**U.S. Kentucky Congressional District 4**

**Alexandra Owensby**

1. What sets you apart from the other candidates?

I am proud to say there are so many things that set me apart from other candidates in this election.

First and foremost, over 80% of our campaign contributions have come from small individual donors.  No other candidate, democrat or republican, in this race has raised greater than 50% of their donations from small individual donors. This is so important to me because I believe we need candidates who represent the working and middle classes.  Most of us do not have family members/corporations that can fund our campaigns.  Most of us are people like me, that are working every day and have working/middle class friends we associate with on a regular basis. While I would love to get to the point where we have a list of people who have maxed out donations to our campaign, I am very proud we built up to that level rather than having high dollar donors financing us from the start.  I believe it is imperative for candidates to have faced everyday challenges working Americans face in order to understand what needs to change in order to move our country into a future where working and middle class citizens have a chance.

Beyond that, I am the ONLY candidate running for office in this district that is a mother.  Less than 6% of Congress has ever given birth and experienced the process of raising children.  While all women should be valued and held in equal standing regardless of their ability or desire to have children, there are also unique challenges faced by working mothers which 94% of Congress does not understand.  Without giving mothers a voice in Congress, we fail to represent those who understand having given birth or being pregnant should not be a pre-existing condition which keeps women from getting insurance.  Without giving mothers a voice, we will continue to fail to address the issues of affordable childcare, the need for mothers to have flexible schedules, the inconsistencies of women’s pay dropping after having a child, while men’s pay goes up.  As a mother, I understand the value of public education.  I see the struggles faced by my children’s teachers.  I understand the investment in public education and the fact it is essential to make sure the next generation has the resources they need to continue advancing Kentucky into the future.

I am also the only candidate running who is in healthcare. I think that my experience in healthcare has led me to be committed to public service. I will care about my constituents just as much as I care for my patients. I want to see real results for the people of Kentucky. I will fight until I see every Kentuckian having a heathy way forward into the future.  I have fought to keep our hospitals open, I will continue to fight for advancing telemedicine, and I will fight for a single payer system where all Americans have affordable access to quality healthcare.  Only by getting healthcare providers elected to Congress and the Senate can we develop a healthcare system which works and is sustainable moving forward.

1. What will you do to ensure that **all** Kentuckians have quality and affordable health care?

As a Nurse Practitioner, I see the impact of the deficiencies in our healthcare system every single day.  The COVID-19 crisis has only highlighted these issues.  How is it possible we still have a healthcare system tied to employment? That in the midst of a pandemic, people have to worry about getting laid off, because more than anything, it means they are losing their insurance. As Americans, we need a better legacy.

On a daily basis, I see people who come into my office and can't afford medications. And, trust me, I get it! My children both require medicine each month. Between the co-pays of the medicines and the co-pays of the specialists, it is expensive and tests the limits of my income.  This is being said by someone who has a good job, with "good" insurance.

Ultimately, we have got to get to a single payer system. Medicare for all is not enough. Medicare has some big problems, including high costs at the beginning of the year and the donut hole gap. We must create a system that protects all Americans equally and does not result in corporate profits. By transitioning to this plan we would save hundreds of billions of dollars per year in administrative costs.

Additionally, I will fight to ensure we have expanded access to telemedicine.  There are many people in Kentucky who do not live near the specialists they need to manage their conditions.  Additionally, many Kentuckians cannot afford to take a day off work to go and visit their healthcare provider.  They cannot afford to take the bus to and from their appointments.  By expanding telemedicine, we give rural communities, as well as 9-5 Monday-Friday workers, a chance to receive the care they need to keep them healthy.

1. How are you going to bring Kentucky into the future?

By electing a mom and a nurse to Congress! As a single mom of two, I know the struggles everyday Americans face. I know what it is like to raise two children relying on government assistance while getting my degree. I relate to those Kentuckians. I will develop policies that would help these Kentuckians!

