

Republican Primary Candidate Alex Donkervoet
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The Red Ledger: President Trump has proposed building a wall on the U.S.- Mexican Border. What are your thoughts on this?

Alex Donkervoet: I am against it. Overall, I think if you wanted to say you want a wall, that's fine. The problem is the cost, which I think is estimated at \$20-30 billion dollars, and I think if you put up a wall, it's not really going to address the problem of stopping illegal immigration. People can still dig tunnels and still fly over here to visit the country and then just not leave. I think it should be more of a symbolic wall rather than an actual giant, physical wall across the whole border. We know right now there is a wall out in certain spots, which is perfectly fine, but a \$20 billion wall across the whole border I don't think is worth our time and our money.

TRL: Regarding DACA, what is the scenario you would most like to win out?

AD: I think just being an American and how the country was founded, and that we do not hold children responsible for their parents' actions, and these children were brought over here, and a lot of them are productive members in society. So right now it's temporary, so it's not a full citizenship, so I do not think we should end the program. I think we should get an overall, complete immigration piece that will allow them to stay here and allow them to continue to apply for work permits as they apply for permanent residency citizenship. I know a lot of countries do that because I lived internationally for a couple years, and you apply and you can stay there and you can work there and be a productive member of society and then, when that's running out, you apply again. If you've been convicted of any crime, they'll deport you, but during that part [you] can say, "OK, I want to be a citizen."

TRL: President Trump has threatened to cut federal funding to sanctuary cities. What is your opinion of this and of sanctuary cities in general?

AD: I believe Trump should not cut funding for sanctuary cities because I believe this is a discussion that we do not need to have. We keep debating issues such as sanctuary cities or building a wall or DACA, but these discussions are not a comprehensive solution to immigration. Once we have immigration reform that's put in place, the questions about DACA and sanctuary cities or building a wall, these issues will be fixed in the overall comprehensive immigration bill.

TRL: What is your general stance on healthcare?

AD: I'm an actuary. I believe that there needs to be little government involvement, and then we can have a free-market system that brings transparency, that allows competition between insurance companies. Whatever you want to do to Obamacare is fine, but the big issue is just solving healthcare in general. Transparency [would] help drive insurance costs down because then we go to the doctor and we know what these costs are. Instead of an x-ray being \$500 or

\$2,000, we can then go to the doctor that has the most affordable and best service, and that's how the free-market can help drive down the insurance costs. I believe we should remove insurance from the employer and have [an] open market similar to how you buy car insurance because that will provide the competition also needed to where the insurance companies compete one for another, rather than having your insurance through the workplace, or have it through Medicaid or Medicare, or have it on the open-market. Those pieces all together will help drive down insurance costs, which over time will help solve the healthcare problem in America.

TRL: What is your general stance on abortion?

AD: One of the big things that research has shown is by outlawing abortion, it does not reduce the rate of abortion that people expect it to. Instead, it just makes it more dangerous for women and everybody involved who still want to get an abortion. We actually had one of the lowest abortion rates of the last 50 years in the last year or two, and that's because of sex ed and availability of contraceptives. So that's a huge push, and one of my big issues is that the pro-choice and pro-life people don't work together. I think a lot of people think that pro-choice means pro-abortion, and that is completely false. It just means that they don't want the government telling them what they should or shouldn't do. About 98 percent of abortions are due to issues such [as] "I don't have the money" or "my living situation changed" or "my boyfriend/fiance broke up with me" or "family pressure" or "too young"— basically issues that are not anything life-threatening or, in [my] opinion, morally gray. You didn't have sex on accident, you didn't get pregnant on accident— you just got pregnant unplanned, and because of that, I think that pro-life and pro-choice people can work together to set up a better adoption system and more financial support. We can also make it a little less taboo and get rid of those stigmas and say, "If it happens, it happens." Because if pro-life people really are pro-life, then it isn't just when a mother is pregnant with an unborn child; it's, for pro-life, we're going to say, "If you can't help that baby once it's born, then as pro-lifers, we have to help."

