

U.S. House of Representatives District:

Candidate name: Dan Mielke

Address: 2550 County Road Ii

Phone number: 715-344-4104      Web: [www.danielmielke.com](http://www.danielmielke.com)

### **Questionnaire**

1. As a legislator, what are the three issues you will prioritize in the next legislative session?

My goal is to first familiarize myself with the job. Once I learn the ropes and get to know my associates I will begin to do the job of working for the people. To stipulate what three issues I will prioritize is not reasonable to give. First I need to see what opportunities I have at my disposal and then take advantage of those opportunities to promote my issues. What I want to do and what I can do may be different. My fundamental goal is to represent the citizens, while protecting their rights and freedoms based on the constitution.

2. Studies indicate that one in four Wisconsinites have diagnosable mental illness and would benefit from effective treatment. In addition, mental illness is the leading cause of disability for working age adults in the United States. People often can not access effective treatment, frequently citing affordability as a barrier. What will you do as a legislator to increase access to effective treatment and community services?

Mental disability is in my belief a major player in the problems we face today. It is causing problems in our schools, our homes and in our industry. I am not sure of all the causes, but I am sure that we must deal with the issue and work to resolve it. Ignoring the issue will solve nothing. I will be open to suggestions and will consider them individually based on their merits and how they fit within the parameters we are bound to.

3. Poverty is a reality for many people with disabilities in Wisconsin. Consider these facts, from the American Association of People with Disabilities.

- 27.5% of people with disabilities aged 18-64 live below the poverty line.
- The unemployment rate for people with disabilities is three times higher than for people without disabilities.
- The SSI supplement for Wisconsinites with disabilities has not increased in over ten years.

As a legislator, what will you do to address poverty for people with disabilities?

I am well aware of the impact our disabilities have on our lives. My wife has had Rheumatoid Arthritis for over 25 years. We took care of my parents when they became disabled. The challenges are enormous. I am a firm believer in working to help people out of poverty so that they can lead normal lives. I am not in favor of enabling people. I would work in favor of efforts to help without enabling. I have spent most of my life working with people who are struggling to get ahead in a very unforgiving

world. I know the problems they face and I am sympathetic to their plight.

4. One of your constituents contacts you. She is a 68 year old woman whose 70 year old husband has just had a stroke and is now in a nursing home. They have a 46 year old daughter with cerebral palsy who has always lived at home.

Up until now, the family has been providing their daughter's personal care as well as help with mobility and transfers, for example in and out of the bathtub. Now with dad in the nursing home, mom cannot care for their daughter alone. The family is covered by Medicare and the daughter is Medicaid eligible.

All the family's available resources have been expended through caring for their daughter and dad's nursing home costs. Your constituent needs help to provide the assistance her daughter needs and she does not know where to turn. Please describe how you would handle this situation as a legislator and what specific steps you would take to assist this constituent.

I have been in this situation, and I have a number of friends and acquaintances who are struggling to take care of their disabled loved ones. My first goal would be to help that person find a way to continue to offer the love and care she has grown accustomed to giving. I am opposed to tearing families apart in times of crises. Home care by family and loved ones should always be the first option. It not only is best for the disabled and their families, it is also best for the nation as a whole. Strong caring families offer far better treatment for the dollar and should receive the highest priority.

5. Do you support the Community Choice Act (HR 1621)? Why or why not? If you support other initiatives to increase options for people with disabilities to live in the community, which ones and why do you support them?

As a candidate for Congress I am not privy to all the details and ramifications regarding HR 1621. But I can guarantee that my goal will be to promote and support any effort that is reasonable which will give the disabled the option to live as normal a life as they can. I do not support any effort which will put that individuals rights and freedoms on the back burner. My first choice is that care should be in the home where they can be with their loved ones. My wife and I took care of my mother in her last years. She had suffered a stroke and was in need of 24 hour care. When my father became disabled with cancer, I again became his caregiver. The burden, financially, was very hard. But the rewards, emotionally, were fantastic. Had I put them in a facility the cost of their care would have been covered. It angers me when I think that we will not support families who put their love above their pocket book. I will aggressively support opening that door, so that families who want the responsibilities and the rewards of caring for their own will get the financial help they need.

6. A constituent in your district who is attending high school plans to attend college in the near future. Her high school offers college prep courses and other extra-curricular activities after school. Counselors often recommend that students participate in these activities to make their college applications stronger and to inform them about options and resources they have when it comes to making a decision to attend college. Your constituent has a physical disability and uses a wheelchair. She is not able to drive or take public transportation. Her high school does not offer accessible transportation for these after-school programs. This constituent would like her college application to be competitive with

students who can participate in these programs. How would you respond if she called to request your assistance?

My next door neighbor has two adult grandchildren who are confined to wheelchairs. Watching their family deal with this situation has been inspirational. These two young men have made a strong future for themselves and are an asset to this nation's vitality. I would do everything in my power to see to it that they can lead normal lives within the guidelines of reason. I would not enable them or hurt others in the process. We cannot get so involved in a particular area that we fail to consider those around us.

7. The 2000 census showed that approximately one in every 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Wisconsin residents has a disability. As a legislator, what specific steps will you take in order to reach out to the disability community and ensure you are proactively meeting the needs of this constituency?

The same as I would for everyone. I will listen, consider and act on reasonable solutions. When a reasonable solution is found I will do all in my power to push it to fruition. Caring and compassion is my motivator. My personal experience gives me the power to accomplish what I set out to do.