

## CD 18 Potential Nominee Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Christina Morales

*If you currently hold or have previously held public office, please list and describe those positions here.*  
Democratic State Representative for House District 145

*Are you currently a resident of the 18th Congressional District?*  
Yes

*If you live in CD18, how long have you resided there?*  
46 years

*If you are not currently a resident of CD18, which Congressional District do you reside, and how long have you lived there?*

### **Background, Education, and Qualifications**

*High School attended and date of graduation*  
San Jacinto Community College GED 1987

*College attended, degree obtained, major, and year of graduation*  
As an orphan, I never had the opportunity to follow a traditional path to higher education. I had to make a living; it was about survival. Eventually, I attended trade school to run my family business and graduated with honors and distinction. Since then, I have never stopped learning. I attended the Goldman Sachs 10k Small Businesses program and the Latino Entrepreneurship program at Stanford University. Additionally, I am a class fellow from the American Leadership Forum Class of 42. Having lost opportunities because I didn't have parents to support me both financially and emotionally drives me to help children. I see myself in their faces and want them to have every opportunity to succeed in life.

*Graduate or other degrees obtained and year of graduation*  
Commonwealth Institute of Funeral Service 1992

*Any Board Certifications. If you are an attorney, please list the states in which you are admitted to the bar and years admitted.*

*What uniquely qualifies you to represent the constituents of CD18 as their Representative in Congress?*  
My unique qualifications to represent CD 18 stem from a combination of personal and professional experiences. Losing my parents at a young age meant confronting mental health challenges and needing financial help from the federal government. I have a deep understanding of the struggles faced by the most vulnerable in our district. My experience also demonstrated to me where our government can support vulnerable children and families and also where it is failing them. This perspective informs my approach to policymaking and advocacy. My experience as a small business owner, community organizer, and state legislator equips me to tackle these challenges head-on, fight for resources, and support our community's needs. But perhaps my 30 years as a funeral director have prepared me to help the families of the 18th District more than anything else. In a family's greatest hour of need, I have seen not just the moment of tragedy but the long, systematic issues that lead to untimely deaths. From insufficient health

care, particularly in African American and Latino communities, to cycles of violence and drugs taking our children from us. During the pandemic, we saw a failed government response cost lives. Many of our zip codes have a lower life expectancy due to pollution and toxic contamination sites-- coupled with high numbers of uninsured individuals, we lose loved ones much too early and cruelly.

*What is your best quality or attribute? What is your least favorable trait or working habit?*

Best Quality or Attribute: My best quality is my leadership and work ethic. As a small business owner for over 30 years and the CEO of both my business and a nonprofit, I have honed my skills in organization, management, and community service. I am not afraid to roll up my sleeves and get to work, whether it's for my business or for the community. This dedication and hands-on approach have allowed me to build strong, lasting relationships and achieve meaningful results.

Least Favorable Trait or Working Habit: While my commitment to hard work and leadership is a strength, it can also be a challenge. I sometimes struggle with delegating tasks because I want to ensure everything meets the high standards I set. Additionally, while I am proficient in Spanish, I am not fluent, which can be a limitation given the large portion of the CD18 constituency who are Spanish speakers. I have come to realize I cannot be all things to all people, and have worked to form more community partnerships to expand my ability to help others. As Congresswoman of the 18th, I would have an extensive network of community allies that would provide support systems in every community.

*What prior elective office have you run for and what was the result?*

I am the State Representative of Texas House District 145. I won my first election in 2019 and have successfully been re-elected in 2020 and 2022.

*Describe any community service you have been involved with over the past ten years.*

I have been deeply involved in community service for over twenty years, continuing the legacy of my grandparents, who provided jobs and charitable services in the district since the 1930s. As President and CEO of Morales Funeral Home, I established the Annual Morales Back to School Supplies Giveaway, which serves over 2,000 students annually. As State Representative for House District 145 since 2019, I support public education, defend voting rights, and host frequent food and school supply distributions. Additionally, if I see a need unmet, I seek out partners to fill that need., I organize community events like college readiness fairs and laptop giveaways to fill in gaps in our education system. I have also served on various boards, contributing to the development and well-being of our community.