First, we need to invest in our teachers and the public education system.  For too long, we have ignored the needs of our schools and teachers.  By not fully investing in our teachers and public education system, we are short changing our youth and our educators.  Teachers are our frontline defense in the war against poverty, drugs, and unemployment.  Our public school teachers deserve to get paid among the ranks of engineers and architects.  They deserve to have the resources they need.  This is an investment that will pay off tenfold as our children grow into adults and productive members of society.

Next, we need a major infrastructure bill that not only will fix major issues holding back our economy, but will also bring us into the future, such as broadband internet access, green energy, modernizing our electric grid, and new means of transportation in public transit. Though I expand on it in the next section, we should address our student debt crisis and find solutions that will stop it from getting worse. The government does not hesitate to loan money to banks at zero percent interest, why are we not doing the same for our students?

As a nurse I will bring a level of expertise that is severely lacking in Congress. We have to bring a better future to Kentuckians. We have to make sure that when they are sick they can get the help they need without the fear of going medically bankrupt. I will support legislation that will make sure that we can ensure that Kentuckians are able to get that help. For example, we need to pass legislation that will lower prescription drug prices. We must pass the Equality Act to stop discrimination for our LGBTQ+ neighbors and youth. We need more criminal justice reform. To raise the minimum wage statewide.

Another forward thinking policy is discussing more effective ways to facilitate employees working from home in the future such as tax credits for businesses that encourage their employees working from home. This would help address climate change, as well as providing working parents the flexibility they need to remain in the workforce and be there for their families.

1. How do you plan on addressing income inequality in Kentucky?

I believe that if you truly want to address income inequality you have to go to the source. One of the biggest issues facing Kentucky is not having access to high speed internet. Without high speed internet our citizens are not able to access the information that is required to advance with the rest of the nation.

We must also look into how we pay our counties' schools. There is no reason why people in Eastern Kentucky should be getting a lower level of education just because they are not getting the money they need for books and staff from Estate Taxes. We have to find a new way to make sure that ALL schools are getting the money they need to give our future generations the education they deserve!

As a part of my efforts to aid our rural communities, we need to make sure that these communities are not left behind in our transition to a greener economy and that the cultural significance of coal mining is acknowledged while also encouraging the real economic opportunity of a clean energy.

Moreover, a major inequity is that many communities do not have access to higher education.  Our first step would be to increase federal funding to states so they can put more money into their schools to ensure that they remain public. However, as a part of that increased funding we would need to require most schools to make major cuts to “administrative bloat”. That is the dramatic rise in executive salaries and the redundancy of administrative positions. Another aspect would be the need to build a student movement to push for more reform. Schools will truly start to listen if we encourage students to make their voices heard in the process. Many students are now taking a gap year which is forcing schools to reevaluate the necessity for certain students fees. It is imperative we address the student loan crisis as I discussed above.  We need to incentivize people to seek higher degrees, and not burden them with lifelong debt as a result.  American doctors are disadvantaged compared to our foreign counterparts as they do not have the student loan debt we have.  This means they can spend more time with patients, have lighter workloads, and not suffer from the burnout American doctors experience. We should support funding for “alternative pathways” such as community colleges or apprenticeship programs. This should include advocacy in our high schools for these post-secondary options as well as developing state or federal based “competency” programs to corroborate certain valuable skills for employment. Finally, we need to phase out the corporate tax cuts and make sure the wealthy are paying their fair share.

1. What are your goals if elected?

My goal once elected would be to address the failing health care system. With my first hand experience in healthcare, I know the system is broken and we must fix it as soon as possible.

My next goal will be to make sure that our children will have a world to grow up in. We must have legislation that will effectively and comprehensively address climate change.

My last major goal would be to make sure that the youth in Kentucky get the education that they deserve. The only way we can ensure a better America is to make sure our children have the education they need to make it in a future that we are unable to predict. We need to make sure that our teachers are adequately paid and that our schools receive equitable funding to ensure success. We also need to immediately pass legislation that removes the deadline for the Equal Rights Amendment, allowing it to become the 28th Amendment.   We also need to strengthen our unions to make sure our workers have protections in the future. To save our democracy and get real results we need a representative who will stop big money in politics and will protect the right to vote while also fighting everyday for working and middle class people. I know that when we are elected, we will make a better Kentucky.