

**Andy Ruff, Democratic Candidate for Indiana Congressional District 9**  
**Responses to questions from the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce**  
**For the June 2, 2020 Primary Election**

**1. As we look to emerge from the COVID-19 stay-at-home period, we'll be balancing public health concerns with economic recovery. What guidance would you provide as a federal legislator to navigate this next phase?**

First to the wording of the question, I think I would use a term like "merge" rather than "balancing". I question framing the issue as competing objectives that need to be balanced, rather than that they are two interconnected aspects of maximizing overall societal well-being. 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.

With that concept in mind, here are features I agree with those who include the following as essential components of a recovery effort going forward:

- Medicare covering all COVID-19 testing and treatment and all related emergency care
- Defense Production Act to quickly plan production and distribution of medical supplies and a test, contact tracing, and Quarantine Program to safely reopen our economy
- An OSHA temporary standard to provide enforceable PPE protections for workers, and to actually enforce it
- \$1,500 /month to adults and \$500/child for at least the next 3 months
- Loans to all businesses and hospitals for payroll and fixed overhead that would be forgiven if all workers are kept on payroll
- Moratorium on evictions, foreclosures, and utility shutoff
- Suspension of student loan payments with no interest accumulation
- Necessary aid to state and local governments sufficient for essential public services to continue running
- Universal mail-in ballots for elections

**2. Many local businesses are struggling 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?**

Assistance must be focused on Main St. not on Wall St. I believe the federal response so far has been to a large degree upside-down – the emphasis in funding and the speed of process should be for individuals and small businesses. In our system, in the private sector, our admiration of entrepreneurial risk-taking is primary to the way we view the economy and the way we view the movers and shakers – the bigger the risk-taking, the bigger the potential financial rewards and all the benefits that go with it.

However, when trouble comes knocking, the risk associated with big business seems to more often than not to be socialized through quick rescues and bailouts by the public – the little guy pays for the big guys' plays. The way our system is supposed to work is that big risks and big firms who are tremendously successful and get rich in the good times when their gambles pay off must take the hit when things go bad.

Individuals, small businesses, and truly not-for-profit hospitals, as well as local governments should have been prioritized in of the federal assistance that has been provided so far and in the future, not more big corporate bailouts with companies being rewarded for years of stock buybacks and other selfish economic behaviors that left their executives and large shareholders richer but their employees not better off and the companies themselves far less prepared to weather future storms.

In addition to the measures I mentioned in question #1, this is a case where throwing money at the problem, for right now, in the midst of the crisis, is what is needed, as managing cash flow problems is the critical issue right now for so many businesses. I would not support any tax cuts for those at the top and would advocate for taxing those who can afford it higher to help fund the assistance and relief efforts.

**3. Other than the current crisis, what will be your top 3 priorities in Congress that tie directly to your district?**

1) Infrastructure – particularly infrastructure for the 21st century – we still have areas in the district without reliable internet 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. We need to alter the dynamic of Washington politics. Small business has issues with access to capital, access to talent, and access to opportunity and networks, including agribusiness as farmers are business people too that can be and need to be addressed more effectively by partner-leaders in government. If our communities and the families who live in them are to thrive we need to do more to help our

small, local businesses be successful and sustainable. 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 returning to their communities.

3) Universal, single-payer healthcare (Medicare-for-All).