### ***Affiliations, Tributes, and Awards***

*Are you a member of or affiliated with any professional organizations? Please list here.*

*Have you held any leadership positions with those groups, and if so, what was your position?*

*Have you received any honors or recognitions that may be relevant to the positions of United States Representative? If so, please describe here.*

I am most proud of being pinned by President Lyndon B. Johnson's daughter, Luci Baines Johnson, with a pin from her father during our historic quorum break for civil rights in Washington, D.C. This pin symbolizes the hard-fought freedom we enjoy as Americans if we have the courage and dedication to secure it.

Other honors include:

2015 Class of Women on the Move: Selected as one of Houston's most influential women by Houston Woman Magazine.

2016 Hispanic Heritage Award: Awarded by the Mayor for supporting education in the community.

Woman of the Year: Selected by Solo Mujeres Magazine for my inspirational work in the community.

I have also received many other awards highlighting my community service and dedication to making a positive impact.

### ***Philosophy and Issues***

*Should you become the Representative for CD18, what do you hope to accomplish during your first term in office? Before the completion of your service as a member of Congress?*

As your TX CD 18 Representative, my immediate focus is to protect voting rights, reclaim our reproductive rights, and fight against the takeover of our schools. That will begin by helping ensure CD 18 meets its full potential in electing VP Kamala Harris and Colin Allred. In the district, there is a need for an advocate for storm recovery funds and an on-the-ground presence like that of the late Congresswoman. That will require getting to work on day one and committing to long days. I have never failed to put in the work, and as your TX CD 18 Congresswoman, I will not relent in my service.

*If you are elected to this position, on which committee(s) of Congress would you most like to serve and why?*

As a Representative for CD 18, I aim to serve on the Education and the Workforce, Energy and Commerce, and Small Business Committees. On the Education and Workforce Committee, I will advocate for quality education, support public schools, and address workforce development to improve economic stability. On the Energy and Commerce Committee, I will push for reliable and sustainable energy infrastructure, addressing issues like the Texas grid failure. With my background as a small business owner, I will work on policies to support small businesses, boost economic growth, and create opportunities in underserved areas. These committees align with my commitment to enhancing education, energy reliability, and local economic development.

*In what way do you believe your individual philosophy may impact your service as a member of Congress?*

My individual philosophy, as the most progressive legislator in the Texas House, will significantly impact my service as a member of Congress. I am committed to inclusivity and ensuring that no community feels overlooked in District 18. This means I will prioritize policies that promote equality, social justice, and opportunities for all, especially the most vulnerable. My approach will be to actively listen to and engage with all constituents, ensuring their voices are heard and their needs addressed. This philosophy will drive my efforts to create a more equitable and just society, reflecting the diverse and dynamic nature of District 18.

*Why do you want to be a member of Congress?*

I have already been fighting for my constituents, and this role will give me a larger platform to serve. My time in the Texas House has proven to be the best training ground for what to expect from a second Trump presidency. Project 2025 is no different than the legislative priorities of Dan Patrick and Greg Abbott over the last few sessions. I know what is coming and what is at stake for our nation. As a mother and grandmother, I am deeply concerned about the stripping away of women's rights and the future of our children. In Congress, I will advocate tirelessly for women's rights, voting rights, education, and infrastructure. A major portion of the district is underserved, with many zip codes having shorter life expectancies due to pollution and a toxic environment, such as the creosote in the 5th Ward. This position will allow me to amplify the voices of my community, address critical issues, and make a significant impact on the lives of my constituents, ensuring that everyone, especially women and children, are represented and protected.

*In what ways do the principles of the Democratic Party inform or reflect your personal philosophy?*

The principles of the Democratic Party align with my personal philosophy of inclusivity, social justice, and community empowerment. I believe in equal rights and opportunities for all, protecting civil liberties, and supporting grassroots engagement. These values guide my actions and decisions, ensuring my work focuses on building a more equitable and just society for everyone.

*What are the three most important issues Congress must deal with and what is your proposal for doing so?*

Congress must urgently address voting rights, education, and energy. To protect voting rights, we need to strengthen federal protections to ensure every citizen can vote without obstruction, especially given the inaction of state leaders. In education, I propose increasing federal funding and safeguarding local control to better support our schools and communities, which have been adversely affected by poor state leadership. On energy, it's crucial to invest in sustainable solutions, upgrade the power grid, and enforce stricter regulations to prevent power outages and ensure reliability. Having personally experienced the impact of power loss, I am dedicated to preventing such tragedies. If elected to represent CD 18, I will bring my progressive record to Washington to address these vital issues.

