

Janelle Stelson

Federal House – District 10

1. Why are you running for the U.S. House of Representatives?

In the fall of 2023, I left my job at WGAL-TV to run for Congress against Scott Perry, the former Chair of the House Freedom Caucus. After 20 years in politics, Congressman Scott Perry is a large part of the problem. His focus is on helping himself, not the people of Central Pennsylvania, as he pushes his extreme, out of touch agenda. Scott Perry thinks politicians should be able to tell you when, where and how to start a family. For years he has sponsored a nationwide abortion ban with no exceptions for rape, incest or the life of the woman. Perry is so extreme that he is often the only member of the Pennsylvania delegation -- in either party -- to vote against commonsense legislation that helps us. That includes legislation to protect firefighters, help homeless veterans and crack down on human trafficking. For far too long, Congressman Perry has put his extremist agenda above the needs of the people of Cumberland, Dauphin and York Counties. Now more than ever we need new representation in Washington. We are better than this, and we deserve so much more-- a strong economy to support our communities, abortion rights, the highest quality accessible healthcare, and someone we know we can trust. As a non-partisan trusted voice, I have spent my career listening and addressing the concerns of this district. I will stand up for the issues that matter to Central Pennsylvania and be the new voice and fresh leadership that we need.

2. What skills or experience qualify you to serve in the U.S. House?

For more than 30 years, I have been telling the stories of our communities as an Emmy award-winning anchor and reporter at WGAL-TV News 8 and WHTM abc27. People across the 10th have trusted me to shine a light on our issues, big and small. Voters are sick and tired of career politicians and want someone who will listen to their concerns and get things done.

My name recognition and history of being a trusted, non-partisan voice was key to our near victory in 2024. My strong candidacy propelled the Cook Political Report to move the race from "Likely Republican" to "Lean Republican" and finally "Tossup." I lost 49.2% to 50.5% by the second smallest margin of defeat of any 2024 Democratic House challenger, even as VP Harris lost our district by more than 5 points. As your Congresswoman, I will continue to listen and ensure your voices are heard in the halls of Congress.

3. If elected, what is your top policy priority? Why?

I'm running for Congress because Washington is a disaster, and career politicians like Scott Perry have made it worse.

My plan to fight corruption in Washington includes term limits, age limits, banning Members of Congress from trading individual stocks, and prohibiting Members of Congress from being lobbyists.

- Scott Perry supports the Iran War, which has raised gas prices. I will vote to end the war.
- Scott Perry voted to cut Medicaid. I will protect Medicaid.
- Scott Perry supported sending \$20 billion of our money to Argentina. I would use that money to make healthcare more affordable for Americans.
- Scott Perry supports tariff taxes that raise prices. I support ending those tariff taxes.
- Scott Perry opposes wind and solar energy. I support clean energy because it lowers utility prices for consumers.
- Scott Perry supports a national abortion ban with no exceptions for rape or incest. I will vote to protect abortion rights.
- Scott Perry wrote on his website that he wanted to raise Social Security taxes and cut Social Security benefits. I support protecting Social Security.

4. Do you believe there is an affordable housing crisis in America? If so, what legislative measures do you think the federal government should pass to address the issue?

We are facing an extreme housing shortage, and bureaucratic red tape around permits and zoning has made it increasingly difficult to build the housing we need. In many areas, it can take years to secure approvals for new projects--delays that drive up costs for developers and, ultimately, for renters and homebuyers. Streamlining and making the permitting process more predictable would lower costs and level the playing field for small and mid-sized developers competing against large corporations. But permitting reform alone is not enough. We also need zoning reform to allow for multi-family and mixed-income housing, and we must expand programs like the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit while providing more support to help low-income families buy their first home.

5. What changes are needed in federal government policies to make our healthcare system more affordable to more people? How will you make these changes happen?

