

BE THE CHANGE

Candidate Questionnaire – US Senate Race 2010
Andrew Romanoff (D-Colorado)

- 1. Describe your service to the constituents of Colorado to date. Detail how you achieved offices held and your notable accomplishments; particularly your leadership in areas of health care, education, environment, election reform, and civil rights.**

A Passion for Service

I have served the people of Colorado for more than 16 years in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. I was the president of the Washington Park East Neighborhood Association and the Washington Street Community Center; as a mentor through Denver Kids; as a member of the boards of the Center for Women's Employment and Education, the Colorado Health Foundation, and the Colorado Children's Campaign. I have advanced progressive causes and candidates through my work as a Democratic precinct committeeman, finance chair, district captain and national committeeman.

A Record of Leadership

I was first elected to the Colorado House of Representatives in 2000. I was reelected in 2002, 2004 and 2006. My district covered parts of Denver and Arapahoe counties. My colleagues elected me as assistant minority leader in 2002, minority leader in 2003, and speaker of the House from 2005 to 2009.

My leadership has been recognized by every major newspaper in Colorado and by more than 50 state and national organizations, including *Governing Magazine*, which named me in 2008 as Public Official of the Year. In 2006, I was honored as the most outstanding legislative leader in America. The Council of State Governments, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the State Legislative Leaders Foundation made me the youngest-ever recipient of their most prestigious award, saying my "career embodies the highest principles of leadership – integrity, compassion, vision and courage."

A Commitment to Progress

I have been one of the leading defenders of Colorado's most vulnerable citizens. I authored laws to protect the victims of domestic violence, to break the cycle of child abuse and neglect, and to expand the supply of affordable housing. My work on behalf of at-risk populations has earned recognition from the Colorado Affordable Housing Partnership, the Colorado Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs, the Colorado Association of Nonprofit Organizations, the Colorado Women's Bar Association, the Junior League of Denver, and Community Shares of Colorado.

I have also built a strong record of leadership on health care, education, environment, election reform, and civil rights.

Curbing the Cost of Health Care

Thousands of Coloradans have been forced to do battle with their insurance companies just to get coverage they've already purchased. In 2008, I fought the insurance industry and won. The result: a new law that requires insurers to pay what they owe when they owe it – and stiffens penalties on those who don't.

I voted to reduce Coloradans' prescription-drug prices, by pooling our purchasing power with other states. I supported efforts to supply rural Coloradans and other underserved communities with greater access to care, by investing in local health clinics and expanding the use of telemedicine. I also authored laws to:

- help Colorado's seniors get the care they need in their own homes and communities;
- save millions of dollars in state medical expenses by holding private insurers to higher standards of accountability;
- make contracts between health-care providers and insurers more transparent;
- provide health coverage – including access to the Children's Health Insurance Program, mental health services, and drug and alcohol treatment – to thousands of Coloradans.

My leadership has been recognized by Colorado's leading health and human service organizations, including the Colorado Psychological Association, the Colorado Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, the Colorado Dental Association, the Colorado Community Health Network, the Colorado Society of Osteopathic Medicine, the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, the Colorado Association of Alcohol and Drug Service Providers, Peer Assistance Services, Crossroads Turning Points, and Advocates for Recovery. In 2006, the Colorado Medical Society named me as Defender of the Patient – the physicians' highest honor.

Strengthening Our Schools

I have dedicated much of my career to public education. As a teacher and as a policymaker, I have worked to expand opportunities for all Coloradans. I led the fight for high-quality early childhood education, so that more students can start school ready to learn. I worked to provide a more stable learning environment for homeless children, so that they can remain in the same school over the course of a year even as their families are shuttled from shelter to shelter. I have been a champion of higher education, ensuring that the doors of Colorado's community colleges and universities remain open to students from low- and middle-income backgrounds.

In 2007, I led a statewide tour of Colorado's rural schools. I recognized that many of our aging school buildings pose a health or safety risk to students and staff. Working with State Treasurer Cary Kennedy, I sponsored the Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) Act. The result: the largest investment in school construction in state history, a billion-dollar plan to transform Colorado's crumbling classrooms.

My leadership has earned top honors from every major education organization in Colorado, including the Colorado Education Association, the Colorado Association of School Boards, the Colorado Association of School Executives, the Colorado Association for the Education of Young Children, and the American Association of University Professors.

Protecting Our Environment

In my first address to the House as its Democratic leader, I vowed to make Colorado a world leader in “the production and use of clean, efficient and renewable energy.” In 2004, I endorsed an initiative to get 10 percent of Colorado’s electricity from alternative sources and then helped double that goal three years later.

I fought the Bush Administration’s attempts to weaken environmental standards. I sponsored bills to conserve open space and farmland, promote water conservation, and enhance energy efficiency and recycling. I also backed measures to:

- protect the quality of Colorado’s air and water;
- keep water flowing in Colorado’s rivers and streams;
- defend water, land and mineral rights and other private-property interests;
- advance large-scale solar projects, biomass development and geothermal research;
- map renewable-resource areas and expedite the construction of transmission lines;
- bring wind power to schools;
- help low-income families weatherize their homes and pay their heating bills;
- give households, farmers, ranchers and businesses credit for the energy they produce on site.

