

Sample Questions for National Candidates in 2002

Children's Issues—General

- The United States has the highest rate of child poverty of any major western, industrialized nation. There are 11,553,00 million American children (16.1% of the total) living in poverty. What specific plans do you have to reduce child poverty in America?
- The recent federal tax rebate was only the first in a series of tax cuts over ten years. Now, our country faces the increased costs of war and homeland security, and tax receipts are dropping due to the recession. Consequently, programs benefiting children are not receiving the necessary funding. Given this, would you consider repealing the proposed tax cuts?
- States across the country, including Minnesota, are experiencing dramatic budget shortfalls and state legislators are being forced to cut programs. What federal legislation do you support to help states balance their budgets without cutting programs that benefit children?
- There are dramatic differences in the ways in which states administer child and family support programs. What would you do to try to ensure that all of our country's children receive the same, high quality level of support from state to state?

Supports for Working but Poor Families

- The economic slowdown has hurt many families, none so much as those living at or near the poverty level. What programs and policies do you support to help working poor families keep working and help those who are seeking work to support their children until a job is available?
- This year Congress will reauthorize three key programs that support children—Food Stamps, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, and the Child Care and Development Block Grant. Do you support increasing the amount of funding available through these programs, and what other changes would you support if these bills were rolled over to the next Congress?
- As a result of welfare reform, many people have moved off the welfare rolls; most often they have moved into jobs paying below poverty wages. Others remain unable to find work. What revisions to the law would you support that would help people obtain full time employment at a living wage, and what revisions would you support to help those people who have been unable to find work?

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Health, Safety and Security

- Even if the country's current health insurance programs for children enroll all children who are eligible, millions of children would still be uninsured. What do you think should be done to ensure that all children have access to affordable health care?
- What specific laws will you support that will protect children from injury or death due to firearms?
- An estimated 2.8 million children were reported as suspected child abuse or neglect cases in 1998 and more than 900,000 of them were confirmed as victims of child abuse and neglect. How do you propose to serve adequately the needs of this vulnerable population?
- Given the fact that 75% of our children younger than 5 years old are in the care of someone other than their parents during working hours, how would you ensure that they receive high quality childcare in safe environments?
- The children in our juvenile justice systems are overwhelmingly poor, with unmet mental health and substance abuse treatment needs, and children of color are heavily over-represented. What specific programs would you support to prevent youth crime by addressing the needs of these children?
- Children are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population in the United States. What will you do to ensure the provision of affordable housing for low-income families?
- Millions of children are languishing in foster care often because of restrictive adoption regulations. What, if anything, do you propose doing to increase the number of children moving from foster care into adoptive family homes?

These questions were adapted from those provided by the National Association of Child Advocates (www.childadvocacy.org).

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