

**Andy Ruff, Democratic Candidate for U.S. House of Representatives District 9
Responses to questions from the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce
For the Nov. 3, 2020 General Election**

- 1. As the nation continues to struggle from the COVID-19 pandemic, government at all levels is balancing public health concerns with economic recovery. What guidance would you provide as a federal legislator to navigate recovery while keeping COVID-19 under control?**

First, it's obvious we can't have a robust economic recovery without prioritizing public health and safety. But we won't be able to maintain strong public health in the longer term without a healthy, strong economic recovery. They should not be seen as competing interests. Instead, I look at it as the merging of these two priorities into one overarching, non-politicized common goal. If we had taken that approach at the federal level back in March, we wouldn't be in the urgent state we still are today.

In terms of specific guidance, I would first and foremost listen to the trusted medical experts and business leaders and make decisions based on what's best for the present and long-term health of our local Hoosier economy. I would also be bold in my support for policies that seek to stimulate new business creation and lead to the growth of young businesses, not just their survival. Policies such as the "Start-Up Tax Credit," which would help businesses mitigate the cost of scaling-up, and the New Business Preservation Act, which would allocate \$2 billion in federal funding to match private investments in areas of the country lacking startup equity investments.

- 2. Many local businesses continue to struggle in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. What additional federal financial assistance or other actions would you support in the coming months to aid their recovery?**

The most important thing our representative can do right now is to ensure that every small business in our district that needs a loan to survive the pandemic receives it. According to the latest data, just 35% of small businesses in Indiana's 9th District received PPP loans through the SBA's \$521 billion program. That's *by far* the lowest share of federal help in our state compared to the other congressional districts. Completely unacceptable.

Beyond making sure that every available fund reaches a concerned business owner, I would strongly oppose bailouts of mega-corporations who took bad risks or wasted their profits on things like stock buybacks, while pushing hard for federal dollars to be put directly into the hands of individual Americans for the duration of this health and economic crisis. There are a lot of nuances to navigate, but if we keep small businesses

open, make it as safe as possible to conduct business, and provide individuals with direct relief, we will be on our way to a true recovery.

3. What will be your top 3 priorities in Congress that relate to the business sector and tie directly to your district?

1) Infrastructure – particularly infrastructure for the 21st century. Our district still has areas without reliable broadband and cell service. We need to continue to create an environment that allows business to be mobile and agile as well as sustainable.

2) Assisting with the needs of small business. Small business in IN09 has issues with access to capital, access to talent, and access to opportunity and networks. That includes agribusiness, which needs to be addressed more effectively by partner-leaders in government. We should reward and help enable businesses that are conscious of their impacts on our environment, our communities, and on employees and their families – businesses that make a priority of doing the right things like playing a role in addressing climate change; providing better benefits, not being anti-labor; and giving back to the communities that helped make them successful in the first place.

3) Untangling employee-based healthcare and providing universal, single-payer healthcare (Medicare-for-All).