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# Women's Economic Priorities Candidate Information

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## GENERAL INFORMATION:

Prepared By: Russell Griffin Date: Aug 14, 2014

Candidate Name: Elizabeth H. Esty

Office Sought: US House of Representatives District: CT-5

Campaign Address: PO Box 61

City: Cheshire State: CT Zip: 06410

Campaign Website: www.ElizabethEsty.com

## CANDIDATE AUTHORIZATION & SIGNATURE:

I have read the attached 2014 Candidate Questionnaire and affirm the survey answers represent my position on the issues addressed.

Date: Aug 14, 2014

Elizabeth H. Esty

Candidate Name (Printed)

Elizabeth H. Esty  
Elizabeth H. Esty (Aug 14, 2014)

Candidate Signature

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# Women's Economic Priorities Candidate Questionnaire

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Women are an important economic force in America who, for too long, have been undervalued. For more than two decades, women have led the growth in America's Gross Domestic Product, driven the creation of new businesses and jobs, moved into leadership roles providing financially for our children and families -- and now, we also hold The Majority Vote.

But, even with our sizable contributions to the American economy, there is much left to do to support our economic opportunities, independence, security, values and family well-being.

The U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce released a report on the Women's Economic Priorities which highlights the contributions we have made to America, outlines our current economic condition and states clearly the types of federal budget and policies that are vital to support Women's Economic Priorities.

As a candidate running for federal office, if elected (or re-elected) – your activities will directly impact Women's Economic Priorities. To understand your positions and views, the U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce asks you to complete the following questionnaire.

## 1. FAIR PAY

AAUW reports: "The Paycheck Fairness Act takes meaningful steps to create incentives for employers to follow the law, empower women to negotiate for equal pay, and strengthen federal outreach and enforcement efforts. The bill would also deter discrimination by strengthening penalties for equal pay violations and by prohibiting retaliation against workers who inquire about employers' wage practices or disclose their own wages."

>Do you support or oppose the Paycheck Fairness Act (S. 2199)?

(check one)     Support     Oppose

>If elected, what specific actions will you take regarding fair pay programs?

It's unacceptable that women continue to be paid less for the same job as their male colleagues. On average, women earn just 77 cents for every dollar earned by a man, and women of color earn even less. That's why I'm a proud cosponsor of the Paycheck Fairness Act to modernize workplace protections to fight back against pay discrimination.

## 2. MINIMUM WAGE

The Women's Chamber recognizes that raising the minimum wage is good for women, businesses and America. Two-thirds of minimum wage workers are women. For women-owned small businesses, raising the minimum wage levels the playing field for fair competition. Minimum wage increases raise productivity and commitment of employees, reduce training costs and turnover, decrease absenteeism and increase morale. Raising the minimum wage increases consumer spending and improves the quality of products/services, customer satisfaction and company reputation.

**>Do you support or oppose legislation to raise the minimum wage to \$10.10 or more?**

(check one)  Support  Oppose

>If elected, what specific actions will you take regarding minimum wage?

I'm a strong advocate for raising the federal minimum wage to \$10.10. No one who works full time should have to raise their family in poverty. Workers deserve a fair wage. Raising the minimum wage is important for women and families. Over two-thirds of minimum wage workers are women, and single mothers often struggle the most. Raising the minimum wage will go a long way in helping lift families out of poverty.

## 3. BIRTH CONTROL

The National Women's Law Center states, "Contraception is a critical preventive healthcare for women. The ability to determine the timing of a pregnancy can prevent a range of pregnancy complications that can endanger a woman's health, including gestational diabetes, high blood pressure, and placental problems, among others." The Women's Chamber recognizes the economic impact on a family that can plan to have children when they are financially prepared.

**>Do you support or oppose mandatory coverage of birth control in the Affordable Care Act?**

(check one)  Support  Oppose

>If elected, what specific actions will you take regarding mandatory coverage of birth control?

A woman's health care decisions should be made by the woman, her family, and her doctor—not by her employer. I'm a strong supporter of the Affordable Care Act's provision that requires coverage of birth control with no out-of-pocket cost. Already, over 27 million women have benefited from this provision. The Supreme Court's recent Hobby Lobby decision is a harmful step backwards for women. I cosponsored legislation that would reverse this misguided decision and protect women's access to health care coverage no matter who their boss is.

#### 4. FAMILY-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

The U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce recognizes that the FAMILY Act will strengthen the economic security of working people, their families, and businesses. The FAMILY Act provides eligible employees with up to 12 weeks of paid leave to care for situations such as their own serious illness, the serious illness of a child, parent or spouse (including a domestic partner), and the birth or adoption of a child. Employees and employers would contribute to a self-sustaining fund, and contributions would amount to less than \$1.50 per week for the average worker or two cents for every \$10 of an employee's salary. Fund contributions would cover both benefits and administrative costs.

**>Do you support or oppose the FAMILY Act?**

(check one)     Support     Oppose

>If elected, what specific actions will you take regarding family-friendly workplace?

Working families often struggle to make ends meet, and juggling the demands of work and family is not easy. I will vote for the FAMILY Act. I'm also a cosponsor of a bill that would extend FMLA to any parent grieving for a child who passed away.

#### 5. SMALL BUSINESS | ACCESS TO CAPITAL

The U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce hears stories everyday about the challenges women face when seeking capital to maintain and grow their businesses. The Small Business Administration lending programs consistently fail to provide adequate access to capital for women-owned firms. H.R. 2451 directs the Administrator of the Small Business Administration (SBA) to establish and carry out a direct lending program for small businesses (businesses with fewer than 20 employees).

**>Do you support or oppose legislation H.R. 2451: Strengthening Entrepreneurs' Economic Development Act of 2013 or other legislation that provides access to capital for small businesses?**

(check one)     Support     Oppose

>If elected, what specific actions will you take regarding access to capital for small businesses?

Access to capital is vital for small businesses, and Congress can and should do more to ensure that women-owned firms benefit from programs that allow entrepreneurs to grow their businesses and create jobs. That is why I support legislation, like H.R. 2451, to improve access to capital for all small business owners. It is also why I'm among the group of House members leading the effort to urge the Appropriations Committee to provide adequate funding for the Microloan Technical Assistance Program that assists aspiring entrepreneurs in navigating borrowing options for establishing new businesses.

## 6. SMALL BUSINESS | ACCESS TO FEDERAL CONTRACTS

The Women's Chamber has fought for over a decade to ensure women-owned firms have equal access to federal contracts. Women own one-third of all businesses, yet the federal government has never met the 20 year goal of 5% and, to date, women business owners have lost over \$100 Billion dollars in federal contracting opportunities.

**>Do you support or oppose legislation H.R. 2452: Women's Procurement Program Equalization Act (House) and S. 2481: Women's Small Business Procurement Parity Act of 2014 (Senate)?**

(check one)  Support  Oppose

>If elected, what specific actions will you take regarding increasing access to federal contracts for women-owned small business suppliers?

I support legislation like H.R. 2452 to sensibly reform contracting authority so that federal procurement contracting officers recognize the value of women-owned small businesses, particularly those that are economically disadvantaged. I was also glad to support H.R. 4435, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY15, in part because it included provisions that are very similar to S. 2481. Section 827 of the House-passed NDAA allows women-owned small businesses to receive sole-source contracts under the same terms as other small business contracting programs and accelerates the disparity study to assess industries in the women-owned small business procurement program.

## 7. RETIREMENT

Social Security is a vital economic bedrock for women in the United States. The National Women's Law Center reports: (1) The average Social Security benefit for women 65 and older is about \$13,000 per year, (2) Social Security is virtually the only source of income for nearly three in ten female beneficiaries 65 and older, (3) Without Social Security, nearly half of women 65 and older would be poor. Women have longer life expectancy than men and consequently run a greater chance of exhausting all other sources of income.

**>Do you support or oppose applying payroll tax to income above \$250,000 which extends Social Security solvency for 75 years?**

(check one)  Support  Oppose

>If elected, what specific actions will you take regarding ensuring Social Security solvency?

It's wrong to balance the budget on the backs of women and seniors. Seniors rely on Social Security that they earned after lifetimes of hard work for their retirement security. I stood up to proposed cuts to Social Security and staunchly oppose any attempt to privatize or cut Social Security benefits. I support raising the cap on taxable income for Social Security to help make sure that this lifeline is available for future generations.

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## U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce

The U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce® unifies the collective strength of women and small businesses to leverage our position as the most influential economic force in America. With over 500,000 members, the USWCC advances economic opportunities for women across America.



**I VOTE FOR WOMEN.org**

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