



## **MAKE IT IN AMERICA PLATFORM SPEECH**

Steven Holden, Lt. Col (Ret.)  
Candidate, NY24 (The Lake District)  
October 2022

My name is Steve Holden, and I am the Democratic candidate for New York's 24<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, the one we affectionately call, "The Lake District." I was raised in rural Oklahoma by my Native American mother and my father who worked on Modoc Nation lands, and I spent a lot of time working on my grandfather's dairy farm. After high school, I received advanced degrees in criminal justice and political science.

Later, I joined the National Guard and then went into the U.S. Army. While in the Army, I earned an MBA and a master's degree in public administration from Syracuse University. I also deployed four times—twice to Iraq and twice to Afghanistan—and received three bronze stars. After 20 years of service, I retired as a Lt. Colonel and became a small business owner who helps veterans start their own businesses. Now I'm a full-time candidate running for Congress!

I decided to run for public office because I believe in service; I believe in duty to one's country; and I believe in our democracy. I am deeply concerned about what is happening right now. Prices are rising, women's reproductive rights are threatened, our clean water is at risk, our first responders are in danger, our veterans are suffering, Social Security and Medicare are in jeopardy, and our farmers need support. Importantly, I want to defend our democracy from extremists who are trying to stop the government from working.

I want to go to Congress so that everyone can make it in America.

- Making it in America means that you can provide for yourself and your family with a good paying job and have access to high-speed internet and safe roads and safe bridges.
- Making it in America means you can make your own decisions about when to have a baby.
- Making it in America means you can breathe clean air and drink clean water.
- Making it in America means our first responders receive the investment they need.
- Making it in America means you can afford healthcare when illness strikes.
- Making it in America means you can rely on Medicare and Social Security benefits to be there when you need them.
- Making it in America means our farmers will have the support they need to be competitive and successful.
- Making it in America means you can trust that our democracy will protect your rights from extremists.



## **Inflation**

Let's talk about inflation. The truth is, corporations are raking in trillions in record profits right now, including Nestle and Proctor & Gamble, two of the largest consumer goods companies in the world. They are charging what they want, making consumers like us pay through the nose.

My opponent, Claudia Tenney, voted against the Price Gouging Prevention Act, and she wants to make the Trump tax breaks for the rich permanent, which are raising the effective tax rate for New Yorkers. Her policies will make the rich even richer and make it harder for middle class families to make ends meet.

Republicans like her do not seem to understand that it is middle class citizens who drive the economy. The wealthy one percent need to pay what they owe. We need to close tax loopholes so corporations will pay their fair share. The Inflation Reduction Act was a major step forward in achieving these goals, and my opponent voted against it. She cares more about corporations than she does about her constituents.

## **Codifying Reproductive Rights**

One of the most important issues on the ballot this year are women's reproductive rights. When the Supreme Court overturned Roe, millions of women lost the right to control their own bodies and their own economic destinies. But some say this is not an issue for New Yorkers. That is not true. Extremists like my opponent want to create a nationwide ban on abortion, which could stop New York State in its tracks.

When I am in Congress, I will work to codify reproductive rights at the federal level so women can make their own healthcare and family planning choices. We do not need or want government in our doctors' offices nor in our bedrooms.

## **Protecting Water Quality**

Another important issue is water quality. We call this the Lake District for a reason. I like to say, "water is life," and clean water is essential to the quality of our lives. It is also the lifeblood for our vineyards and our farms.

Tenney is funded by big oil, and she wants to reintroduce fracking to New York. I've seen the results of fracking in Oklahoma, with higher cancer rates in our children and seniors, and earthquakes in a place they never were before. And all I can say about that is, who'd want fracking here? Not me, that's for sure!

I will fight to protect the land, lakes, and waterways of our District and will never be in the pocket of big oil.

## **Supporting First Responders**

I am concerned about our men and women in police departments, fire departments, and EMTs that deal with all kinds of emergencies, when they have no way of knowing what they're going to find when they show up. They also suffer a higher rate of suicide. My opponent says she's pro police, but she voted against the Rescue Act, which is funding small police departments and their pensions.



I am proud to announce the first piece of legislation I will introduce in Congress -- **The First Responders Investment Act** -- that will provide funds to embed crisis intervention specialists and mental health professionals in their departments. This Act will address emergencies occurring on the front lines as well as combat the rising tide of suicides suffered by the people in these professions.

### **Supporting Veterans**

We know how important veterans are. I use the VA system for my own healthcare, too. We need to care for our veterans and families, as best we can, but Tenney voted against the PACT Act, which provides medical benefits for injured veterans. She voted against it twice!

I will always fight for our veterans, not just because I am one, but because everyone who serves our country deserves to be protected and cared for during their service, and especially after it.

### **Supporting Family-Owned Farms**

There are more than 33,000 farms in New York State, and 98 percent are family owned. Under the previous president, mergers consolidated two-thirds of all seed production into the hands of just three companies, giving them an essential monopoly on prices and production and putting the squeeze on small farms. Tenney voted 97 percent of the time with Trump and cares more about Monsanto than she does about small farmers.

When I'm in Congress, I'll propose the **Family Farm Restoration Act** that will give tax breaks to small farmers so they can effectively compete in the marketplace.

### **Maintaining Social Security and Medicare**

Our seniors rely on the services they paid into their whole lives. We must keep Medicare costs down and make social security benefits available to anyone who needs them. Medicare is projected to go bankrupt in 2028 and the Social Security Trust Funds exhausted by 2035. We must work together in Washington DC; but if Republicans gain control of Congress, they have already said they will hold the government hostage by defaulting on our national debt unless President Biden agrees to make deep cuts in these essential programs. And then they will blame Democrats for abandoning our elderly, our sick, and our disabled.

The Inflation Reduction Act gives tax credits for affordable healthcare, allows Medicare to negotiate lower prices for expensive medications, and caps prices for insulin. Tenney gets money from Big Pharma, and of course she voted NO on these provisions.

I support these programs and will work to make sure these services continue long into the future.

### **Protecting Democracy**

Most importantly, I am concerned about the state of our democracy. We saw what happened on January 6, and evidence shows that the ex-president knew his people were armed and ready to take over the Capitol. Tenney called the insurrectionists, "her supporters," demonstrating she is open to political violence. We are



seeing states take away voting rights. We are hearing rhetoric from Republicans they will accept the results of this election, but only if they win.

Defending our democracy is up to all of us. Your vote counts. And we must count every vote.

As you know, we are at a crossroads for this election. And when our citizens enter the voting booth, some will choose fear and anger over hope and possibilities. Some will choose tax breaks for the rich over broadband and infrastructure investment for our farmers and residents. Some will choose to take reproductive rights away from women. Some will be willing to poison our water for profit and keep healthcare costs high over taking care of our environment, our first responders, and our veterans. The choice is clear to me.

My opponent takes extreme positions most Americans do not want. She helps corporations and her donors instead of regular folks like you and me. She will make life harder for all of us.

I will work to bring the cost of food and gas prices down and make sure our rural communities get broadband. I will support a woman's right to choose her own reproductive destiny. I will fight to keep our water clean and clear. I will take care of our first responders and veterans. I will support our family farmers.

I will work to hold those responsible for January 6 accountable, no matter who they are, or what titles they hold.

I want to make it easier for all citizens in NY24 to Make it in America, not just those who donate to my campaign, and not just those who vote for me. I have the life experiences to understand our District's challenges, and the education and skills to meet the needs of The Lake District.

Early voting in NY has begun.

Whether it is today, next week, or on November 8, I humbly ask you to vote for me. My name is Steve Holden, and I want you to Make it in America.

# # #