

Boulder, CO

2008 Endorsement Questionnaire

U. S. House of Representative

Candidate and Campaign Information:

Candidate Name: *Joan Fitz-Gerald*

Address: *7205 Meade Street*

City, State, Zip: *Westminster, CO 80030*

E-mail Address: *www.joanfitz-gerald.com*

Office for which you are running: *2nd Congressional District*

Date of Election: *August 12, 2008*

Registered Political Party: *Democratic*

Campaign Manager: *Mary Alice Mandarich* Phone: *303-487-1111* Fax: *303-429-9700*

Campaign Consultant: *Please refer to the attached campaign prospectus.* Phone: Fax:

Campaign Address: *P.O. Box 689, Westminster, CO 80036*

List endorsements from organizations and/or individuals: *Please see attached campaign prospectus.*

How would you describe yourself politically (i.e. progressive; moderate democrat, etc.)?
Progressive.

List elective or political party offices you have held, including committee appointments:

Jefferson County Clerk & Recorder (1990-1998)

State Senator (2000-2007)

- *Chair, Business Affairs Committee (2001-2003)*
- *Minority Leader (2003-2005)*
- *Colorado State Senate President (2005-2007)*
- *Chaired Legislative Council Committee & Legislative Executive Committee*

What is your primary occupation?

Being a candidate for Congress. You can believe me when I tell you it's a full time job.

Why are you running for Congress? (100 word limit)

America is in troublesome straits at the moment. From an endless civil war in Iraq that is siphoning more and more of our national wealth, to a economic recession the

*President refuses to acknowledge, to a health care system that desperately needs to be fixed, to an energy crisis that is driving up the cost of living for those who can least afford it and contributing to our ballooning trade deficits, much needs to be done. I, like many Americans I talk to, feel outraged by the lack of action coming out of Washington, D.C. I am running to bring a sense of **urgency** to the U.S. Congress to start getting things done on the problems I recited above as well as many other pressing issues.*

Issues Specific to Office:

What experiences have prepared you to run for Congress?

My leadership at the legislature has prepared me to hit the ground running if elected to Congress. It is important to note that of the 7+ years I was in the state senate, I was minority leader and state Senate President for five of them. These leadership positions were not bestowed upon me by default. The fellow members of my caucus voted me into leadership. On a daily basis I had to make decisions about staffing, policy, committees, the running of the Democratic caucus, and the running of the state senate as an institution. My fellow Democrats who have gone from the Colorado General Assembly onto the U.S. Congress confirm to me that their experience at the legislature was invaluable to them as new members of Congress.

If you receive the endorsement of Progressive Democrats of America, how do you intend to use it?

My campaign will publicize the endorsement as best we can. And we would be looking forward to setting up direct communications with the members of PDA inside the 2nd Congressional District.

Please list the top three issues on which you will take leadership if elected:

- 1) Vote for immediate withdrawal of our troops from Iraq.*
- 2) Help create a universal single-payer health care system.*
- 3) Support a package of bills to promote renewable/alternative energy such as the Democratic majority did at the Colorado General Assembly.*

Do you agree with Congress' decision to reauthorize the Patriot Act?

Why or why not?

I do not. It tramples far too many civil liberties for us as Americans to be comfortable with.

If elected, which committee(s) would you prefer to serve on and why?

I have learned from talking to my fellow Democrats who are members of Congress from Colorado that rookie congresspersons don't get much say in what committee(s) they are assigned. But if I could have my preference I would choose the Energy and Commerce Committee. As Chairman John Dingell (D-MI) points out, over the years this committee has passed, "... laws to improve the quality of the air we breathe, to clean up toxic waste sites, to provide health care to senior citizens and children, to protect the safety of our food and drugs, to promote a vibrant telecommunications industry, to prevent

fraud in our financial markets and much more.” In addition, this committee deals with trade issues, fuel & energy efficiency, alternative/renewable fuels and the internet.

