MDLP Congressional Candidate Questionnaire

1. To be elected by the citizens of your district is a great honor. What is the reason that caused you to decide to run for Congress?

In close analysis, congressional office, if one follows the Constitution, is even more important than that of President. For one, Congress contains the direct representatives of the people of the United States. Congress is the body that can approve or disapprove the most serious act that any nation can carry out, and that is war. With the two current wars, that are illegal, and the Patriot Act a violation of the Bill of Rights, Congress has both abdicated its responsibilities and also circumvented its reason for being, in the process betraying the American people, specifically with the Patriot Act which potentially makes anyone a target as an enemy of the country and the state. After everything is said and done, whether taxes, commerce, free markets or the lack thereof, these three things—that is, the two wars and the Patriot Act—could potentially destroy the country and its very reason for being. We need an individual representing the Second District in Maryland who will address this cancer without mincing words or falling prey to the accusations that such an attitude will imperil our national security, someone who will reverse the path taken by the incumbent, Dutch Ruppersberger. Front and center, that's why I'm running for Congress.

2. The work habits and rare appearances of congressmen and congresswomen in their districts seem to peak near election but the rest of the time you rarely hear peep. What type of session schedule for Congress would you like to see? How would you schedule your appearances in your district and what would you focus on?

First of all, it seems that members of Congress spend too much of their time courting the special interests of the military industrial complex and the unions, both public and private, for funds, which pour in in the tens of thousands, if not the millions. Recently, the incumbent, Ruppersberger, has been dodging, for weeks, a citizens' group that has asked to meet with him by offering times and places that were ultimately canceled, insisting on a list of the people who were going to attend the meeting, indicating that questions regarding the recent so-called health care bill were not an agenda item—and these are all concerned constituents of Congressman Ruppersberger with legitimate questions regarding the direction that our country is going in. That is a most objectionable work habit, which is clearly aimed at preserving his position in Congress by currying favor with those of outsized wealth as well as power and who are, in my opinion, co-dependents with our federal government in the unconstitutional and reckless behavior of those who decide what happens to our country. I would try to schedule any appearance of mine at times when most working people can attend. I would take time to walk through the neighborhoods of the district, as disparate as they are because of the gerrymandering that caused the district to have its current bizarre geography. I would focus on telling people the same thing that I tell now—you're not going to like everything that I have to say, but it is what I honestly believe. One of the worst working

habits of our current congress is the habit of creating legislation that no one can truly read and understand and that, at its core, reflects favoritism as well as a game of "gotcha." I would never vote for a bill that exceeds 50 pages, and, as it is, I think 50 pages is way too long, but I'm willing to compromise on that.

3. Becoming a congressman is a position where great trust is placed in you. What changes in ethics rules that govern Congress would you work to change?

First of all, when we're talking about ethics rules, let's focus on the fact that rules and regulations that Congress makes regarding itself are aimed at the privilege that they give themselves at the expense of ordinary citizens. When it comes to this question, the first order of the day for Congressman Gaztañaga would be to strike down via legislation or jawboning anything that gives privilege to a member of Congress, whether it is a special gymnasium in the Capitol, a special health care plan, the outrageous pensions and salaries, or the ability to simply retire and go make a gazillion dollars as lobbyists—this particular one should have a twelve year moratorium. If you want to advise anyone; do it on your own dime. I remember well, during the 1970's when the gasoline shortage hit the nation, people had to schedule gassing up according to odd or even numbers on their license plates, etc. I was living in Washington, DC and I saw with my own eyes how the regular citizens of all social strata had to put up with the enormous inconvenience, but not Congress. They had an ample supply of gasoline that could be pumped at will, right in the garages of congressional buildings. When it comes to campaign financing, I favor donations by individuals only—people who live and talk and eat. In other words, the likes of GE, UAW, etc. need not apply here. Any campaign donation by an individual over $100 needs to be reported. As long as it's reported, there's no limit. Is this a perfect system? No, but it would be a vast improvement over all the systems we've had over the years.

4. One of the toughest decisions Congress must make is whether or not to authorize the President to go to war. The two current military operations, Iraq and Afghanistan, are obviously two different situations. Would you have authorized the President on either of those situations? And why or why not?

I would never have authorized the war in Iraq under any circumstances. All the reasons for going in there were false. Anyone who has followed the history of Al Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden and Saddam Hussein would have known that the executed tyrant was a secular Muslim with little more than speaking Arabic in common with Osama Bin Laden, and the fact that they both engaged at the time in killing innocent people to fulfill their agendas.

