The Senate race: Candidates speak on issues

Candidates for the U.S. Senate in the Aug. 10 primary — one Democrat and four Republicans — were asked by the League of Women Voters to summarize their biographies in 45 words and to answer each question in 45 words. Responses were edited for length only.

Donald W. Riegle Jr.
Democrat
age 44, of Flint

U.S. senator. BA, U of M; MBA, MSU; DBA studies, Harvard Business School. Member of Congress 16 years (6 in Senate, 10 in House). Four major committees; ranking Democrat, Banking Committee. Co-chairman, Northeast/Midwest Senate Coalition. Married, Lori Hansen Riegle; three children.

William S. Ballenger
Republican
age 41, of Lansing

Full-time candidate of the U.S. Senate. BA, magna cum laude, Princeton University; MBA, Harvard University. State representative, 1969-70; state senator, 1971-74; deputy assistant secretary, U.S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, 1975-76; state director of Licensing and Regulation (Michigan), 1977-1981.

Robert J. Huber
Republican
age 59, of Troy

President, Michigan Chrome and Chemical Co. BS, Yale University. Former mayor, county commissioner, state senator and U.S. congressman.

Deane Baker
Republican
age 57, of Ann Arbor

President, Deane Baker Construction. Wisconsin, BBA; Harvard, MBA. U.S., overseas business experience; married, four children; Presbyterian; Air Force, Pilot WWII, Korean War; twice president, Detroit Urban League; former president, Ann Arbor Senior Citizens; Rotarian.

Philip E. Ruppe
Republican
age 55, of Houghton

Businessman. CMU, U of M, V-12 program; graduated Yale, 1948, BA history. Served northern Michigan in U.S. Congress, 1967-79, retiring undefeated. Korean War Navy veteran, lifelong resident of Upper Peninsula. He and his wife Loret, director of the Peace Corps, have five children.

	Riegle	Ballenger	Huber	Baker	Ruppe
Specifically, how would you deal with the current state of the economy?	Need a major mid-course correction in the economic plan — to reduce federal deficits, reduce interest rates, and put people back to work. We must reduce defense spending increases, and cut special interest waste. We must directly challenge unfair trade practices by Japan and others.	Support 1981 Economic Recovery Act, with fine-tuning to reduce size of projected budget deficit. Specifically, president should levy $5-10 per barrel import fee on foreign oil; Congress should amend so-called "safe harbor" tax credit leasing provision. These might save as much as $70 billion.	My 37 years of industrial experience in local and international business operations could promote forward planning legislation to improve the U.S. competitive position at home and abroad in steel, auto, chemical, plastics, banking, research — industries I am familiar with.	More jobs through lower interest rates, reduced government costs, lower inflation, lower taxes, more savings, balance budget, restore consumer confidence, emphasize education, university research, develop new technology for new jobs in biochemical engineering, molecular genetics, robotics computers. Study possible restructuring U.S. international trade approach.	The budget process has become too short-termed and politicized. To restore business confidence and economic stability, we should have a three-year budget in order to address the long-term problems of federal debt reduction, high interest rates, and tax policy.
List any modifications you would make in the Social Security system.	Fully protect and guarantee the benefits workers have paid for and earned. Oppose Reagan cuts. Take Social Security out of federal budgets, set up truly independent board — and earn full interest on reserves. End recession which is starving Social Security of needed income.	Willing to wait for recommendations of 15-member bi-partisan commission appointed by president and Congress — but system is near bankruptcy. Either another tax hike must be passed (which Americans will not stand for) or level, scope of benefits and age of eligibility must be reduced.	Commission an independent actuarial study free from political pressure. Re-evaluate qualification criteria to eliminate future excess benefits beyond actuarial study. Contain inflation to allow system to be actuarially sound.	The Social Security system has troubles and needs strengthening. I support the president's appointment of a bi-lateral commission to study the Social Security system and recommend changes for its improvement. Recipients of Social Security should have input into where adjustments should be made.	The bipartisan commission must recommend reforms that guarantee benefits to current recipients and those approaching retirement age. Reduced unemployment to increase the system's funding and lower inflation to decrease required COLA payouts are key.
Would you advocate reducing the projected federal deficit and, if so, how?	Federal deficits must be reduced. I proposed alternative budget with much lower deficits. Must cut spending waste from sacred cows, including defense, nuclear weapons, tobacco subsidies, Clinch River breeder reactor, big oil and gas giveaways. Increase revenue by spurring employment with lower interest rates.	Yes, and I've outlined how above.	Yes. Further cuts in spending plus tax on imported oil to raise $20 plus billion and cuts of $30 plus billion to reduce deficit a total of $50 billion.	Federal deficits must be decreased. Government needs lower costs, additional income. As recession recedes, new tax revenue generated. More jobs reduced unemployment cost to government. Lower interest rates reduce government's interest cost. Balance budget. New taxes like per barrel charge imported oil.	Yes. By eliminating inequities in the current tax code and increasing revenue collection of unreported income, by reducing fraud and waste in federal programs, improving defense procurement practices to avoid unnecessary cost and duplication, and to reduce unneeded defense installations.
What changes, if any, are needed in U.S. defense policy?	Must strengthen our conventional military forces, including readiness, rapid deployment, and training. Seek mutual, verifiable nuclear arms freeze with U.S.S.R. to limit dangers, cost of arms race. Make allies shoulder fair-share cost of joint defense effort. Rebuild, modernize our industrial base for future mobilization.	Commitment to defense spending has plunged from nearly 50 percent of federal budget in 1963 to under 25 percent today. Military strength has deteriorated vis-a-vis its totalitarian enemies. President is trying to partially redress this imbalance and deserves as much as tight budget will allow.	Falkland Island and Israel wars show need for top defense position. Peace in the world requires the strongest army, navy, and air force to be in the hands of the most peaceful nation — the U.S.	U.S. must improve quality, quantity, both conventional, strategic arms over several years on financially prudent basis. U.S. should negotiate verifiable arms reduction agreements with Soviet Union. Negotiations progress possible when U.S. negotiates from strength militarily, morally and economically.	Reform defense procurement practices, seek increased defense spending from NATO and Japan. review conventional arms needs versus new nuclear weapons systems, and reassess naval needs in light of Falkland Islands events.
What are your personal priorities in the next Congress?	Continue fighting for national economic policies that will allow economic recovery in Michigan. Michigan jobs and economic strength are my main goals. Business, labor and government must work together as a team to spur recovery. Continue to seek greater fairness and efficiency in government policies.	Getting Michigan back on its economic feet, partially through making sure it gets better return on its tax dollar than it has for past two decades, when we've ranked last among the 50 states with only 66 cents returning for every dollar we send to Washington.	Improve industrial economic climate — to reduce unemployment through improved business atmosphere — and cut expensive spending and balance budget as soon as possible.	Fearlessly represent Michigan in Senate, including auto, agricultural, recreation, small business, other industries. Represent all labor, business, professions, education, state government. Work for peace through strong defense. Work for equality all people. Return to state fair share federal taxes.	Bring fair share of federal tax dollars back to Michigan. Retrain workers in depressed industries and assist youth entry into the labor force. Coordinate federal, state, and private research in micro electronics and telecommunications areas to ensure American superiority. Develop long-range resource policy. Reduce interest rates.