*How can Congress (with Presidential support) better and more humanely control illegal immigration across the Southern Border or elsewhere?*

Congress, with Presidential support, can address illegal immigration more effectively and humanely by creating a fair pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants and improve the legal immigration system, invest in technology and infrastructure for secure yet humane border practices, including proper facilities for asylum seekers, enhance the asylum process with more judges and legal aid to ensure fair and timely hearings, support Central American countries to improve local conditions and reduce migration drivers and collaborate with Mexico and Central American nations to manage migration flows and safeguard migrant rights.

These measures aim to build a more just immigration system that balances human dignity with national security.

*What, if anything, should Congress do to restore and protect abortion rights and rights of reproductive autonomy?*

Congress should take decisive action to restore and protect abortion rights and reproductive autonomy by enacting laws that codify the right to abortion and reproductive healthcare nationwide, ensuring that these rights are protected regardless of state laws. Increase funding for reproductive health services, including clinics that provide abortions, contraception, and comprehensive reproductive care, particularly in underserved areas. Implement legal protections for healthcare providers who perform abortions and for

patients seeking reproductive care, safeguarding them from harassment and violence and invest in public education campaigns to inform individuals about their reproductive rights and available healthcare services, ensuring everyone has access to accurate information.

By taking these steps, Congress can ensure that reproductive rights and autonomy are upheld and protected for all individuals across the country.

*What do you plan to do to protect and expand voting rights and protect the basic tenets of democracy?*

To protect and expand voting rights and uphold democratic principles, I will advocate for strengthening federal voting protections and supporting legislation like the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act to combat voter suppression. I will push for increased voting access by making Election Day a federal holiday and ensuring widespread availability of mail-in voting. Additionally, I'll support measures to safeguard election integrity through updated voting technology, robust cybersecurity, and transparent audits. Promoting voter education and engagement, defending against gerrymandering through independent redistricting commissions, and fighting to ensure every voice is heard will be central to my efforts in Congress.

*What policies and initiatives will you advocate to reduce student debt? What would be your approach to making higher education more affordable and accessible?*

To reduce student debt and make higher education more affordable, I propose supporting comprehensive student loan forgiveness programs for low- and middle-income borrowers, addressing rising tuition costs at publicly funded institutions, and advocating for tuition-free community college. Expanding Pell Grants, simplifying income-driven repayment plans, and reducing federal student loan interest rates are also essential. Strengthening the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program, increasing funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), and promoting financial literacy education will further support students. These initiatives aim to alleviate student debt and ensure higher education is accessible to all.

*What policies will you advocate to reduce poverty in our district? What are your strategies for economic development to lift individuals and families out of poverty?*

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*What can be done to lower the price of basic necessities such as food, shelter, healthcare, and other costs of living?*

To lower the cost of essentials like food, shelter, and healthcare, I propose increasing funding for affordable housing and supporting local agriculture to reduce food prices. Expanding affordable healthcare options, raising the minimum wage, and enhancing utility assistance programs will also help. Additionally, funding affordable childcare, investing in public transportation, providing tax relief for low-income families, and addressing corporate price gouging are crucial. These measures aim to make basic necessities more affordable and accessible for everyone.

*What is your view about the necessity (or lack thereof) for gun safety legislation and what proposals would you support (and which, if any, of them would you oppose)?*

I believe in the urgent need for gun safety legislation to protect our communities and reduce gun violence. In the Texas legislature, we attempted to pass sensible measures like red flag laws and raising the minimum age for purchasing assault weapons to 21. With gun violence being the leading cause of death among children in America, we must take stronger action.

I support measures such as red flag laws to temporarily remove firearms from those deemed a threat, increasing the minimum age for assault weapon purchases, implementing universal background checks, limiting high-capacity magazines, and banning military-style assault weapons. I oppose arming teachers, as it does not address the root causes of gun violence and can introduce additional risks.

Enacting these common-sense measures will enhance public safety and protect our children and communities from the devastating effects of gun violence.

*The U.S. has used foreign policy to fight inhumane practices abroad and also to further our security and economic interests. What goals should the U.S. be furthering through foreign policy, if any? What tools should the U.S. use in accomplishing those goals (i.e., economic sanctions, military intervention, etc.)?*

The U.S. should use foreign policy to promote global stability, human rights, and our national security and economic interests. The primary goals should be:

Promoting Democracy and Human Rights, Enhancing Global Security, Supporting Economic Development, Addressing Climate Change and Humanitarian Assistance.