I would have authorized Afghanistan along the lines of a letter of mark with the specific purpose of routing out Al Qaeda, which was clearly based there at the time, and any Talibani that might get in the way. No nation building. All of the rhetoric in the world regarding the niceness of bringing democracy and representative government to people

who don't even see themselves as a nation is ludicrous, however well meant those words might be. The cost in life and treasure, the so-called "collateral damage" of civilians in-country is, simply put, unaffordable by any decent measure.

5. The size and scope of government is absolutely gigantic and needs to be reduced. What programs, departments, and process would you look to begin eliminating by reducing the funding or just cutting the program all together?

I'd start by getting out of the two foreign wars we're involved in, which for years were not properly accounted for in the federal budget during the Bush administration—and congressmen like Dutch Ruppersberger condoned this. Then I would dismantle the fascistic sounding Homeland Security Department. From 9-11 and before then (let's not forget the first World Trade Center bombing; let's not forget the Mura Building bombing) the bloated intelligence and security apparatus has been no more efficient, no less parochial, no less turf protecting than the current federal Department of Education—which would go next, if possible, all in the same breath. Billions would be saved. The so-called War on Drugs, where evil and stupid come together in a deplorable marriage, is something else that needs to go. Not only is it unconstitutional for the federal government to tell honest, law abiding people what they can or cannot put in their bodies (people who do bad things while under the influence of whatever are responsible for their actions, however), but the so-called War on Drugs actually puts the United States government in the position of telling foreign governments what to do and forcing them to initiate policies detrimental to their countries. Let's not forget the guerrilla wars in Colombia, US customs agents at Colombian international airports, the mayhem and destruction at the US/Mexico border as examples. The Mexican government has already suggested to the big neighbor to the north to ease up on the war on drugs for the sake of their own peace and tranquility. I am certain that there is more garbage that passes for policy and waste and fraud that pass for government programs, but these things would be a very good beginning—billions and trillions saved, and lives saved, too.

6. The Constitution is under attack from beginning to end. What steps when crafting or opposing legislation would you take when executing your oath to protect it?

Not everyone I know is versed (barely or thoroughly) in the Constitution. They prefer to dialogue using different language and images. When I discuss with these friends and acquaintances about what is constitutional or not, or what appears to be constitutional or not, I always point out that, as a rule, any law or regulation or statute that makes the citizens and lawful residents of the United States more dependent on the "largess" of the federal government should be an unwanted law, regulation or statute. The Constitution guarantees the welfare of the people, not people or corporations of any kind on welfare. The welfare of the people means, in my opinion, that the federal government is to guarantee the rights delineated in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights: equality under the law, avoiding/negating special privileges. I infer by this understanding that any law,

rule or statute that makes people dependent on the US government's power not only violates the Constitution but violates the very concept of the welfare of the people. Short term gain by the federal government leaning on some citizens for the benefit of others is detrimental and destructive to the nation, the fabric of society and the government itself. As a legislator, I propose two things: if a bill before me does not meet the guidelines I just laid down, I'll vote against it, and that would include bills that might claim to adhere to these guidelines but are too long to be read—more that 50 pages, I'll vote, against it, and I'm already being lenient on this. The second thing is that I would do everything within the authority granted to me as a member of the US Congress to review current laws, and if they don't meet the criteria described above, I will do everything within my constitutional powers to get rid of them.

7. Term Limits is an off again on again issue. Do you believe that federal legislation should dictate congressional term limits or should the individual states make that decision?

Term limits is on and off again for both good and bad reasons. We all saw the Republican congress of 1994 promising to limit their terms, and the vast majority stayed on. That's a bad reason. What happens if a legislator is in office, following the Constitution, carrying out his or her duties as he was supposed to, pushing leviathan back, and then, because there's a regulation that says "two terms and you have to get out?" That in my mind is a dangling proposition. With that said, I recently heard a speaker at the Elkton, Maryland Tea Party rally. He suggested something that I thought made a lot of sense: Federal legislators, both in Congress and the Senate—no more than 12 years. I think that that would be a solid two terms for Senate and a considerable six for Congress. If you can't lay down what needs to be done in 12 years, there's either something wrong with you, or your constituents, or your fellow legislators. A term limit of this sort should be decided at the federal level for federal offices. Term limits for state legislators should be decided at the state level, and for county, city or town councils, it should be decided at those levels. That is consistent with the Constitution as I see it. There are two topics that usually get left out of the discussion of term limits: 1) We need to address the shadow government composed of the civil service and appointed positions that may outlast the appointer in some cases. This has to be dealt with—term limits alone won't do. 2) The most important component of all: just because there might be term limits, we cannot have an electorate that goes back to the complacency of old and the political coma that we all allowed ourselves to go under and that has gotten us to where we are now. That has to change above all, and I'm speaking here not as a candidate, but as a citizen who still enjoys his natural, God-given right to vote for the representatives he wants and to speak his mind on topics he considers to be true.

