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Please confirm your name

JoAnna Mendoza

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The Affordable Care Act (ACA) has provided protections for 2.8 million Arizonans living with a pre-existing condition and has provisions that extend care to former foster youth, school-aged children, and hundreds of thousands for Arizonans. However, the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act is under review by the Supreme Court. Do you support efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act?

No

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Comments on the Affordable Care Act

The Affordable Care Act was a major step forward for our healthcare system in the United States. It expanded access to millions of Americans who were previously uninsured and expanded Medicaid coverage. One of its most important components is that it prevents health insurance companies from declining coverage or offering higher prices because someone has pre-existing conditions. This was a monumental step in our country and has improved healthcare access and availability for millions of Americans, including many here in Arizona. Many problems still exist in our healthcare system, and accessibility and affordability of healthcare is still a major problem in Arizona, especially in rural communities. But to fix those problems, we need to protect the ACA and expand upon the benefits that it provides.

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Medicaid is a major source of federal funds in Arizona, with every dollar of state investment drawing down \$3.20 in federal funds. The Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC) projects a major state budget shortfall in the next state fiscal year (FY2021). Would you support cuts to Medicaid provider rates, member eligibility, or covered benefits in order to make up for state budget shortfalls?

No

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Comments on Medicaid

It is essential that we protect funding for Medicaid and not make any cuts to this program in order to make up for state budget shortfalls. Healthcare is a human right. Both AHCCCS and KidsCare are absolutely essential for providing necessary healthcare services to a large number of Arizonans. The federal poverty level for a single person is \$12,760. At 138% of that for AHCCCS coverage, a person is making only \$17,609 a year or \$36,156 for a family of four. These are some of our most vulnerable and we need to ensure that they have access to healthcare services. This is even more important during the COVID-19 pandemic, when so many people have lost their jobs, had their hours reduced, or are continuing to work on the frontlines and need reliable access to healthcare services. The budget shortfalls that we are facing as a consequence of the pandemic will need to be addressed, but cutting funding to healthcare and other social safety net programs is not the approach we need to take. We need to protect that funding from any cuts. Additional revenue to address this deficit can be generated by modernizing our tax code. We lose millions of dollars every year to special interest tax cuts and loopholes. By removing unnecessary corporate tax loopholes we can invest in healthcare, education, and other programs that benefit all Arizonans.

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The Invest in Education Act is a ballot proposition that restores hundreds of millions of dollars annually in K-12 education funding to solve the teacher-shortage crisis, lower class sizes, hire aides and counselors, and expand career and technical education. It raises the state income tax rate for income above \$250,000 for individuals and for income above \$500,000 for households. Do you support the Invest in Education ballot proposition to raise new resources dedicated to public schools?

Yes

Comments on Invest in Education

Funding for our public education system is absolutely essential. Education is key and can be the great equalizer. Every child should have the opportunity to gain a quality education - regardless of zip code or socioeconomic status or the color of their skin. We need to make education more accessible for everyone to ensure that future economic success is possible. This needs to be a priority for how we spend our state funds. Today, our public education system is massively under-funded and failing our future generations. Particularly in rural areas, there's a lack of certified teachers, special education teachers, and serious infrastructure issues, with buildings in disrepair and students traveling long distances to get to school on buses with no air conditioning or heat. I fully support the Arizona Education Association's priorities, including: restoring funding to pre-2008 amounts and increasing both teacher salaries and salaries for support staff. Quality education ensures the success of our communities as a whole. Without a high-quality education system, we can't build a strong workforce, attract new economic development and employers, or ensure the future success of our children. I support the structure of the Invest in Ed initiative and also believe that we can find more funding for public education by modernizing our tax code and eliminating special interest tax breaks and loopholes for corporations.

The Arizona Education Progress Meter recognizes that children with access to quality, early learning opportunities are more prepared for kindergarten. As they go forward in school and in life, they are less likely to need special education or be held back a grade. They are more likely to graduate high school and go on to college. But many children start kindergarten already behind their peers. Only 21 percent of Arizona preschool-aged children today benefit from quality, early learning in child care and preschool compared to the progress meter goal of 45 percent by 2030. Will you support using state and federal child care funds to connect more young children with quality, early learning in preschool and child care to move Arizona toward the progress meter goal?

Yes

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Comments on early learning

I fully support devoting more state and federal funds to early childhood education programs and working towards meeting this progress meter goal. One of the biggest threats to Arizona families is the lack of early childhood education. Early childhood education sets the foundation for success in school and beyond. It's essential to the holistic development of a child's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical needs. Funding early childhood education would provide children with an opportunity to get a head start and be better prepared for reading on grade-level in the future. These programs are also essential to supporting working parents and aiding in our economic recovery from the pandemic. In order to get our economy going again, we need to ensure that working parents can actually get back to work. To do that, they need good childcare options that also provide quality learning opportunities. Investing in education now (particularly early childhood education), even during a period of economic hardship, will help working parents get back to work in the short-term and help our younger generations be prepared for the future.