Federal Issues:

1) Iraq:

PDA supports an immediate start to a rapid and complete withdrawal from Iraq of all troops and military contractors, and has championed legislation that would withhold funding for any other military purpose there. In addition, PDA believes that the U.S. must revise its strategy for the region by removing these forces from the Mideast entirely, rather than just "redeploying" them within the region. PDA advocates a shift in U.S. foreign policy from reckless unilateralism toward cooperation and diplomacy--so that people of other countries know us more by our helping hand than our slugging arm. Furthermore, PDA supports the redirecting of resources allocated for military spending to human needs.

Will you pledge to support such immediate and total withdrawal from Iraq of the military forces, including supporting legislation towards this goal?

Yes.

In addition, will you forswear any preemptive military attacks upon any nation?

Yes. I think the Bush/Cheney administration has espoused a preemptive strike rationale that has severely damaged the United States standing in the world community. In too many instances this has made it nearly impossible for us to engage in constructive diplomatic talks on issues/situations we need to be addressing. The next Congress and President need to withdraw the Bush/Cheney preemptive strike policy. And we just need to be smart enough to elect a Democratic President who isn't going to lie about the need for a preemptive military action.

Will you commit to fully support investigations into the White House's false claims justifying the invasion of Iraq, and would you support impeachment of Bush, Cheney and other administration officials for these and other high crimes?

Yes.

Have you participated in or spoken at any events, demonstrations, meetings or teach-ins opposing the Iraq war and occupation?

Yes.

Have you organized any such events?

Organized directly by me? No.

2) Health Care:

There are over 46 million uninsured people living in America, the majority of which are working Americans. Every year, nearly 18,000 people die unnecessarily as a direct result of their lack of health insurance. Millions, with health insurance, maintain inadequate, overly expensive coverage and face the peril of denials of claims or termination of

benefits if a family member becomes seriously ill--one of the leading causes of bankruptcy in the U.S. While spending twice as much on health care as any other industrialized country, our system performs poorly, spending more money for less coverage, maximizing profits by finding ways to deny care. The private insurance bureaucracy expends one-third of health care money on waste, administrative paperwork, advertising and corporate profits. The current Medicare program for senior citizens spends under 4% of its budget for its overhead costs. Meanwhile, poor health, escalating health insurance premiums and spiraling health care costs impair our economy and job creation in the U.S.

PDA has endorsed HR 676, the National Health Insurance/"Expanded and Improved Medicare-for-All" Act. To guarantee comprehensive health care for all, PDA supports the replacement of the current profit-driven system, publicly financed, privately provided health care program. This "Medicare for All" national plan would save more than \$350 billion per year, enough new money to provide guaranteed comprehensive health care for all. This system would insure portable and uniform benefits regardless of income. With no deductibles or co-pays, this plan would encourage preventive care and restore a doctor and patient controlled health care system affording choice of providers and fair, publicly negotiated payment for both treatment and medication.

What is your approach to the health care crisis?

I support creating a universal, single payer health care system. Only one of my two primary opponents agrees with me on this.

What is your view of Guaranteed Health Care through an Expanded and Improved Medicare-for-All system?

If you are asking whether I am in support of HR 676, the U.S. National Health Insurance Act a.k.a. Expanded and Improved Medicare for All Act, then Yes, I am. I have looked at U.S. Rep. John Conyer's (D-MI)HR 676 and believe it has long-term care, prescription and mental health parity.

If elected, would you support a publicly financed, privately provided national health care program, which insures access to comprehensive health care for all in the U.S.?

I think it is somewhat incongruous to have "for-profit" associated with the term "health care system". But if the "privately provided" healthcare had appropriate caps on its costs to prevent excessive profit-taking, I could see my way to support it.

Would you support a not-for-profit, doctor-patient controlled system which would eliminate the private health insurance industry (with protection for eliminated workers) as the intermediary determining access and the level of care?

If this is the intermediate step that would eventually lead to an universal, single payer health care system then, yes, I could support it.

Would you support the government's ability to negotiate fair prices for treatment as well as drugs, as it does for those covered by the Veteran's Administration's plan?

Yes.