8. The Federal Government and the Supreme Court often ignore the Tenth Amendment when it comes to states rights. The authority of this amendment was severely undermined in the Civil War and the outcome strengthened the power and authority of the Federal Government. What

steps do you think can be taken to restore the authority of the Tenth Amendment?

If I were a business as usual politician, I might promise to introduce a bill that would remind Congress and the people of the Tenth Amendment. What would be the value of that? The Tenth Amendment is there. Read the Constitution. It's there, and it's as brief and to the point as all legislation should be. It's easy to blame the federal government for the destruction of the Tenth Amendment. This has happened with the collusion of the feds, the state governments and the local governments. The federal government, with its largess with other people's money, for decades has gone around to state and local governments promising them what amounts to wealth from what it takes elsewhere. It's the kind of greed that's never spoken of, but has to be, as it's the kind of greed politicians have. It's their greed for money and power, usually at the expense of others. So the Tenth Amendment is destroyed by the state and local governments who allow it to be sold for their 30 pieces of silver. Let me give you a present and clear example of how the Tenth Amendment is sold by the state governments at the expense of our national security, our national treasure, and the lives of those who serve in the armed forces. The Iraq and Afghan wars are both unconstitutional and illegal, yet not one word of protest, not a complaint, not an expression of disappointment, nothing, is expressed by those who rule the states when the National Guard is pulled away from its recognized duties to subsidize with lives and materiel two illegal wars. They say nothing because if they do, one of the things they might lose is the unconstitutional revenue stream that goes into things with benign names like "opportunity" and "education"—never mind that they usually have nothing to do with their names. As a congressman, I will speak out on the floor of the congress in support of any state government, not only my own, that stands up to defend its rights under the Tenth Amendment. Let's not forget, the federal government does not go bad just because it goes bad. In too many cases, it is encouraged by the greed and short sightedness of our state and local governments. This problem will not be solved until we face this truth.

9. The United States has one of the highest tax rates on her workforce in the world, especially on businesses and business owners. Abolishing the Internal Revenue Service and the complicated Tax Code has been offered as a solution and to be replaced with a "Fair Tax" system. What do you feel is the best solution for the mess that the tax system has become and what avenue do you believe the government should use to raise revenue?

Recently, I was chatting with our tax preparer as we crossed the final t's and dotted the final i's on our tax return. I asked him, if a flat tax was enacted, would it hurt his business. He said, "Yes." In the next breath he said that the 16 big volumes that are used to refer to the tax code are unnecessary. You don't need that much. So here's a man who makes a good living preparing income tax returns for people saying that there's something wrong with the way this thing is done. In the original constitution, the federal government was supposed to collect taxes from the states through apportionment. Of course, the 16th amendment changed that. Plainly, the 16th amendment should be repealed. The states

have the right, by the Tenth Amendment, in fact, to set up their own tax systems. Then through apportionment, some of that money could go to the federal government. So the 16th amendment has to be repealed. The federal government also gave itself the right in the Constitution to collect excise taxes, etc., with the approval of Congress. The late Milton Friedman said that the only just tax was the one collected on land, as in landed property. Of course, anything of that sort would only be applicable at the local level—it's not anything that should be administered at the level of state government, and definitely not at the federal level, because the abuse would be rampant. We cannot have meaningful, permanent, rational change to our tax system as long as we continue the spending spree with money we don't even have. The latest thing--$30 billion to bail out Greece! For goodness sake! I watched in horror during the Bush years when he cut back taxes and ramped up deficit spending like no one else before him. A tax cut or a tax change under those circumstances is almost cynical, and undermines at its very foundation the permanence of such a change. What would a fair tax be? A national sales tax replacing all income taxing? It sounds better than what we have, but let's not forget that sales taxes can hurt production and consumption, much as a VAT would. Would it be a flat tax—X percentage that everyone pays? Yes, it would be fairer than what we have, but I insist that until we turn off the spigot and end the outrageous spending and begin to pay off our national debt, in much the same way as American families are cutting back on spending and seeking to pay off their debts in any way they can, until that happens at the federal level nothing meaningful can be done to fix our tax problem. Nothing. The people in charge, whether you have a national sales tax or a flat tax, so long as they have the power to figure out how to spend more in new ways, will be able to do whatever they want by simply changing the percentages. How many of us remember that at the end of the cold war 20 years ago we were promised a "peace dividend?" We wouldn't have to pay all that money to fight the Soviet Union—and look what happened. Look at what they've done: more wars and bailing out the culprits of the financial disaster—all with taxpayers' money.

