

State Office: Assembly            District: 56

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### **Questionnaire**

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

Affordable health care is my primary issue.

Campaign finance reform is another issue of concern for me.

Renewable energy and environmental protection is also a priority for me.

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?

I think that mental health parity is very important to have health insurance companies recognize mental health as a health issue. We also need to increase community resources to be able to offer more programs to those with mental health disabilities.

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 wholeheartedly agree that SSI supplement and benefits as a whole need to stay current with the rate of inflation. We need to make sure we need to have sufficient community resources to support economically those with disabilities.

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.

My first step would be to refer her to a Disability Benefit Enrollment Specialist at the County Human Services office or Aging and Disability Resource Center. From there, if they did not receive all the support they needed, I would connect them with statewide organizations that also offer support.

5. Do you support expansion of Family Care statewide? 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?

I absolutely support Family Care and its expansion. It actually reduces costs and offers families options to stay in their homes.

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?

There are resources on the county level to offer transportation for those with disabilities. I would make sure she is connected to any programs and resources that she qualifies for. Also, I would encourage her to apply for any scholarship that she would qualify for to help with her college costs.

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?

I will be actively meeting with and advocating for those with disabilities, especially those in my district.