Tools to Accomplish These Goals:

Engage in dialogue and negotiations with other nations to resolve conflicts and build alliances. Use targeted sanctions to pressure regimes that violate human rights or threaten global security while minimizing harm to the general population. Provide financial and technical assistance to support economic development, healthcare, education, and disaster relief. If we use the “stick” of economic sanctions with our enemies, we must use the “carrot” with our allies. China has provided infrastructure across Africa and Latin America, these developing nations and fledgling democracies should be able to count on the U.S. to help them grow economically and stabilize their region. Use military force as a last resort, only when there is a clear and imminent threat to global security or to prevent atrocities and work through international organizations such as the United Nations, NATO, and other alliances to address global challenges collectively.

By focusing on these goals and using a combination of diplomatic, economic, and, when necessary, military tools, the U.S. can promote a more stable, prosperous, and just world while safeguarding its own security and interests.

*How, specifically, do you plan to help the people of CD18?*

To assist the people of CD18, I plan to focus on several key areas. I will advocate for policies that boost economic development by supporting small businesses, creating jobs, and enhancing workforce training. Improving access to affordable housing is a priority, and I will push for policies that fund and expand housing options, ensuring developments benefit residents. In education, I will seek federal funding for schools, expand early childhood education, and work to reduce student debt. Expanding healthcare access, particularly in underserved areas, and promoting preventive care is crucial. I will address

environmental hazards, like creosote contamination, by securing cleanup funding and supporting green infrastructure investments. Additionally, I will protect voting rights by supporting fair election legislation and combatting voter suppression. Lastly, I will advocate for common-sense gun safety measures to reduce violence. These initiatives aim to enhance the quality of life for all residents of CD18, ensuring a safe, healthy, and supportive community.

*What do you plan to make your signature issue as a member of Congress and how do you plan to address it?*

As a member of Congress, my signature issue will be saving our public education system, starting with addressing the HISD takeover. This is crucial for ensuring that all children have access to quality education and that local communities retain control over their schools.

### **Campaign Plans**

*How will you convince voters of CD18 to support you before November 5, 2024?*

To convince the voters of CD18 to support me before November 5, 2024, I will focus on connecting directly with as many voters as possible. This involves:

1. Community Engagement: Hosting town halls, listening sessions, and community events to hear directly from residents about their concerns and priorities.
2. Door-to-Door Campaigning: Going door-to-door to meet voters personally, discuss my platform, and understand their needs.
3. Grassroots Mobilization: Building a strong grassroots campaign by mobilizing volunteers and supporters to spread the word and engage with the community.
4. Targeted Outreach: Reaching out to underserved and marginalized communities within the district to ensure their voices are heard and their issues are addressed.
5. Clear Communication: Using social media, newsletters, and other communication channels to keep voters informed about my campaign, my plans, and how I intend to address their concerns.

By actively engaging with the community, listening to their needs, and clearly communicating my vision, I will earn the trust and support of the voters in CD18.

*How will you support down-ballot Democratic candidates?*

To support down-ballot Democratic candidates, I will:

1. Campaign Collaborations: Partner with down-ballot candidates for joint events, canvassing, and rallies to amplify our collective message and reach more voters.
2. Resource Sharing: Share campaign resources, such as volunteers, data, and advertising opportunities, to strengthen their campaigns.
3. Endorsements and Public Support: Publicly endorse down-ballot candidates and use my platform to highlight their qualifications and the importance of their races.

4. Fundraising Assistance: Assist with fundraising efforts by hosting joint fundraising events and promoting their campaigns to my donor network.

5. Voter Education: Educate voters about the importance of down-ballot races and how these positions impact their daily lives, encouraging them to vote the entire Democratic ticket.

By working together and supporting each other, we can build a strong Democratic presence at all levels of government.

*How much money do you expect to raise for your campaign?*

I expect to raise \$400,000 for my campaign initially. But it's important to me to spend everything I raise that I don't need for my campaign in the field. You will never see me hoard campaign funds. CD 18 has a lot of room for voter turnout growth and I view it as a primary responsibility of our member of Congress to make that happen. The funding I raise will enable us to effectively reach and engage with voters, support down-ballot candidates, and ensure we have the resources needed to run a successful campaign for me and the ticket.