3) Economic Justice:

The current generation has seen unprecedented levels of economic disparity, both among individuals (the richest 1% of Americans own almost 35% of all wealth; the bottom half, only 2.5%) and in the ratio of CEO pay to employee wages. Thirty-seven million people (equal to the population of California) are living in poverty in the U.S. These immoral levels of poverty, which disproportionate impact communities of color and women, can be significantly reduced through concerned legislative effort - including a living wage for all workers, expanded earned income tax credits, childcare assistance and housing vouchers. Specifically, the federal government must fulfill its promise of resources to Hurricane Katrina survivors so they can return to rebuild their communities in the Gulf Coast.

Tax burdens on the middle class can be eased if the wealthy pay their share. In addition to working to roll back Bush's tax breaks for the wealthy, PDA endorses the Equity in Income Act, limiting the amount of CEO compensation afforded federal corporate tax deductions. In emphatically supporting the workers' right to organize, we also endorse the Employee Free Choice Act, which establishes unions in any workplace where a majority of workers sign union cards to join. In the global arena, PDA supports anti-sweatshop legislation and fair trade agreements which protect workers' rights as well as the environment, while opposing wage-reducing "free trade" agreements that protect only corporate rights to exploit unprotected labor. PDA also advocates for humane and comprehensive immigration reform, which insures a fair, attainable path to citizenship and the rights of undocumented workers in the workplace, affirming the dignity and integrity of immigrant families.

What is your position on "Fair Trade" versus "Free Trade" agreements?

I am the only candidate running in the 2nd Congressional District that has come out for scrapping NAFTA and CAFTA.

Will you have pledge to reverse the tax cuts on the wealthiest Americans?

I am resolutely opposed to making Bush's tax cuts for the wealthiest 1% of Americans permanent.

Do you support the right of workers to organize, in any situation?

Yes.

What is your relationship to labor nationally and in your district?

Excellent. I have been endorsed by both the AFL-CIO and the Change-To-Win Coalition.

Do you have union endorsements and supporters in your district?

Yes, a large number of them. Please refer to my attached campaign prospectus.

What is your approach to bringing communities "out of poverty"?

Well, in Colorado we moved before the U.S. Congress did by adopting a raise in the Colorado minimum wage law. At the legislature, we supported expanding community medical clinics as we recognize that lack of access to healthcare keeps people in poverty. Improving education is a key to getting people out of poverty but under the No Child Left

Behind law adopted by an earlier Republican congress, schools in poor communities were actually being punished for being rural, having non-English speaking students or having a disproportionately higher percentage of developmentally disabled/learning disability students. That is why I favor scrapping NCLB and also why I oppose the way CSAP has been interpreted. Staying with education, I support the expansion of federally funded/guaranteed grant money to allow more financially challenged students get to college as I did. As tuition has risen, fewer and fewer grant programs have been available thereby burdening students with back breaking student loans. When you interview me, please let us talk about this more.

Would you support the legislation of the "out of poverty" caucus?

I do not know what all of the legislation is that the "Out of Poverty" caucus is proposing but, having come from poor circumstances myself, I believe I will be generally supportive.

What efforts would you support to provide meaningful resources to Katrina survivors?

By and large, Congress has been quite good in appropriating large amounts of taxpayers' dollars for Katrina relief. But the delivery of that relief to the victims of Katrina has been horribly bungled by the Bush administration. I was outraged that the Bush/Cheney administration proposed waiving the Davis-Bacon Act (which requires construction workers to be paid the prevailing wage rates for their crafts) for the reconstruction work to be done in the Katrina disaster- struck locales. How do they expect people to rebuild their own homes if they pay them substandard wages for the Katrina reconstruction effort? At this point the best thing I can think of to do is to replace the current administration. I am convinced a new Democratic president will not merely pay lip service to Katrina relief efforts as Bush has.

Do you support comprehensive and humane immigration reform as outlined above?

Yes. Please refer to my written answer on this topic I gave to the Boulder Chapter of the PDA.

Have you reached out to immigrant communities and advocates in your district?

Yes. The needs and concerns are the same throughout the congressional district, but in the mountain counties it is worse due to the higher cost of living in the high country.

