

Choice

Our first order of business is to prevent unintended pregnancies. By supporting organizations with family planning services, we can do just that –providing our youth with reliable facts and fostering strong lines of communication. However, Mike believes that a woman’s right to choose is just that – her right – and has fought to protect it. Mike has emphasized the importance of family planning in our national budget, and has spoken out highlighting the importance of [Title X](#) family planning programs. Mike has also spoken out on numerous bills attacking a women’s right to choose, including the [No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act](#) and the [Stupak amendment](#)

Defense

Keeping America safe is key. Recent history has shown us that threats to our nation’s safety can come in many forms, and our defense policy must be tailored accordingly. In a September, 2010 speech to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Mike argued for reevaluating our global needs and building a military to match those needs. “We could cut our defense spending in half and still be spending more than our current and potential adversaries combined,” he said. He has supported efforts to overhaul many facets of our military, including cutting out [discretionary military spending](#), troop levels in Western Europe and Asia, and ending the procurement of costly and outdated weapons systems the Pentagon has not even requested. Many of his reforms are included in his [“Reinventing Government”](#) report, and include recommendations that can help us meet evolving strategic needs, while still maintaining competitive military strength.

Education

An investment in our children’s education is an investment our country’s future. The importance

of providing our children the best possible education cannot be overstated, especially as so many Americans battle economic hardship. That's why Mike voted to help pass a bill infusing Illinois schools with \$415 million, helping students and protecting teachers' jobs.

Environment and Energy

An innovative environmental and energy policy is necessary to combat the increasing carbon emissions that endanger our planet's environmental health. Mike has worked tirelessly to advocate for environmentally-conscious government. Renewable energy can be a cornerstone of sustainable economic growth by creating competitive, green jobs of the future, and the long term cost of inaction for our environment far outweighs today's price tag. [Mike spoke on the House floor in defense of the Clean Air Act](#)

, opposing amendments
[meant to strip its power](#)

. Allowing further environmental degradation is not only irresponsible policy for the present day but will cause incalculable damage to the world our children inhabit.

Equality

Mike firmly believes in President Abraham Lincoln's vision, shared nearly 150 years ago – that our country is on an evolutionary path to full equality for all Americans and that the fight for human rights is an ongoing one. Whether it's fighting for marriage equality, fighting against senseless discrimination, or fighting on behalf of those who cannot defend themselves, Mike believes that we must be guided by doing what's right, what's fair, and what's just. Mike has been a fierce supporter of the LGBT community and has emerged as a national advocate for equality. He is an original co-sponsor of the [Respect for Marriage Act](#) allowing all couples to be recognized under the law. He believes it is our moral obligation to ensure justice for all, and not allow race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation to divide us. To that end, Mike strongly supported repealing the military's

["Don't Ask, Don't Tell"](#)

policy. His first bill co-sponsorship in Congress was to strengthen federal protection against hate crimes.

Foreign Affairs

Mike is committed to providing the resources our soldiers need, and ensuring that our servicemen and women are not in harm's way one day more than necessary. Mike has taken trips to Iraq and Israel and Gaza reemphasizing his goals to establish sound Middle East policy. He believes that Congress and the Obama Administration should work together towards responsible, pragmatic, and thoughtful foreign policy. Mike has spoken numerous times in [support of the state of Israel](#), and has written to Secretary of State Clinton [opposing U.N. action against Israeli settlements](#). He has also introduced legislation to extend and ultimately make permanent the Visa Waiver Program, [including Poland as a participant country](#), so that Polish citizens can travel visa-free to the United States.

Health Care

Mike believes that comprehensive health care reform is vital to the health of our citizens and future prosperity of our nation. President Obama and his Administration have made this initiative a top priority, one which Mike shares. Forty-seven million Americans are currently uninsured, a number that continues to rise as unemployment grows. Health insurance premiums are skyrocketing, doubling in the last eight years and increasing 3.7 times faster than wages. Mike believes these increases are simply unsustainable for families and businesses, and must be addressed because the status quo isn't working.

- To learn how the health care reform bill will impact the 5th District, [please click here](#).
- For more information about the health care reform legislation, [please click here](#).

Immigration

As globalization shrinks our world, establishing a fair system to account for the movement of people across and within our borders becomes increasingly important. Mike supports [comprehensive immigration reform](#) that is right, just, and fair for all – working towards concrete and pragmatic solutions for environmentally-sensitive border security. Mike was a strong supporter of the DREAM Act, giving everyone born in the United States an [opportunity to attend college](#) or serve in the military. Mike believes we must document the estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants currently in the United States.

Justice

As a lawyer and a member of House Committee on the Judiciary, Mike's background gives him a unique perspective on judicial issues. Mike is committed to passing legislation that protects civil liberties, ensures equality for all people, and above all, upholds the Constitution. A functioning, independent Judiciary is essential to a healthy democracy, and Mike is proud to play an important role casting his vote on issues crucial to justice for all on the Judiciary Committee. Mike spoke on the House floor [warning against those who promote constitutional fundamentalism.](#)

Reform

Mike believes the best form of government is an open and honest government that serves its people and not a special interest. As U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis famously stated, "sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants." Open and transparent government will produce efficient and effective results, strengthening Congress' ability to serve our constituents' best interests. Reforming, streamlining, and reinventing government is central to Mike's efforts as a public servant. Mike has introduced a comprehensive deficit reduction report, ["Reinventing Government,"](#) to save the federal government nearly 2 trillion dollars over the next ten years – asking the hard questions as to how we are going to balance our budget.

He also has proposed sweeping disclosure requirements across the board, spanning from [congressional offices](#) to [lobbying firms](#). He has worked as well to crackdown on corruption by introducing legislation allowing [states to more effectively fight against corruption](#) and to prevent elected officials from using their offices for personal gain.

Transportation

Mike believes that rebuilding our infrastructure is tantamount to spurring economic growth. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was a step in the right direction. It is most important to invest in long-term projects seeking to modernize our national infrastructure, providing efficient and safe transportation of goods and people, reducing congestion and pollution. Transparency and accountability are critical throughout the process, so [Mike has visited some of these job boosting projects](#) to ensure that taxpayer dollars are being spent efficiently.

Veterans

These brave Americans have chosen to serve their country, and in turn, their country should serve them. Mike works tirelessly to improve healthcare and ensure access to higher education for our veterans. Additionally, his District Office assists veterans with various casework services on a daily basis, like helping one World War II veteran cut through the red tape of the Department of the Navy to receive the [medals he waited twenty years for](#) .

Mike's Committees

Mike serves on the Committees on the Judiciary and Oversight and Government Reform. He is also the ranking member of the Subcommittee on TARP, Financial Services, and Bailouts of Public and Private Programs. As a member of the Judiciary Committee, Mike is able to put his wealth of legal and legislative experience to great use. As member of the Oversight Committee, Mike has the opportunity to work to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse in all facets of government, increasing transparency and making government more responsive to its constituents.