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In 2018, 13 percent of children in Arizona (204,363) were being raised by their grandparents or other relatives. In many instances, these relatives have stepped up to care for children who were being abused and neglected, keeping them safe and out of the foster care system. Nationally, informal kinship caregivers keep millions of children out of the overburdened child welfare system and save taxpayers more than \$4 billion each year. Even prior to the COVID-19 crisis, these families faced barriers to securing adequate food, clothing, shelter, and medical care. Before the Great Recession, kinship caregivers were able to access "child-only" benefits through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (TANF), also known as cash assistance. These benefits helped these families meet the critical basic needs of the relative children in their care. Do you support restoring access to "child-only" TANF benefits for children who are being raised by kin?

Yes

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Comments on kinship families

I fully support expanding TANF benefits and restoring access for children who are being raised by kin. As someone who worked in foster and adoption care, we always tried to place children with kin if that was an option. In many cases, relatives provide a much more stable, happy, and healthy option for children rather than placing them in the foster care system. This keeps children from being uprooted unnecessarily and may help reduce the trauma associated with being separated from their parents. But we need to support these kinship caregivers with the resources they need to provide food, shelter, clothing, and medical care for the children under their care. They have stepped up and taken this on out of care for the child, but that commitment comes with added responsibility. The average TANF benefit is only \$185 per month and can only be received for two years. We need to expand TANF benefits and provide more funds to help support these families, including kinship caregivers.

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The events over the last few weeks have brought widespread focus on the systemic racism that is deeply embedded in our society. If elected, would you hold your colleagues and other elected officials accountable to specific criminal justice and police reforms for systemic change.

Yes

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A free space for your comments

I am a retired Marine, mom, and native Arizonan. I'm a small-town kid from a rural community, who grew up working in the cotton fields with my parents. I'm a proud product of government assistance programs like food stamps, section 8 housing, and state-funded healthcare. My story isn't unique. It's the story of many children growing up in Arizona today. It's just one that hasn't often been told. My childhood forced me to develop a fighting spirit to overcome incredible obstacles. At seventeen, I answered the call to serve and joined the military. After 20 years of honorable service, I returned home to Arizona with my son. While serving our communities as a congressional staffer, I saw the struggles people continue to face in our district. I never planned to run for office, but I realized the need for elected

leaders who will fight for Arizonans. We deserve an Arizona where everyone can succeed, regardless of zip code – with access to quality public education, high-paying jobs, affordable healthcare, and a sustainable environment. A place where all children can grow up in safe and prospering communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed all of our lives. We're still struggling to control its spread and we've seen our economy grind to a halt. We're facing budget deficits and may be headed for another recession. The effect of the pandemic on our economy can't be reversed overnight. It's going to take time for our society and our economy to stabilize and recover. Because of this, we have to look at all of the issues in light of the changes that COVID-19 has forced upon us. We need to invest in people-oriented policies to support working families and strengthen our social safety nets as we work towards long-term recovery.

Most Arizonans cannot afford to be out of work for an extended period of time. For those who have been laid off or furloughed, we need to ensure that expanded unemployment insurance is available and that we strengthen our social safety nets, including SNAP and a statewide ban on evictions. For those who are still working, we must make workplace safety a priority and guarantee paid medical and family leave so that no one has to choose between their health and keeping their job. In order to get our economy going again, we need to ensure that working parents can actually get back to work. In order to do that, they need childcare. Arizona has long neglected the childcare industry and rural areas suffer the most, with 48% of working parents living in a childcare desert.

We need to make sure that we maintain and increase funding for education and early childhood programs, and don't repeat the mistakes made during the 2008 Great Recession. We still haven't recovered from the cuts that were made to K-12 schools, community colleges, and universities then. Investing in education now, even during a period of economic hardship, will ensure that working parents are able to get back to work in the short-term and will build a stronger workforce for the future, adding to our economic recovery. We need to use our \$1 billion Rainy Day fund to protect funding for public education and safety net programs to help us weather this storm. By modernizing our tax code and eliminating corporate tax breaks, we can also generate new revenue that can be invested into public

education, infrastructure, and other programs that benefit ALL Arizonans.

We deserve leadership that truly represents the diversity in our communities. I understand the issues impacting Legislative District 11 and I'm committed to fighting for our values and putting people first. I fought my way out of poverty, fought to protect our Constitutional rights, and now I stand ready to fight for the people of Arizona as State Senator in District 11.

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To receive a record of your responses please provide your email

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