*How do you plan to raise the amount of money you have indicated in the previous question?*

To raise the \$400,000 for my campaign, I plan to utilize the following strategies:

1. Grassroots Fundraising: Engage with supporters through small-dollar donations, using online platforms and social media to reach a broad audience.

2. Fundraising Events: Host events such as dinners, town halls, and community gatherings to connect with donors and raise funds.

3. Donor Outreach: Reach out to past supporters and potential new donors through personalized emails, phone calls, and direct mail campaigns.

4. Partnerships: Collaborate with local organizations and community leaders to expand our fundraising network and gain their support.

5. Digital Campaigns: Run targeted digital fundraising campaigns to attract contributions from supporters across the district and beyond.

6. Matching Donations: Encourage larger donors to offer matching contributions to incentivize smaller donations and maximize our fundraising efforts.

By employing these diverse fundraising strategies, I am confident we will reach our goal of \$400,000 and build a strong foundation for a successful campaign.

### ***Democratic Credentials, Experience***

*When and why did you become a Democrat?*



I became a Democrat because I was born into a family of staunch Democrats. Our home was adorned with pictures of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr., symbolizing our commitment to the values they represented. My grandmother played a significant role in shaping my political beliefs; she helped many Democratic candidates with their first campaign checks and shared stories of paying poll taxes, emphasizing the importance of voting. Having grown up during the Great Depression, she believed in paying taxes and saw the government as a vital support system when needed. This strong family tradition and belief in Democratic principles have guided me throughout my life.

*Which Democrat in your lifetime has most impressed you and why?*

Most recently, I have been incredibly impressed with President Biden. Although I did not support him initially, I have watched him become one of the best presidents in my lifetime. He has passed comprehensive legislation in a short amount of time and has done more to help the middle class than many other presidents. His recent announcement to retire was a selfless act, showing his dedication to the country and its future.

*What involvement have you had in grassroots Democratic activities?*

My involvement in grassroots Democratic activities includes initiating and supporting several key programs:

1. College and Career Day: I host an annual College and Career Day, promoting voter registration and encouraging young people to get involved in the democratic process.
2. Gen Z Latino Voter Engagement: I am working with the county party on an initiative to engage Gen Z Latino voters, ensuring their voices are heard and their participation in elections is maximized.
3. Self-Defense Class: I am hosting a self-defense class at the University of Houston-Downtown to raise awareness about the 26,000 pregnancies in Texas resulting from rape, highlighting the lack of rights women have over their own bodies in the state.
4. Voter Registration Drives: I lead voter registration drives to ensure as many people as possible are registered to vote and understand the importance of their participation.
5. Advocacy and Mobilization: I work with local organizations and advocacy groups to mobilize support for key Democratic initiatives and policies, such as protecting voting rights and expanding healthcare access.
6. Financial Support: Whenever possible, I financially support organizations that engage in voter participation efforts to strengthen our democracy.

I know that lives depend on the next election, and I will do everything in my power to get out the vote. It is the most important job for the person selected as the nominee, and I am committed to ensuring that every eligible voter in CD18 has the opportunity to make their voice heard.

*Have you ever been a Republican or voted in a Republican primary? If so, when and why did you become a Democrat?*

No

*Is there anything else about your background, experience, philosophy, leadership qualities, or skills as a campaigner which you would like to bring to the attention of the Democratic precinct chairs of the 18th Congressional District of Texas?*

When I was first contemplating a run for office, I was asked if I was willing to do the hard and unglamorous things. As someone who had learned to embalm in her twenties, I told them I am prepared to do what it takes to achieve my goals. I was immediately challenged to be ready to canvass the day after Christmas for the special January election. I showed up in a pair of sneakers that I would wear down over the coming months as I learned to love canvassing. My team later admitted they believed I would not meet the challenge of getting to work from day one. That cold morning, December 26 in 2018 is the day I proved to my team I would lead by example. I will lead by example for the people and families of TX CD 18.

*Is there any other question which we have not asked you but which, in the interests of understanding why you would be the best person to succeed Sheila Jackson Lee, you would like to address?*

The rich diversity of communities in CD 18 have a high expectation of constituent engagement and advocacy. I believe I am ready to meet their expectations and bring new ideas to solve the problems keeping communities from meeting their full potential. They expect a high intensity of activism and would not have it any other way. I want to unify us Democrats to deliver for every community in our district.