

Ripon Profile

Name: U.S. Rep. Jo Ann Emerson

Hometown: Cape Girardeau, Missouri

Occupation: Member of Congress

Previous Jobs: Senior Vice President of Public Affairs, American Insurance Association; Director of State Relations and Grassroots Programs, National Restaurant Association; Deputy Communications Director, National Republican Congressional Committee

Individual(s) who inspired me as a child: My father, Ab Hermann, who was the executive director of the RNC in the 1960's. He was charged with the task of uniting our party and redefining the Republican Party to a new generation of conservatives using new technologies and media – our challenges today are much the same as the ones he took on 50 years ago.

Historical figure(s) I would most like to meet: Abraham Lincoln – he had to fight to preserve our Union and, though the challenges are different today, we have to stop runaway federal spending and work harder to preserve individual freedoms in order to guarantee the blessings of liberty for future generations of Americans.

Issue facing America that no one is talking about: People may be talking about how the manufacturing sector of the U.S. economy is hurting, but no one is talking about the changes we must make. For starters, we should expand tax incentives for American businesses to invest in modernizing equipment and to expand R&D efforts. We should also emphasize business expensing for all kinds and sizes of American businesses, instead of depreciation, to speed the benefits of tax treatments to the U.S. economy at a critical time. Finally, we must make wise choices in government to curb wasteful and redundant spending in favor of investments in public infrastructure – chiefly transportation infrastructure – to create lasting, stable jobs in America.

What the GOP must do to reclaim its congressional majority: Simply put, but not so simple to do, we must return America to the days when an entrepreneur could make his idea a profitable reality entirely within the United States. Today, great business and manufacturing ideas from America are assembled in Mexico using labor from Central America, capital from Japan, energy from Brazil and the Middle East, and packaging from China. The call centers to answer questions about the resulting product are in India, and the only thing made in America is the credit card transaction to buy the thing. Public-private partnerships to achieve this goal should be a staple of a smaller, more streamlined government that encourages American economic productivity.

