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# 2020 DISABILITY COMMUNITY CANDIDATE SURVEY

## The Questions: here's what we asked

### Special Education

Children with disabilities, especially those who are also people of color, often have unequal access to educational resources, despite the law guaranteeing such access. During this pandemic, families of children with disabilities are experiencing even more challenges in getting the special education supports they need to learn and achieve - especially during distance learning.

How would you work to improve special education services for students with disabilities, especially during the pandemic?

### Accessibility

Minnesota has a history of ensuring that spaces are accessible for people with physical disabilities and those that are more commonly understood, but our service systems and infrastructure lack support for people with hidden intellectual, developmental, and neurological disabilities.

How could you help improve equity in accessibility for people with all types of disabilities, including invisible disabilities?

### Employment

Minnesotans with disabilities want to work and contribute to our economies, in jobs that pay wages reflective of their skills, abilities, and expertise. With the right supports, people with more significant support needs can also work in regular job settings at minimum wage or better. Currently, Minnesota law still allows for individuals with disabilities to be paid less than minimum wage, sometimes pennies on the dollar.

How will you work to build capacity in our service system to move toward fully inclusive and equitable employment for Minnesotans with disabilities?

### Individualized Services

Flexible, individualized services are important for many Minnesotans with disabilities to live in their own homes and work in meaningful careers. These supports help make sure that people can live the lives they choose, and not have to move into more costly, congregate settings. Many people, though, are not able to access these supports due to bureaucratic barriers and inequities in our service system.

Given the looming budget deficit, how would you ensure that individualized services are available for people with disabilities statewide, whether they need minimal or intensive supports?

### Discrimination

Many Minnesotans have experienced discrimination in their schools, their jobs, and communities due to their disability. The discrimination they face is frequently compounded by historical racial, cultural, religious, and gender inequities. Race and disability are overlapping identities that are both related to systemic inequality.

If elected, how would you work to create a more equitable Minnesota and address issues impacting people with disabilities living at different intersections of our communities who experience discrimination?

# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

House District 1B  
Debra Kiel  
debkiel.org

House District 1B  
Cynthia Ansbacher  
www.cindyansbacherformnhouse.com

<p><b>Special Education</b></p>	<p>Students with disabilities need to have consistency, education system needs to go back to a full schedule where schools can work with students. We have great teachers in Special Ed, while there will need to be precautions taken, education needs to happen. I am interested in lowering the paperwork load on teachers so they can spend more time with the students.</p>	<p>I work as a DSP with Lutheran Social Services, and I am a Retired Nurse. Students with disabilities, especially during these times, need reliable activities and interactions that promote their educational needs. Many students with special education needs have a difficult time with change. This year they have lost contact with friends and familiar faces due to Covid-19 restrictions. Face time with other students, use of multimedia could be a way to bring the world in to them in a fun and positive way. Increased funding, that would ensure more one to one support with access to the educational resources that benefits special education students and teacher directly.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p>	<p>I believe that students need a more rounded education, career classes in the high school years give them the ability to "try" different skills. Therefore discovering their talents one never knows where you can go until unlocking the doors. (personnel experience with a nephew)</p>	<p>People with disabilities, including invisible disabilities, need safe positive places to call home. They need places they can call work, earn a pay check and take pride in what they have accomplished. My time with Lutheran Social Services has been and continues to be a joy for me. Programs like the one I work for as a DSP, work hard with the individuals to help them to achieve their goals, what ever they choose those goals to be. I would support legislation to continue funding and support for ensuring proper for access for individuals with physical disabilities. Equality is achieved with equal opportunity. This means making sure individuals have the resources they need to support their disabilities, like access to language interpreters (ASL), Braille, CART( Computer aided real-time transcription) and other programs to do their jobs and live their life more fully.</p>
<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p>I do not believe that mandatory wage requirements are the way to go. However individuals need an advocate to make sure they are not taken advantage of. Services like Developmental Achievement Centers help them to obtain a job and direct them to a successful job whether it be in a business or in house job. I am aware of the disadvantage these DAC have had during Covid-19 with financing, which is going to be a challenge in the next Legislative session.</p>	<p>I support funding for individuals to have the equipment and assistive devices that they would need to work on in a field they otherwise qualify for. They should be hired for their abilities, not their disabilities. I would also support changing the law that 'still allows for individuals with disabilities to be paid less than minimum wage'. to one that reflects equal respect, equal opportunities and equal pay. Meaning no more working for less than minimum wage.</p>
<p><b>Individualized Services</b></p>	<p>As we head into the next Legislative session I will seek to find ways to fund and strengthen these programs. Like everyone else people with disabilities are individuals, they need to be treated in a respectful manner for their own individual abilities.</p>	<p>I would make sure every effort was made to connect with persons with disabilities and their supports to fill out the 2020 Census. The results of the census are used to look at funding needs. Being able to determine and show need makes it more likely to get properly funded.</p>
<p><b>Discrimination</b></p>	<p>It is certainly sad when individuals are not treated well. However we have to deal with each individual on what their abilities are! Not on how they looks no matter</p>	<p>I would continue to support opportunities for independent living, accessible accommodations and fair pay. This would include accessible fishing docks and trails, the outdoors is one place we can go and experience some enjoyment during Covid-19.</p>

