

Responses to Questionnaire
The Signal – UH Clear Lake Student Newspaper

By James D. Noteware
Jim Noteware for Congress
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Attachments: James D. Noteware – two page introductory bio
Noteware family resume
Letter to Michael Quinn Sullivan of Empower Texans

1. Why did you decide to run for the United States House of Representatives?

I am running for Congress to take our 7th District values to Washington and to make Washington work for us!

Ever since Barak Obama ran for President in 2008, the Democrats have said, “we need to change America.” My view is that America is doing just fine; we need to change Washington, to align Washington’s interests with American voters, including in CD-7.

Like so many residents of our District, my family and I flooded during Hurricane Harvey. We have been appalled at the slow response of Washington to our flood-related needs, especially the Corps of Engineers. We can and must do better.

But, Harvey isn’t the only assault on our District. Our two most important industries, energy and health care, are under attack by Democrats who would implement the Green New Deal or Medicare for All, destroying jobs in our District, harming our country and not achieving their own (unattainable!) objectives.

Thus, my three most important policy priorities are:

- Flood mitigation in Houston, to ensure major flooding never happens again
- Expanding energy exports to build upon the shale revolution’s achievement of US energy independence, to boost the Texas economy and to improve the US balance of trade
- Solving the Health Care crisis, through Republican-led market reforms to stimulate competition and innovation, enhancing the role of the Texas Medical Center, while improving access and reducing costs.

While these three priorities reflect both our District’s greatest risks and greatest opportunities, they are controlled in Washington as the result of Federal laws, Federal

budgets and Federal administration. Thus, CD-7 needs a leader who will stand up for our District and be ready to lead by example on Day 1.

As presented in my two-page attached bio, I am the only candidate in the CD-7 race that has extensive experience in:

- Business leadership (Maxxam - Fortune 500 CEO; National Director, Price Waterhouse)
- Public leadership (turning around major troubled agencies at the invitation of two big-City mayors)
- National and international leadership (conducting business throughout the US and around the world).

In addition, as conveyed in the attached letter to Michael Quinn Sullivan of Empower Texans, I am the only candidate that has spent the past ten years consistently and successfully “walking the walk” of taxpayer advocacy to hold government accountable in Houston and in Texas.

Thus, my mission will be to: align the interests of Washington in Congress with the needs of CD-7, lead by example (my personal responsibility!) in formulating policy initiatives and achieving legislative results, and hold government accountable in delivering results to our district and throughout the country.

2. Who is one of your biggest inspirations? Why?

I have a small group of hero's in my life: Lee Kuan Yew (founder of modern Singapore), Thomas Sowell (conservative economist and sociologist at the Hoover Institution at Stanford), Curt Flood (who fought to establish free agency in baseball), etc. All of these people have achieved very significant results – results that are often unrecognized or under appreciated (how many young people today even know who Curt Flood was?), and whose leadership has brought people together for lasting collective value.

The biggest inspiration in the context of your question as a student of communication politics is Gerald Ford. To understand President Ford and his accomplishments, you must understand who he was and the context of his contributions.

First, Mr. Ford was the only un-elected President in US history. President Nixon appointed him Vice-President in 1972 upon the resignation of Spiro Agnew as the result of bribery scandals while Agnew had been Governor of Maryland. Although he had been a well-recognized member of Congress for a long time, Ford had no national political base, and shortly after his appointment, President Nixon's own descent began as the result of the Watergate mess. It was a hugely confusing and uncertain time for the

United States, made much more complicated by the divisiveness of the Vietnam War and the deterioration of the US position there.

When Nixon resigned and Ford was inaugurated in August 1974, the United States faced a myriad of problems:

- First and foremost, the legacy of President Nixon. A majority of the country wanted to pursue criminal actions.
- The continued divisiveness of and the failures of the Vietnam War. Saigon fell only six months later and the US finally left in disgrace in April 1975.
- The deteriorating US economy, as the result of the rapidly increasing inflation caused disastrous growth of the money supply over the prior decade to finance the war.
- The Arab oil embargo, caused by the very same inflation that caused “gas shortages” and turmoil on the streets of America, experienced virtually everywhere.