In 2009, northeastern Colorado’s chamber of commerce, Progressive 15, made me the first and only metro-area lawmaker ever inducted into its Legislator of the Plains Hall of Fame. My leadership also won recognition from groups ranging from Colorado Conservation Voters to the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union.

Reforming Our Political System

I have spent more than a decade fighting for election reform and ethics in government, both as a board member of Colorado Common Cause and as a lawmaker. I fought the GOP’s attempts to gut voter-approved contribution limits, sponsored a tough gift ban, and – in my very first year in the legislature – authored a law increasing the penalties on candidates who fail to disclose their donors or expenditures.

As speaker of the House, I sought to end backroom deal-making by enforcing Colorado’s open-meetings law, investigating and punishing ethics violations, and requiring an opportunity for public testimony on every bill. I also pushed the Colorado legislature into the 21st century by putting live video coverage of the House of Representatives on television and the Internet – an effort that earned me the Sue O’Brien Award for Public Service from the Colorado Freedom of Information Council.

Safeguarding Our Rights

My passion for civil rights took root nearly 30 years ago. While in high school, I learned about the Southern Poverty Law Center's efforts to combat Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazi groups. In 1987, I moved to Montgomery to work for the Center's Klanwatch Project; I conducted research for law-enforcement officials across the country. Five years later, I took a job at the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, the state's civil rights agency; I designed and supervised a pioneering investigation of employment discrimination.

My commitment to human rights extends around the world. In 2007, I worked with a group of students at the University of Colorado to craft the Sudan Divestment Act. The law, which I steered through the legislature by a margin of 97-1, cut state ties to the regime responsible for the genocide in Darfur. Later that year, I brought 46,000 petitions to Beijing on behalf of the Save Darfur Coalition. I met with Chinese officials and urged them to use their clout with the Sudanese government to stop the genocide. My efforts were honored by the Jewish Community Relations Council and by the Mizel Museum, which named me as its 2009 Tikkun Olam Ambassador.

2. Please describe your legislative agenda for providing affordable health care to all the citizens of Colorado. Specifically speak to your attitude toward single payer solutions.

I support a universal, single-payer system, and I will fight to secure high-quality health care for all Americans. I believe our nation should also:

- Make coverage affordable, by reducing medical errors, minimizing administrative expenses, and promoting prevention and early intervention.
- Make coverage reliable, by cracking down on companies that unreasonably delay or deny the payment of claims.
- Make coverage portable, by allowing Americans to keep their insurance even if they change or lose their jobs.
- Prohibit discrimination on the basis of preexisting conditions.
- Expand consumer choice and encourage innovation among health-care providers.
- Improve the quality of medical care by coordinating services and by reforming reimbursement formulas to reward value, not just volume.
- Increase the use of information technology.
- Promote personal responsibility for health decisions, by reducing co-payments for check-ups and wellness programs.

3. Please describe how you will address climate change in the US Senate. Include discussion of these measures with specific reference to and impact on ongoing energy policy.

Increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are imperiling our planet. Our addiction to fossil fuels darkens our skies, damages our water, destroys our wetlands and wildlife habitat,

and disrupts our climate. The consequences of inaction will be catastrophic, not only for our health and our environment but also for our economy and our national security. We can save thousands of lives and hundreds of billions of dollars by transforming the way in which we produce and consume energy.

I will fight to preserve our natural resources and agricultural heritage, end our expensive reliance on foreign fossil fuel, and spur the creation of green-collar jobs. Among my goals:

- Establish a high national renewable energy portfolio standard.
- Use federal revenue policy to reward work and reduce carbon emissions.
- Invest in the research and development of alternative energy sources and energy-efficient technology.
- Improve the power grid to transmit and distribute energy more efficiently and to facilitate the use of wind and other renewable energy sources.
- Set a national goal of zero net energy use in all federal facilities and provide incentives to minimize energy use in the construction and operation of other buildings.
- Strengthen the protection of public health and the enforcement of air, land and water laws, including the monitoring and reporting of emissions and waste storage and disposal.

4. What have you done to protect and balance the interests of your constituents with the typically more prominent position and influence of lobbyists and corporate special interests?

I believe the disproportionate influence special-interest groups wield in Washington has distorted our democracy. I am trying to restore the power of people by running a broad grassroots campaign – and by refusing contributions from political action committees. To date, I am the only candidate to turn down such contributions. I have challenged the other candidates to make the same commitment and return the corporate cash they have already accepted; none of them has done so.

5. Please describe your attitude on corporate personhood and how you propose to address practically and legislatively.

The Supreme Court's recent decision in *Citizens United vs. Federal Election Commission* undermines the ability of ordinary people to compete with corporate interest groups, as I said on the day the ruling came down. To mitigate the danger of this decision, Congress should consider subjecting independent expenditures to greater disclosure, transparency and shareholder approval; adopting a system of public financing; and requiring television and radio stations to offer candidates airtime at lower costs. A constitutional amendment may be the only means to reverse *Citizens United*, short of a change in the Court's membership or philosophy.

