

# Independent Living Council of Wisconsin Legislature

## 2008 Candidate Questionnaire

**State Representative Pedro Colón - Incumbent**

**State Assembly District 8**

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1. My priorities for the next session are:

- Push for universal access to health care for all Wisconsin residents;
- Increase and create a stable funding source for the Share Revenue Program so that local governments have the resources they need to provide vital services; and
- Work with local and community leaders to improve my district to create increased economic opportunity and reduce crime

2. I recently joined the Board of the Milwaukee Center for Independence and realize the struggles that people with mental illness have. There is no question that effective treatment will lead to a better quality of life for the individual and the community at large. As such, I believe that the legislation must continue to push for issues such as Mental Health Parity and universal access to health care. These two, thing, however will not be easy to pass, so we must also improve our support system for those in need. Through cooperative work between state government and local service providers, I will push for increased funding, just as I have in the past to ensure that needs are being met.

3. To address poverty, in this population, I will continue to push for state increases in SSI to keep pace with inflation and cost of living increase. I also will continue my advocacy and support for increases in funding to end waiting lists for the Community Options Program.

4. Regarding the situation described in the case in this question, these are often extremely complicated cases (and I have dealt with similar situations in my 9 year tenure in the State Assembly.) First, I assess the situation by speaking to the family and ascertaining what programs and services they currently receive. Once that is known, I work with my staff to draft a plan of action. This involves contacting the Secretary's office of the state agency and working with them to find resolution to the issues. Additionally, in this case, I would contact the office of Congresswoman Gwen Moore to get help with the federal issues and I would also contact Independence First in Milwaukee and to make sure they are aware and involved.

5. I have supported the Family Care program but I do think it needs improvements. There needs to be an independent advocate to ensure that consumers are receiving the benefit and services they needs. Secondly, I am open to working with advocacy groups to ensure that this program meets the needs of consumers, their families and the community. As, such I will be the first to push for any changes that are brought to my attention.

6. I would employ the same method that was described in question #4. When I speak to other agencies, our Congressional offices and local community agencies, I know that I can usually provide the help and assistance one needs.

7. I have a strong working relationship with groups such as Independence First and the Milwaukee Center for Independence and have an open door policy to speak to consumers, advocacy groups or anyone that wished to educate me on these issues or provide me with more information so that I may make better decisions as an elected official.

As a the State Representative in the 8<sup>th</sup> Assembly District, I try to make myself as available as possible to the community so that they can feel free to contact me on any issues or concerns that they may have.

Additionally, my Chief of Staff, Andy Janssen come from a background with Independent Living Centers, as he was once employed by Access Alaska in the late 1980's and is always available to anyone who my with to call or meet.