**2CSS202001HD\_Candidate\_Statement\_Transcript**

- Tricia Zunker: Hi, I'm Tricia Zunker, Democratic candidate for Wisconsin's 7th Congressional District. A lot of people ask me why I'm running for this seat. And the truth is I have no choice. I believe I have a duty and an obligation to use my voice in a way that can make a positive difference for Wisconsinites. I think about what my relatives went through and their hard work and sacrifice. And it wasn't for me to just sit on the sidelines and care about myself. I come from humble beginnings, but there were opportunities that presented themselves in my life and I seized on them, and I know what a difference it's made for me. And I believe that is one of the roles of a representative is to ensure opportunity for your constituents. I grew up in a strong union household. I'm a member of Ho-Chunk Nation. I am a first-generation college graduate, and then I went to law school. And I use that law degree to serve the Ho-Chunk Nation as Associate Justice on the Ho-Chunk Nation Supreme Court. I'm also school board president for the Wausau School District and solo parent to an amazing nine-year-old son. I started running for this seat because there were so many things that we need to address. And we need leaders that are gonna get to work. I'm hardworking and effective, and I am committed to working across the aisle to achieve bipartisan solutions that make life better for everyone here in Wisconsin's 7th Congressional District. When I first started running, a number of issues were paramount and still remain critical. But now we are also in this pandemic. It's inexcusable that we are eight months into this pandemic and we have 200,000 lives lost. That's 200,000 grieving families. There isn't enough PPE for our essential workers. We need to ensure enough testing. We know how important testing is to getting this pandemic under control. We need to make sure that our essential workers have hazard pay. And that people who have lost their jobs have extended unemployment benefits. And we need to ensure there's funding for our small and midsize family farms that are suffering during this pandemic and to make sure our small businesses have protections to stay afloat. I think this pandemic has also highlighted a number of really critical issues here in Wisconsin's 7th Congressional District. We have a caretaker crisis and we saw this when we went to mandated virtual learning in the spring, and a lot of districts that are doing that now. And this is something actually I saw when I was getting out in the district too before the pandemic hit, but we have pockets throughout the district, where there just aren't enough caretakers. And I think that really comes down to valuing our caretakers for the critical work that they do. Taking care of our children, our elderly, our disabled loved ones. We need to value them for that critical work with a living wage and benefits. When people have a living wage and that reliable job, they'll stay in that job, and that will help eliminate this caretaker crisis that we have here in this district. Another thing that this pandemic has really magnified is the need for treating rural broadband like the utility that it is. There are too many households in this district that don't have access to high-speed working internet and that means they are being deprived of opportunity, whether that is the ability to do their schoolwork, to grade their papers, to conduct their business, or just have access to the news and everything that we have access to online. We need to treat broadband like the utility that it is, and this is something that I am prioritizing in Congress, to make sure everybody has access to it. Another thing magnified by this pandemic is healthcare. The healthcare crisis, the need to ensure affordable accessible healthcare and that people with preexisting conditions stay protected. If somebody has Coronavirus and they recover from it, they're going to be deemed to have a preexisting condition, and that's just not fair. And another thing magnified by this pandemic is how we need to address decision making and address solving problems, by listening to experts, listening to science, looking at data as a source of decision making. We see how we need to do that by addressing the climate emergency with the urgency it requires and how we need leaders who are going to do that to address this pandemic. Finally, I just wanna point out that this is a historic race. I will be the first Native American to represent Wisconsin in Congress. And I will be the first woman ever to represent this district. I don't ask anyone to vote for me because I'm a woman. I ask you to vote for me because I'm a hard-working qualified woman, who's gonna work hard for everybody here to get the job done. But women's issues are human issues and it is high time our women and our girls see themselves reflected in Congressional leadership. Our boys need to see it, too. Thank you.