4) Clean, Fair, Transparent Elections:

The U.S. election system is in crisis. Not only are the usual corrupting factors of money and corporate lobbying as rampant as perhaps at any time in U.S. history, but the new millennium – along with the fallout from the contested 2000 election - have ushered in a qualitative change in the conduct of our elections: Centuries of tradition in which citizens, government officials and Party representatives oversaw physical evidence of voter intent have fallen to the rise of the machines. This sea change, from paper to ephemeral electrons, brings much more than the implicit demand to trust the invisible: the move to computers means that 85% of America has ceded control of its elections to third-party vendors, whose legal claims regarding proprietary software bring corporate control of the entire voting process. PDA thus supports federal legislation that would ban the use

Will you pledge, if elected, to support only voting methods in which ballots are cast on paper?

As a former county Clerk & Recorder, I strongly believe in having voting methods that are auditable. In almost all cases, that means having a paper trail. After all the discrediting of direct record machines that has taken place, I have a strong preference for paper optical scans.

Do you pledge to support “Clean Money” public financing of public elections?

No. As long as the Buckley decision of the U.S. Supreme Court stands, public financing is not adequate. As of the day I write this, one of my primary opponents has put in \$1.6 million dollars of his own money. Because of this ruling, public financing would have left me in a noncompetitive position.

Would you accept public financing for your current campaign?

Again, as I stated in the answer immediately above, as long as the Buckley court decision is still the law of the land and multi-millionaires like my opponent can spend freely of their own money, it would not make sense for me to do so.

Do you support the restoration of voting rights to past felony offenders?

Yes if they have completed their sentence.

Do you support same-day voting registration?

As you know, we’ve had some difficulty in some counties of Colorado in running elections well. I would really like to see us (the State of Colorado) successfully carry out an election without incident before attempting same-day voter registration. Currently, I don’t believe same day voter registration is compatible with an optical scan system and I think the paper ballot trail is more important (see my answer four questions above).

Would you oppose the onerous requirement of official photo identification before affording citizens access to the polls?

Yes. The recent U.S. Supreme Court decision upholding such a requirement in Indiana is flat-out wrong and another piece of evidence as to why we need a new Democratic President who will appoint the next few Supreme Court justices. Not surprisingly, Republicans brought forward an Indiana style photo ID bill before the Colorado General Assembly and I voted against it.

5) Environment/ Global Warming:

No issue reveals more clearly the flaws of the U.S. political-economic system than global warming - the dominance of greed and corporate power over the public good, and the near-sighted focus on the short-term over the welfare of future generations. It is known that the U.S. has the natural resources to power the entire country solely from clean, “alternative” sources of power- whether with solar cells that would require a miniscule fraction of the California desert, or from wind turbines on the Great Plains and in the Great Lakes. It has also often been said that we need a new Apollo Program for clean energy (if not Manhattan Project), in which science, industry and government would cooperate on a crash course to produce novel results in a limited period. Immediate action

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would include raising the auto fuel economy and impose mandatory caps on carbon pollution while investing in public transportation, energy conservation technologies and alternative energy development--in the process, creating new jobs which pay well. .

PDA calls on the Democratic majority in Congress to lead boldly in reducing our country's oil dependence and use of fossil fuels.

Will you pledge to take an uncompromising leadership role on legislation to enact the enormous changes and sacrifices that will be required to stem Global Warming?
Yes, and I already have done so as the Colorado State Senate President.

Will you pledge to enact an Apollo Program for clean energy?
Yes, and I have already done so on the campaign trail for the 2nd Congressional District.

What kind of personal vehicle do you currently drive? Is it rated ZEV, or PZEV?
A 2005 Honda Civic Hybrid. I do not know the rating.
(Insert other federal questions which you find pertinent.)

Insert state or local questions here:

Finance:

Please estimate your campaign costs:
Primary Election: *\$2.5 million* General Election: *\$500,000*
How much money have you raised to date? *\$1.3 million*

Please list independent expenditures that may impact your race:
I don't know of any at this time. However, each of the three times I ran for state senate I have had negative attacks come against me from independent expenditure committees, so I expect I will again. We just have to wait and see.