

INDIVISIBLE

SAMPLE CONSTITUENT QUESTIONS FOR CONGRESSIONAL RECESS TOWN HALLS

The upcoming congressional recess is a big opportunity for local groups around the country to show their Members of Congress (MoCs) how serious they are about stopping the Trump agenda. To accomplish this, it's helpful for to have a consistent message for their MoCs during town halls, district office meetings, and phone calls.

It's impossible to cover every single issue you might care about directly with your MoC, but there are a few issues today that are as symbolic as they are potentially devastating to those affected by them. **These are the ones that Indivisible will be focusing on during recess.**

A mix of defense and offense. The hard truth is that we don't have agenda-setting power right now. Trump and his lackeys in Congress hold the reins. As local constituents, we have the power to respond, and you've already proved how powerful that response can be. But there are still opportunities to go on the offense once a while too—and we're suggesting both for this recess:

Three Issues on Defense:

- » Defending the ACA/Obamacare
- » Opposing Trump's nominee for the Supreme Court
- » Opposing the Muslim and refugee ban

One Issue on Offense:

- » Demanding that Trump release his tax returns

This document provides some sample questions to ask when you show up to your town hall over congressional recess. Use these verbatim, edit them to fit your voice, or make up a whole new set on your own. We're just here to help—you're the leader here, so feel free to get creative. Good luck out there—we will win. We also have plenty of [scripts](#) here to use if you're also making calls next week.

FIVE GENERAL TIPS FOR CRAFTING TOWN HALL QUESTIONS

1. **Keep your eye on the prize.** Your job isn't to convince your MoC—it's to make him or her give you an answer or make clear to all watching that they refuse.
2. **Be a storyteller.** Incorporate your own personal story in your question. Keep in mind your audience is as much your neighbors and fellow town hall attendees as it is the MoC. Be honest, be vulnerable, and tell stories that matter.
3. **Make a concrete, verifiable ask.** The best asks are clear, actionable for the MoC, and easy to verify whether they followed through or not. If you ask any MoC "Will you fight for me?" Every single one of them will say "Yes!" and then go about their day. If you ask them: "Will

you commit to voting against X upcoming bill,” they may answer directly or they may prevaricate, but regardless they will adjust their decision-making calculus.

4. **Don't settle for talking points.** MoCs love to fall back on a set of canned responses to your REAL questions. Don't let them. Force them to engage with your humanity.
5. **Know your strengths.** Just want to show up to the Town Hall, but don't want to ask a question? That's OK! Showing up is doing your part—you're supporting everyone else in the room. Be honest about your strengths and limitations because that will make the work stronger.

DEFEND THE ACA/OBAMACARE

See our longer background playbook [here](#). Tip: Arm yourself with data! Show your MoC that you know exactly how many people would lose coverage in your congressional district and state if Obamacare is repealed. District-level data can be found [here](#). State data can be found [here](#).

1. I don't believe that ensuring "access" to health care, which doesn't take into account affordability or quality of care, is good enough. Can you guarantee that any replacement plan will cover AT LEAST as many people that would be covered under the ACA? Can you guarantee that no one will lose their coverage as a result of your vote?
2. I [or someone I know] has "x" condition and I'm afraid that I [they] will be unable to obtain affordable health coverage because of my [their] pre-existing condition. I want to know if you can assure me that I'll be able to get the same consumer protects as the ACA, including for a pre-existing condition?
3. Thanks to the ACA, I was able to enroll in my state's Medicaid program for the first time. I'm afraid that a replacement plan will end funding for state Medicaid expansions. Can you assure me that funding for Medicaid won't get cut under any replacement plan?
4. Currently, anyone who is eligible for Medicaid is able to get it. I'm one of those people. I'm afraid that I may lose my Medicaid coverage if the program is restructured to a block grant or a capped system. Can you also assure me that Medicaid will remain an entitlement, and that anyone eligible will be guaranteed coverage?
5. For Democrats: I'm afraid that Republicans will try to force Democrats to negotiate on coverage and benefits in a replacement plan. Can you promise me that you won't compromise on coverage and benefits for anyone currently eligible for the ACA?

OPPOSE GORSUCH FOR THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES [FOR SENATORS ONLY!]

See our longer background playbook [here](#).