I support high-quality, affordable, accessible health care. We also need better access to urgent care and primary care. It should not take six months to get a physical or three days to get an appointment when you are sick. The current system needs reform. I support lowering the price of prescription drugs by allowing the government to negotiate prices. Scott Perry was the deciding vote on a bill that would cut health care for nearly 20,000 people in our area. This bill is devastating and will worsen the doctor shortage, threaten our hospitals, and raise premiums. Big Pharma and the insurance companies that support Scott Perry have jacked up prices and put lives at risk. Unlike several of his Pennsylvania Republican colleagues, Scott Perry voted against lower health care costs and said reducing the cost of health insurance would be a "colossal mistake." I would protect the Affordable Care Act. You should never have to decide between putting food on the table or paying for the medical care you need. I believe we need to ban surprise billing, close the loophole for ambulance trips and improve the dispute arbitration process to better protect patients. It's unacceptable that people who have health insurance coverage still fall into medical debt due to sky-high costs. That's why I believe medical debt should be taken off credit reports.

6. How will you protect the current provision of and access to Medicare and the Affordable Care Act?

The Affordable Care Act, which Congressman Perry has voted to overturn time and time again, has been a step in the right direction. We must protect Medicare at all costs and strategically pursue ways to expand it. One of the first things I would do is repeal the Big Beautiful Bill that cut healthcare for 20,000 people right here in our district.

7. How will you work towards achieving an economic balance of providing a social safety net while preserving fiscal responsibility in the federal budget?

My approach to the legislative process is centered on pragmatic collaboration and effective problem-solving, with a strong emphasis on compromise and bipartisan dealmaking. I believe that working across party lines is crucial for crafting policies that address the diverse needs of our constituents. Many of the problems we face are American problems and should be addressed as such, not Democrat or Republican problems. To prioritize fiscal stability, I would advocate for a balanced approach to budgeting that emphasizes both responsible spending and strategic investments in key areas that help our middle class families and the most vulnerable among us. Supporting bills that aim to reduce the deficit, streamline government spending, and enhance entitlement programs will be central to my efforts.

8. What course of action will you take to limit climate change now that the clean energy provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) have been repealed?

Having clean air and water and a future for our children is of the utmost importance. Central Pennsylvanians need a leader who will protect our values and our environment. Our rural communities, small towns and the cities in this region deserve someone who will fight for the environment and lower our costs. Gutting clean energy investments does not just harm our climate, it drives up utility bills for Central Pennsylvanians struggling to make ends meet. For years, scientists have given fair warning. Now, everything they've projected is coming true. We are in dire straits, and Congressman Perry, an outright denialist, is increasingly this threat to humanity. As a young reporter with WPLG-TV in Miami, I followed Jean-Michel Cousteau, son of the great oceanographer, as he tracked the extinction of aquatic species ravaged by warming waters. This was before we knew how rapidly the scope of destruction would weaken entire ecosystems. In the past several years I have reported on story after story of extreme, catastrophic weather events-- including tornadoes, flash flooding and wildfires-- and our country's increasing lack of ability to respond. As Congresswoman, I will focus on job training and investment in the clean energy infrastructure of the future.

9. What is your position on oversight of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in this administration?

We have a broken immigration system and both parties have botched the crisis for years. There need to be independent and thorough investigations into every killing involving ICE agents. ICE should also not be rewarded for arresting legal U.S. citizens. Due process and our laws must be followed. All federal law enforcement including ICE should wear uniforms with badges and should not wear masks. I am glad Kristi Noem was removed but we still need to ensure that monsters like Stephen Miller are held accountable.

10. What Congressional changes would you propose to revitalize and enforce the checks and balances between the three branches of government as outlined in the Constitution?

Washington has a corruption problem — and it is fueled by career politicians who stay too long, get too comfortable, and start serving themselves instead of the people they represent. Too many lawmakers get rich trading stocks while writing the laws. Too many leave office and immediately cash in as lobbyists using the special access reserved only for former members of Congress. I believe the following actions would help fix many of the problems we see in our federal government:

- **Limit terms to 12 years.**
- **Ban members of Congress and their immediate families from trading individual stocks while in office so they cannot profit from insider information.** If you are elected to serve, you should not be allowed to profit from insider information.
- **Lifetime ban on members becoming lobbyists after serving in the House: no cashing-in on your service.** Former politicians should not be able to cash in on their previous positions and votes.
- **Create a truly independent Congressional Ethics Agency with the power to investigate members for wrongdoing, so members of Congress no longer regulate themselves.** Everyone answers to someone, so should our politicians.
- **A constitutional amendment to end or significantly curb the President's pardoning power.** No one is above the law, not even the President or his or her family. Presidents should no longer have the power to pardon political allies or family.