10. Illegal Immigration has been a very divisive issue over the last twenty years. The Immigration system is broken. We have over 12 Million people living in our country illegally and undocumented. Where do you see Congress needs to begin to fix this problem?

PEACEFUL people should be able to cross borders **PEACEFULLY** for **PEACEFUL** purposes. What's going on along the southern border between the United States and Mexico is not an open border. I am tired of hearing that it's an open border. We don't have an open border any more than Sarajevo had open streets when people had to dodge bullets from snipers on rooftops. What we have on our southern border is chaos, mayhem and horrific crimes. People's property is being invaded, people are being kidnapped and murdered; women trying to cross the border (admittedly illegally) are being raped. The march across the border becomes a death march. Who does this benefit? I guess the people whose only goal is cheap labor. It has some benefit for those who make it in, IF they make it on the death march through the desert, since they can work, etc.

Before I get to my complete answer, let's knock down one myth—that these illegals don't pay taxes. They pay the same sales taxes that we all pay. The ones that are here using forged papers, including social security numbers from dead people, etc., are also paying income tax, which of course, the IRS in its infinite goodness doesn't mind or care about, as long as it gets its cut. What to do about the 12 to 14 million illegals here? Well, you find them. A government that knows everything about everybody living here should be able to find where they're working, go to these work places where illegals have been determined to be found, and fine the employers—but not to the extent of closing the business just to make the enforcers look good. There are many reasons for hiring illegal immigrants besides cheap labor. Some of them are very good workers.

Then, confront the illegal individuals and give them an ultimatum: a one year visa to stay in the country so long as you have work, which can be extended to two years as long as you're gainfully employed. If you do not accept or meet the criterion for that first year visa, you go back. A three year extension can be applied for after the two year extension, ***as long as you are gainfully employed***. As long as you remain gainfully employed, after ten years you can apply for an indefinite period work visa. During this time, after five years of legal residence, you can begin the process of naturalization. There will also be a $50 fine for every year that you were here illegally before you were found out.

This is how to deal with the people who are here illegally now. Much like the Arizona law, for which I don't blame Arizona (my only concern is the possible violations of the fourth amendment), it would be a psychological deterrent to coming here illegally. Now, what do we do about changing the current immigration law? Well, you can come to the border peacefully and get a work visa at the border for $500 and proof that you have a job waiting for you. You can keep this visa until such time as you're no longer gainfully employed. A $500 processing fee is very reasonable, considering that poor people are paying thousands of dollars to criminals to get them across the border—*coyotes* who murder them in the desert or leave them to die in hot, unventilated trucks. In the United States, employers who are interested in hiring these folks could actually initiate contact with them in their home countries. This would be an easy matter in this age of the internet and cell phones and an entrepreneurial spirit that wants to rise above a calamitous economy. Job banks could easily be created in the countries of origin to match potential employers with potential employees. This should be managed as a private enterprise, not as a government service. The role of government is to ensure that people are not being abused or defrauded. Since they would be here legally, they would be able to report cases of abuse and fraud to the appropriate authorities. Any one of these immigrants will be treated as citizens or legal residents. If convicted of a crime, they will serve out their sentence here. If they have no job waiting for them after serving their time, they will be deported.

No fixed immigration policy can be complete without understanding the need for assimilation, and I know a thing or two about that personally. I am from Cuba. I'm very proud of my ancestry. I speak, read and write Spanish, my first tongue, fluently. My favorite dish is still Cuban black beans with white rice and pork chops. None of that has stopped me from loving my adoptive country, or from learning its language. Of course, I am fortunate, because when I came here, school systems were not trying to balkanize and separate Latin American immigrants and refugees by teaching them courses in Spanish that should have been taught in English, delaying their assimilation. The number of politicians back then who were trying to keep these immigrants as dependents of the government by keeping them apart and separate was not as large as it is today. This needs to change.

Lastly, concerning the virtual war that goes on along the southern border of the United States: we cannot separate the effects of the so-called War on Drugs from the mayhem along the border. To try to do so would be like separating the "H_2" from the "O" and still thinking you have water. There's more, of course. I welcome questions and comments on this and all the other issues I've laid out here. Remember:

PEACEFUL PEOPLE SHOULD BE ABLE TO CROSS BORDERS PEACEFULLY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES.