

## INDIVISIBLE OH12: OHIO 12<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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### CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for completing his questionnaire for Indivisible OH12, a non-partisan, grassroots organization of 4,000 members living across the 12<sup>th</sup> District's seven counties. Please save the completed document (add your last name to the file name) and return as an attachment to [indivisibleoh12@gmail.com](mailto:indivisibleoh12@gmail.com) by Monday 2/19. Your completed questionnaire is an invitation to participate in our candidates' forum, co-sponsored by Progress Ohio, to be held Monday, 2/26, 7pm at the First UU Church, 93 W Weisheimer Rd, Columbus. All candidates who have filed to run for the 12th congressional seat are being invited to participate. Please feel free to contact us via email us with questions.

Candidate Name: **John Russell**

Party Affiliation: **Democrat**

Campaign Committee Name: **John Russell for Congress**

Campaign Address:

**John Russell for Congress**

**P.O. Box 952**

**Sunbury, OH 43074**

Phone number: **330-272-1509**

Campaign Website Address: **www.russellforohio.com**

Campaign Manager Name: **Isaac Bacon**

Campaign Manager Phone Number: **919-259-9566**

Campaign Manager email address: **isaac@russellforohio.com**

What endorsements, if any, have you received for your candidacy in this race?

**Former congresswoman Mary Jo Kilroy.**

Have you ever run for or held an elective Office?

**I haven't held public office, but I ran for State Representative in Ohio House District 68 in 2016. That district was one of the most conservative districts in the state, covering all of Knox County and the eastern half of Delaware County. Despite the long odds, our campaign was able to raise**

**\$50,000, knock on 30,000 doors, and run 7-24 points ahead of every other Democrat on the ticket in the precinct breakdown of Knox County, which went for Trump by 35 points.**

If so, please list here:

Office	Dates

Please answer each of the following questions in **100 words or less**.

1. Which experiences have prepared you to run for and hold the office of Representative for Ohio's 12<sup>th</sup> Congressional District?
  - a. **First, I've owned and managed a small business for five years. I've done all the things that come with launching and managing a successful business. Secondly, I grew up in a working class town that was left behind. I saw, first hand, the human toll of trickle down economics. I've lost friends to this opiate crisis. Growing up there gave me a lifetime commitment to speaking up for workers and people on the outside of power. It gave me the values that I have today, and those values will guide my decisions in Congress.**
  
2. Understanding that voting is primarily legislated at the state level, how do you see your role in expanding the franchise and protecting voting rights as a member of Congress?
  - a. **As a general rule, lawmakers should not make it harder to vote. Every lawmaker has a platform. I would use mine to fight against voter ID laws, cutbacks on early voting, and roll purging. I favor reinstating the recently rolled-back sections of the Voting Rights Act. We should modernize registration and expand access to the ballot with same day registration, online registration, and expanded early vote.**
  
3. As an elected member of Congress, how will you seek to protect and expand access to healthcare for all Americans?
  - a. **The best example we can point to in healthcare, in terms of coverage, delivery, and satisfaction, is Medicare. One of my top legislative priorities is to expand Medicare to all people. In the meantime, we need to fight to preserve the ACA and reinstate the individual mandate to stabilize the market. Ultimately, I feel that a single-payer system should be our long-term goal as it is both universal and efficient.**
  
4. What role do you believe science should play in environmental policy? As a member of Congress, how would you support an American role in responsible climate policy?
  - a. **Science and evidence should be the basis of all policy, especially environmental policy. The hour is growing late to avoid the worst consequences of climate change driven by unchecked carbon and methane emissions. I'm a strong supporter of putting a price on pollution, specifically carbon and methane, and using the proceeds to develop domestic renewable energy. Additionally we should keep the United States in the Paris Climate Accord.**
  
5. What role do you see for the federal government in the public education system? What policies would you support to improve public schools and expand access to higher education for all students?
  - a. **In general, the federal government should help guarantee access to a world class public education for every citizen from the cradle to the grave, especially since rapid technological change in our economy will require citizens to adapt and learn new skills constantly. At the university level this includes strengthening pell grants, student loan forgiveness programs, and a debt free four year degree available in every state**

through our public universities. The federal government can help states meet this obligation. At the high school level, we need to address disparities created by an over reliance on property taxes to fund our public schools, while at the same time, holding for-profit charter schools, that drain public school funding, to the same standard as our public schools. Early education is one area where small investments yield large returns over a person's lifetime. The federal government should pursue universal pre-k education.

6. How would you describe your stance on gun safety? What ideas could you bring to Congress to push through the gridlock and create safer neighborhoods and schools for Ohio and the US?
  - a. **As a gun owner and lifelong resident of rural Ohio, I can be a credible messenger on this issue. We can be a nation that owns guns, and takes common sense steps to reduce shooting deaths, which are unthinkably high in our country. Strong majorities of gun owners support universal background checks and closing the gun show loophole. We should start there. Next, there should be accountability for lost and stolen weapons that supply black markets. Owners should have to report stolen firearms to local police within 30 days. That would incentivize people to store weapons safely. Lastly, there are limits to firepower that work. We used to have a machine gun problem. We regulated them and we don't have the problem anymore. We should look into firepower standards, especially for people with violent track records.**
  
7. What does comprehensive immigration reform look like to you? What do you see as the key elements of such reform?
  - a. **We are a nation of immigrants. Through our entire history, our country has been a melting pot, enriched by the diverse experience of people coming here and seeking a better life. People that come here go to work, raise kids, shop at our businesses, and contribute to society in all kinds of important ways. Most of the 12 million undocumented citizens living here are contributing to our economy and being productive citizens. They need a path to citizenship. We made a promise to the 800,000 DREAMERS living here that we must keep: register through DACA and you'll be safe from deportation. Additionally, we need to offer foreign students an easy opportunity to stay and help drive innovation at American companies. These priorities passed the U.S. Senate in a bipartisan immigration reform bill in 2013 lead by Sen. Dick Durbin. I support the contours of that legislation.**
  
8. List and very briefly discuss the two or three other top concerns that would be priorities for you if you were elected.
  - a. **I mentioned single-payer healthcare in a previous question. Other priorities would be:**
    - i. **Combating opiate addiction and holding pharma companies accountable.**
    - ii. **Putting people to work through public infrastructure rebuilding and renewable energy job development.**
    - iii. **Pursuing political reform by: requiring donor transparency on all super-pacs, establishing public financing for elections at all levels, and supporting an amendment to overturn Citizens United.**

9. Have you made public statements, written articles, or taken formal positions on any of the issues covered in this questionnaire? If so, please provide electronic copies or links to the leadership of Indivisible OH12 via email before 2/19. This helps us to provide our members with a breadth of resources on potential candidates.
  - a. **My website is the best source for public issue positions:**  
<https://www.russellforohio.com/issues/>