TRL: Texas has recently passed laws permitting the open carrying of firearms in public. What is your opinion of open carry?

AD: There are questions, but overall I think the federal government should stay out of a lot of places— I think the states should do it. Texas, if they want, should have an open carry. I don't have a problem with that because I think a lot of buildings, sports complexes, offices, and other things like that will set the rules. Overall, I think gun owners are mostly responsible people. It's the very few bad apples that give a lot of the gun owners a bad name. Overall, I think a gun should almost carry a certain liability with it, and I think a lot of your personal responsibility is not attached to a gun like it is to something else because if I went out with a car and did something reckless, then I can get in serious trouble, but if I did certain things with a gun that were extremely reckless, it just seems like the laws aren't there to put down personal

responsibility. I also don't think the federal government should say "all states have to do this" in regards to open carry.

TRL: What is your general stance on student loans?

AD: One of the things I have an issue with when it comes to education is I feel we're to a point where we tell everybody that they have to go to college, which I don't think is true. And that's not to say I don't believe in education, I'm just saying there's different kinds of education out there, like trade schools and apprenticeships. There's a lot of jobs that people seem to go to college for, and then they don't get that job and they do something else. You don't need to go to a four-year college and get a major in something you aren't going to use for the rest of your life to become a plumber or install air conditioning. This is one of the reasons I think a lot of people are in this placement. Also, I think a lot of colleges will have people come to school and major in philosophy, but they don't educate the kids as to whether or not they'll actually be able to get a job in that.

TRL: What do you think are the most pressing issues regarding first-time voters?

AD: A lot of the times the voters don't vote, for obvious reasons, because everybody's fed up. For me, the most pressing issue is Washington, D.C., and I'm fairly young compared to 50, 60, 70-year-olds you see in Congress today, and if we don't fix social security, healthcare, the national debt, and trade, then we just keep kicking the can down the road, and we're going to have to take sharp measures at one point in time. But the biggest problem is nothing can be passed when one party is trying to undo all the other party's regulations. This new tax bill is a perfect example. They passed the bill, it was 100 percent Republican, and the Democrats the next day, even before it passed, said, "Our objective is to undo this tax bill." And if we continue to have policies put in place that will just be reversed, then we'll be unable to address these big issues, because two parties cannot come together and figure out a compromise. So until we reverse this course, we're at a standstill.

TRL: What do you think could draw Democrats to your campaign?

AD: This county is very Republican, so the victor of the general election in November will be whoever wins the Republican primary. So, what I told some Democrats was, "If you want somebody to represent you, then you need to go vote Republican in the primary," because I realize that it's not just a Republican county, and I will work toward bipartisan solutions. And when it comes to topics like social security, as an actuary, I understand how numbers are derived, I understand tail factors, I understand the expectancies and assumptions that are made in there. I say, "What's the data? What's the solution? What's the research?" and then, "What's the opinion of the other side?" Because like I said, if we can't work together, then it's not to be. And a lot of people— and this drives me crazy— a lot of people will do 50 percent of their fundraising while they're in Washington, D.C. I'm not going to do that.

TRL: Do you think the November election will act as a sort of referendum on the current administration?

AD: I do. I think parts of the U.S. are going to see a switch, and I think you can kind of already see that in the number of senators and representatives not running for re-election because they can see a lot of the polls and how the current administration is being polled today. A lot of people are going to point the finger at the president, but think it's more of a Republican thing, not so much a president thing, so I think it is going to be kind of reflective on how people think he's been, and honestly I don't know if it'll be on policies so much as his demeanor and his attacks and his daily Twitter, where it's more about how we look rather than what we're doing. So yeah, I think it's going to be a harsh reality, and I think it's going to come quickly. People will be more dissatisfied than they thought they would be two years ago.