There were of course, a host of other routine problems. And, Ford inherited a dispirited and disgraced cabinet and administrative structure from Nixon. He had few areas of support.

But, he faced these problems with great aplomb – he made the courageous decision to pardon Nixon – highly unpopular at the time, but in retrospect, considered the right thing to do by nearly all observers. This action immediately ceased the Nixon controversies that were consuming nearly everyone’s attention and goodwill.

He somehow handled the end of the Vietnam War that had undermined both the Johnson and the Nixon administrations. In hindsight, that too was a blessing because the second most divisive issue was put to rest, although recovery from the war especially difficult and long lasting.

The hardest part for President Ford was economic policy. Inflation was a new experience for America and the mid-seventies recession would not abate. Because he occupied the White House during the resulting pain – Ford was blamed for the inflation, the gas lines and the severe recession’s painful job losses.

And, just as Ford was beginning to make headway, the election of 1976 emerged. He had to fight a primary challenge from Ronald Reagan, former Governor of California, which he did successfully, but at great cost to him and to the Republican Party. Then he had to run in the general election without the support of a united party. While he narrowly lost to Jimmy Carter, and while there were certainly still economic problems, nearly everyone would agree that he left Carter with a far better situation than he had inherited from President Nixon only 29 months earlier.

Most importantly, the mid- and late-1970's began a period of healing. The controversies of the early 1970's – Watergate, the Vietnam War, the recession, -- gradually faded, and while inflation continued to dog President Carter and later President Reagan, the US economy bottomed in the spring of 1976 and began one of its longest ascents in history. Ford had the bad luck to have occupied the bottom.

Through all this, Ford retained his composure, his personal reputation and restored the credibility of the US Presidency. After his retirement, he wrote a best selling memoir entitled, "A Time to Heal."

All of us owe a great deal to President Ford for his efforts to bottom out the US economy and begin to heal our cultural divides, as well as to restore faith in the American culture and re-establish the sense of future opportunity. This is why Gerald Ford is one of my hero's.

(I strongly suspect that most Americans have either forgotten or are totally unaware of the history I have just written.)

3. What do you remember about the first time you voted? What motivated you to?

I voted for the first time in November 1972, at age 20. Not long before the voting age had been reduced from 21 to 18. It was an exhilarating experience.

I was motivated to vote in the Presidential election for George McGovern, the Democratic nominee against President Nixon. At that time, having been raised as a Republican, I did not really have any dislike for Nixon (Watergate had not become a scandal yet). But, I was totally against the Vietnam War, and McGovern was clearly the anti-war candidate. I was totally against the war for three reasons:

- I could not figure out why the US was fighting the war and what victory was supposed to be. What was the win we were trying to achieve?
- Without understanding a satisfactory answer for that question, it was clear that young men my age were being used as pawns in the war. Why should we risk our lives for what neither we nor anyone else understood? (By the time I voted, five of my high school classmates had already been killed in Vietnam.)
- The government was lying to the American people in its conduct of the war. Daniel Ellsberg's release of the Pentagon Papers in 1971 changed popular perception of the war and gradually accelerated opposition. Later, Robert McNamara, President Johnson's Defense Secretary wrote an extensive mea culpa memoir.

While my friends and I knew that voting for McGovern was a longshot (he carried only Massachusetts and the District of Columbia), we cast our votes anyway.

George Bernard Shaw is famous for his statement: “those that forget the lessons of history are bound to repeat them.” The Washington Post published Ellsberg’s Pentagon Papers (see the movie, *The Post*), and last month published “The Afghanistan Papers.” My concern, even now as a conservative Republican, is that our US leadership is repeating many of the very same mistakes in Afghanistan as we did in Vietnam, including most alarmingly, lying to the American public about the conduct of the war. There are many huge lessons for all of us in this most recent experience.

But, the lesson of voting remains with me. Voting is the voice of change.

4. Why should college students, some of whom may be first time voters, choose to vote for you?

There are at least three reasons for students as first time voters to vote for me:

- First, as students with your full life ahead of you, you should be most concerned about the future and what condition people my age (67) leave the US and the world to you. The reality is that I live in the future – every business and personal decision I make, including how I spend my leisure time, is based upon my consideration of how the present will become the future. I am as concerned about the future as you and your fellow students should be.