6. How have you and will you continue to seek the regular, active input and feedback of your constituents?

I have done so and will continue to do so by holding open office hours and town meetings, distributing newsletters and surveys, and using the new media as extensively as possible. Meeting voters face-to-face has been the most rewarding part of every campaign I've ever worked on; I've knocked on tens of thousands of doors in the last 16 years – and I'll keep going!

7. Discuss your ideas for accelerating the economic recovery, specifically generating long term, permanent gains in employment for Coloradans; and what measures you advocate for guarding against this sort of economic crisis in the future.

I led the fight to rescue Colorado's economy from its last major crisis. As speaker of the House, I convened lawmakers from both sides of the aisle, as well as key leaders from every sector of the state. Together, we developed an Economic Recovery Plan called Referendum C. I helped build the broadest coalition in state history to pass that measure.

Under my leadership, the legislature produced the strongest jobs program in decades, including:

- significant support for Colorado's homegrown industries, such as renewable energy, bioscience, biotechnology, tourism, and the arts;
- financial incentives for small and rural employers;
- a near-record boost in work-study funding and financial aid for Colorado's college students;
- a green light for three-dozen critical road and bridge repairs;
- a billion-dollar investment in school construction.

I also voted to shield consumers from fraud and abuse, crack down on predatory lenders, defend the right to organize, and protect homeowners from foreclosure.

In the U.S. Senate, I will fight to strengthen the middle class, modernize America's aging infrastructure, train our workforce to compete around the world, and improve oversight of the financial industry. I will work to:

- Repair and rebuild our roads, bridges, mass transit, water systems, information networks and energy grids.
- Ease access to credit and capital, particularly for small businesses.
- Use the Earned Income Tax Credit to reward work and reduce poverty.
- Preserve the purchasing power of the minimum wage.
- Expand opportunities for dislocated workers to obtain job training.
- Maximize access to vocational rehabilitation.
- Strengthen the enforcement of consumer protection laws.
- Promote public-private partnerships to advance education, research and development in science, technology, engineering and math.
- Create a new Consumer Financial Protection Agency to promote transparency and accountability in the market for financial products and services and prevent deceptive and abusive practices.

- Separate traditional banking from riskier investment banking activities, by enacting a modern version of the Glass-Steagall law.
- Require that derivatives be regulated and traded on an exchange.
- Limit the amount of leverage banks are able to incur and increase the percentage they are required to keep in reserve in safe, liquid investments such as Treasury bills.

8. Discuss your assessment of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the long-term outlook and U.S. presence/responsibility in each.

U.S. foreign policy should reflect our national-security needs as well as our commitment to democracy and human rights. The long-term stability of Iraq and Afghanistan rests on the establishment of functioning governments in those countries – governments that enjoy the support and promote the welfare of their own citizens. The U.S. and its allies in the international community should use diplomatic and humanitarian means, whenever possible, to advance those goals. At the same time, the U.S. must seek to eliminate the threat of terrorism and to prevent terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda from gaining a safe haven anywhere in the world. Military force should be used only as a last resort.

9. Discuss your assessments of Iran, Israel and a Palestinian State in the stability and security of the U.S. and the Middle East.

Lasting peace in the Middle East demands a commitment to security and the rule of law on the part of both Israelis and Palestinians. I support Israel's right to exist and to defend itself. I also favor the creation of a Palestinian state. Iran's suppression of democracy at home and its support of terrorism abroad endanger the region and the rest of the world.

10. Please identify what will be your five highest legislative priorities and why they should be at the top of your list.

Our quality of life – and, in many ways, our survival – rest on the security of our nation, the safety of our environment, our access to medical care, the quality of our education, and the income and dignity that come with a decent job. Those are among the top priorities I will pursue in the U.S. Senate.

11. Explain why you are running and uniquely suited for this U.S. Senate seat.

We find ourselves at a time of extraordinary peril and promise, as a people and as a planet. Many of the challenges we face are literally matters of life or death. Yet the United States Senate seems paralyzed by cowardice and partisanship.

I am running for the Senate because I want to make it possible for every American to enjoy a steady paycheck, a stable source of health care, and a safe place to live. I have built the strongest

record of legislative leadership in Colorado. I am also the only candidate in this race willing and able to reform our broken political system by turning down the corporate cash that corrupts it.

12. Discuss your abilities to work with individuals who disagree with you and how you resolve those differences to achieve your goals.

No one has been more effective in bringing Democrats and Republicans together to solve Colorado's toughest problems. From the campaign for Referendum C to the passage of BEST, I have tackled some of the most important challenges our state has ever faced. I know how to find common ground and where to draw the line. I will take to Washington an ability to develop creative solutions and to forge broad coalitions – skills that seem in short supply in the U.S. Senate today.