1. Senator, as a woman, I value my right to make my own choices about my body, and about whether and when to have children. It is incredibly important to me to have affordable access to whatever methods of contraception will work best for me to achieve those goals, no matter who I work for. I also value my right to be able to obtain a safe abortion should I need one, no matter where I live. Neil Gorsuch is an extreme nominee who has ruled against affordable contraceptive access and against a woman's right to choose. Will you ensure that any nominee to the Supreme Court commits to upholding my reproductive rights?
2. Senator, in the history of our country, every single justice to sit on the Supreme Court has received the approval of a filibuster proof majority—at least 60 votes in the Senate. This has been important in protecting our democratic institutions, and our system of checks-

and-balances. The Senate is now threatening to get rid of the filibuster for Supreme Court nominees—what they call the “nuclear option.” Can you promise me that you will support our democratic institutions by opposing the nuclear option?

3. For Democrats: Senator, American voters did not choose Donald Trump to fill this vacancy. They chose Barack Obama and then they chose Hillary Clinton. Donald Trump has no mandate to appoint a justice. With an administration committed to trampling on well-established law and protocol, we need a Court that will provide a strong check on Donald Trump. Senate Democrats are the only firewall against a Supreme Court potentially shaped by a corrupt president committed to a racist, xenophobic and misogynistic agenda. Will you promise to use the Filibuster against Gorsuch?

OPPOSING THE MUSLIM AND REFUGEE BAN

See our longer background playbook [here](#). Learn about the planning call we hosted with Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAAJ), American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP), and National Immigration Law Center (NILC-IJF) that explains WHAT the Executive Order is, WHY it’s unconstitutional and illegal, and HOW you can push your Senators to restore justice [here](#).

1. I am appalled by the refugee and Muslim ban that Donald Trump tried to impose. It is not only un-American, but also puts American lives at greater risk. I, like a majority of the American public, oppose the ban and expect you to do all you can to make sure no such ban ever goes into effect. Can I count on you to forcefully condemn the Muslim ban in public statements, including on the House/Senate floor?
2. I am deeply concerned by Donald Trump’s abuse of executive power, such as through his unconstitutional Muslim ban. I’m glad that the courts have temporarily blocked the Muslim ban, but I’m afraid that another court will allow it to take effect. I, like a majority of Americans, oppose the Muslim ban and expect you to do more to stop it. Will you sign your name to legislation [SOLVE Act in House/S.274 in Senate] that would block implementation of the ban and prevent funding for it?

DEMAND THAT TRUMP RELEASE HIS TAX RETURNS

Trump is the first president in modern American history to refuse to release his tax returns, and there are serious concerns about his conflicts of interest. But Congress has power to get his returns through existing law that has been on the books for 90 years. Representative Bill Pascrell is circulating a sign-on letter that would instruct Congress to use this authority. **Your two senators and representative should sign this letter.**

1. Donald Trump has financial interests here in the US and in a lot of other countries. We’ve also seen undeniable evidence that the Trump campaign has maintained close ties to the Russian government and may be vulnerable to blackmail. But he has not taken the necessary steps to eliminate potential conflicts of interest. All of this scares me. One way he could reassure Americans is by releasing his tax returns, and yet he refuses.

Congress can act unilaterally without Trump’s permission to release his returns, and Rep. Bill Pascrell is circulating letter to build support for that action. **This isn’t a partisan issue; it’s a matter of public trust—and I want to be able to trust my President. Will you show me that you agree by signing on to the Pascrell letter?**

2. As you know, every single president since Jimmy Carter, including Republicans, has released his tax returns. Doing so has become an important practice of transparency, showing the American public that a president does not have conflicts of interest. Donald Trump refuses to release his tax forms. Do you believe, as I do, that Trump should release his tax returns to prove that he isn't using the office of the President for financial gain?

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3. Even after making several promises to release his tax returns, Donald Trump refuses to release them. He claims that he's unable to because he's being audited. However, even Richard Nixon—another Republican president—released his tax returns while undergoing an audit. I'm worried he's hiding something that would prevent him from prioritizing his duties as the President. Do you believe, as I do, that Trump should release his tax returns to ensure he acts in the best interest of the American people, and not his own self-interest?

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4. I'm deeply troubled by Russian interference in our previous election, and about allegations that the Trump campaign cooperated with Russian government officials. My concerns have been magnified by the recent revelation that National Security Advisor Michael Flynn colluded with the Russian government before the election, and then lied about it. I think it's important for Trump to release his tax returns to show, once and for all, whether he has debts in Russia that might be used as leverage against him. Do you believe, as do I, that Trump should release his tax returns to prove he isn't beholden to Russian interests?

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