The biggest issue that you face is what economists call “generational theft:” that is, the borrowing that our governments at all levels are undertaking, leaving young people your age to pay off our living beyond our current means. This is very serious, and I can discuss it comprehensively with you.

I hope that you and your classmates will heed the experience I have described about the 1970’s. My generation changed the course of America with its opposition to the Vietnam War. You too can change the course of America by objecting to generational theft and expressing your strength in the voting booth. You have every reason to do so, and with social media all the tools you need! I urge you to go for it, and I have already been helping you...

- ...I have “walked the walk” to hold our governments (at the local, State and Federal levels) accountable to restore discipline to our public finances and STOP THE GENERATIONAL theft. I am attaching a letter that I recently wrote to Michael Quinn Sullivan, founder and CEO of Texans Empowered, that describes my experience in the past ten years engaging in political, financial and legal efforts to stem the public’s profligacy.

- My wife and I have raised four very successful children: three daughters (36, 30, 27) and a son (32), all of whom share our values and are very successful personally and professionally. Even though they live all over the world and have for some time, from Buenos Aires to London to Dubai to Australia, and work throughout Africa and Asia as well, we are all very close. The four children every year schedule a “siblings weekend” somewhere ... (their mother’s only objection is that she does not get invited!). We have run marathons and ridden cycling centuries together, also all over the world. So, my wife and I (married 43 years) know something about your younger generation.

I am attaching a “resume” of my family, as well as my two page introductory bio to this questionnaire.

5. Is there anything you would like our readers to know?

Yes. My religious philosophy is my life strategy that has two components: first, “Know thyself,” (self-awareness!) and second, to follow the scripture that says: “You should love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and great commandment. And a second is like it: “You should love your neighbor as yourself.”

Thus, “loving my neighbor as myself” is my moral imperative. I learned long ago that I could scale this love by improving the quality of life for the greatest number of people through leadership of private enterprise in the marketplace – creating jobs, improving products, mobilizing investment capital. Later, I also learned that I could improve other lives through reforming governmental agencies and their programs with application of similar business principles and practices, rehabilitating housing and transforming entire communities.

People from all walks of life and across the political spectrum have recognized the results of my successful leadership and are now asking me to run for Congress to take my skills to Washington to reform the biggest platform of all -- the US Federal Government.

Republican victory requires energizing the conservative base and also securing votes of independents. As Co-Chair of Houston’s International Trade Center (the ITC), I have been engaged with both Houston companies moving abroad and with international enterprises landing in Houston – from southern and eastern Asia, Latin America, Europe, the Middle-East and Africa -- bringing their leaders and their families into Houston’s culture and political structure.

I am the only candidate that has proven leadership in business and government – locally, nationally and globally.

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sent electronically to:
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RE: Texans for Fiscal Responsibility – 2020 Congressional Questionnaire

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

Earlier this afternoon, I submitted the completed 2020 Congressional Questionnaire in the hopes of earning the endorsement of Texans for Fiscal Responsibility for my campaign for Congress, Texas District #7.

I want to supplement the earlier submission with evidence of my direct experience in taxpayer advocacy in Houston over the past ten years. To begin, I am attaching a two-page introductory bio of my professional career, devoted mostly to business leadership – in professional services, corporate management, real estate development and international trade and investment. You will see that my business career has been supplemented by invitations from two big-City mayors to turn-around and then lead to success large public agencies, in Washington, DC and Houston.

These two roles convinced me of the near universal opportunity for reform in public management, beginning with the policy priorities of elected officials through capital and operating budgeting and ultimately to on-the-ground delivery of public services. I learned first-hand that government bureaucracies can only be reformed from outside, and the most effective catalyst for reform is “budget starvation.” Following my departure from the City of Houston in 2012, I decided to focus the next stage of my life to leading this reform by “walking the walk” for taxpayer advocacy.

To summarize my activities in the past ten years:

- In early 2010, newly elected Houston Mayor Annise Parker asked me to join her administration as Director of Housing and Community Development, specifically because of my acknowledged work-out and turn-around experience in real estate and related operating businesses. I accepted because I was convinced her request was sincere and the Department desperately

needed fixing, including bringing it into compliance with Federal and State grant programs. Within 90 days, I reduced the staff by one-third and restructured capital programs to renovate over 2,000 affordable multi-family apartment units for less than 25% of the prior per-unit cost estimates. When I departed two years later, we had resolved 50 of 60 serious citations from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the remaining ten resolutions were completed shortly thereafter.

