

State Office: Assembly District: 22

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Questionnaire

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

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?

Issues of treatment for mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders have been woefully neglected by the legislators in Wisconsin. As a psychiatric nurse for 30 years, I have been a long-time advocate for people living with mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders. I have met with legislators, written letters, and testified in behalf of enacting parity. When I am in Madison, I will make this my priority. I have educated hundreds of citizens on the need for reform and I am eager to do the same in Madison. I will co-sponsor a bill and eagerly meet with all advocates to get this accomplished.

Moreover, existing community programs are underfunded. I will advocate for individuals so that funding matches the need for quality treatment and programs

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?

These statistics are abominable. I will work for increases in SSI supplements, which need to keep up with inflation. In addition, we must not penalize individuals who work, only to become ineligible for aids.

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 would advise this constituent to contact Disability Rights Wisconsin and Independence First for assistance in navigating through these issues. Eligibility for Family Care needs to be explored.

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?

Yes!!! As a society, we must do all we can to allow people to achieve quality of life as they define it. Our society does not have a good history of respecting QOL as people age or acquire disabilities.

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?

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and ADA must accommodations for this student must be made so that her opportunities are substantially equal to students without disabilities.

7. The 2000 census showed that approximately one in every 6¹/₂ 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?