campaign Website: <http://debbieriddle.org> (accessed 10/21/2014)