- During the 2012-2015 period, I studied municipal finance generally and the City of Houston's predicament specifically, learning from my mentor, the late Robert Lemer who was widely regarded as the dean of public finance in Texas. In late 2014, John Beddow the (now retired) publisher of the Houston Business Journal asked me to write a series of columns on local public finance as Expert Op-Ed contributor. These columns immediately captured the attention of both the local political establishment and the business leadership. This led to numerous speaking engagements around Houston, testimony during the 2015 Texas legislative session, and extensive media coverage. My writings and speaking on the City's pension calamity became the central issue of the 2015 Houston mayoral campaign and I assisted five of the seven candidates.
- Following Sylvester Turner's election, his transition team sought my recommendations on pension reform. Unfortunately, however, he chose to pursue a different course and in 2017 he asked the State legislature to approve his pension program (as required by state law), including issuance of \$1 billion of Pension Obligation Bonds. I was asked to support the program, but after my review, I wrote to Senator Joan Huffman, sponsor of SB 2109 that confirmed the Mayor's plan and authorized issuance of the bonds, that I could not do so. My objections were both substantive (poor financial policy) and procedural (the program was based upon misinformation and misunderstanding). Nevertheless, SB 2109 became law and the bond proposal was placed on the November 2017 ballot and approved by the voters.
- In December 2017, I sued the City of Houston because of the deceptive ballot language that was used to convince voters to approve the \$1 billion authorization. The deception was a sentence missing from the ballot that permitted the City to raise property taxes in the event that it could not service the debt from the new bonds. (This was the third such deceptive ballot language in five years, after the "Rain Tax" and the "Bathroom Bill," both of which were struck down by unanimous verdicts of the Texas Supreme Court.) I sued to protect the property tax cap that had been passed by Houston voters in 2004. While the judge in our case ruled that he did not have the authority to grant my motion for summary judgment (technically we lost in his lower court), he also enjoined the City from ever breaking the property tax cap (so in reality, we achieved my objective and we won on financial grounds).

Nevertheless, my legal team appealed and the State Supreme Court has agreed to hear the appeal, most likely in 2020.

- During the current 2019 election season, I have served as financial consultant to the most serious challenger to Mayor Turner, Tony Buzbee, advising him on how to immediately address the City of Houston's increasingly desperate cash situation and then, longer term, provide sustainable solutions for lasting change. In the past few months, despite the beginning of my own campaign for Congress, I have attempted to stimulate turnout of conservative voters by speaking consistently about the desperate and immediate need for "regime change" in Houston during this election. I am motivated from the Congressional perspective because Houston's fiscal situation is directly linked to the well being of District 7 in many ways: 80% of the voters in District 7 are in the City, and our most pressing issue, flooding, has its Federal recovery and prevention allocations tied up in the City's inept and corrupt bureaucracy. This latter point.

This local experience in Houston has influenced the formulation of policy positions for my Congressional campaigns, creating my specific focus on "taxpayer advocacy." To my knowledge, I am the only candidate that has articulated this commitment, and also the only candidate to have specific -- let alone ten years of consistent -- experience in putting this policy into practice.

I suggest that you contact each of three gentlemen who can confirm this experience and provide their own perspective of its value to Houston:

- Charles Blain – Empower Texas's former Houston representative, and himself a keen observer of Houston's political economy.
- John Beddow – former publisher of the Houston Business Journal and an aggressive supporter of my Congressional campaign.
- Bill Frazer – long-time friend and business colleague who now serves as my campaign manager. I understand that he won the Texans for Fiscal Responsibility in his run for City Controller in 2015.

The larger issue, however, is how importantly this taxpayer advocacy directly supports my main reasons for entering the Congressional race, to:

- Align Washington's priorities with needs of our constituents in Houston.
- Lead by example, communicating transparently and behaving civilly, and
- Hold government accountable.

So, based on this experience and my commitment to change Washington according to our Houston and Texas values, I will be ready to lead day 1.