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

House District 8B  
 Carol Wenner  
[carolwennerformnhouse.com](http://carolwennerformnhouse.com)

House District 9A  
 Alex Hering  
[hering4mn9a.com](http://hering4mn9a.com)

<p><b>Special Education</b></p>	<p>It is vital during Covid and beyond that we provide children with disabilities with the resources that they need to be safe and to thrive in their educational settings. As a legislator, I would listen to the needs of families, educators and advocates for children with disabilities and remind others that it is our duty to fulfill the commitment of educating the disabled.</p>	<p>Funding for all levels of education will be a challenge, listening to students, special educators and parents will be the best source of solutions to improve connections and access.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p>	<p>To ensure accessibility for those with hidden disabilities I would work to educate myself on the challenges they face. I would remind lawmakers how we as Minnesotans care for each other and how we have worked hard to create equality in accessibility in the past. It is our duty to keep pushing for legislation that recognizes and advocates for all forms of disabilities.</p>	<p>Public transportation has been a challenge for my older brother with autism, he feels safer on metro mobility. Scheduling rides is more complicated than just waiting for the next bus. I'm sure there is more to learn and ideas to hear.</p>
<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p>Minnesotans with disabilities contribute greatly to the workplace. They are dedicated, trustworthy and take pride in their work. They understand the value of an honest day's work and it is only fair that they are paid an honest day's pay. I would push for minimum wage pay in the workplace for individuals with disabilities.</p>	<p>Identifying skill sets and training for consistent work with better pay should be available to all Minnesotans</p>
<p><b>Individualized Services</b></p>	<p>As legislators it is our responsibility to advocate for any group that is faced with barriers to a quality way of life in working or living conditions. We as a state, must care for the most vulnerable among us.</p>	<p>Tele health check ins have helped my brother when his counselor's office was closed this year preventing in person sessions until recently. How these services could be reimbursed was initially the obstacle that had to be adjusted.</p>
<p><b>Discrimination</b></p>	<p>It does not help that bullying has been mirrored at the national level which can have a trickle-down effect and give others in power permission to bully or discredit people of color, those with disabilities, and the LGBTQ + community. As a legislator, I would bring empathy and compassion back into the conversation. And most importantly, when I hear bullying and injustices I will speak up. I will advocate for the most vulnerable of my constituents.</p>	<p>I am interested in learning more about current proposed ideas and hearing how I can help stand up for all Minnesotans equality.</p>

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

House District 10B  
Rep. Dale Lueck  
[www.VoteDaleLueck10B.com](http://www.VoteDaleLueck10B.com)

House District 12A  
Murray Smart  
[www.murraysmartfor12a.com](http://www.murraysmartfor12a.com)

## Special Education

Ensure that we focus providing services in a safe manner. We must focus on how we can do that, rather than locking both our students and their teachers out of the opportunity to continue their education.

Number one is that special education services for students with disabilities have been underfunded for years and years. I will fight each and every day for full and complete funding for special education services period. It is unconscionable that in our state we do not take full and complete care of our special education students. I have a very special concern in that we have a special needs granddaughter and we will do all in our power to see that she has a full and complete life.

## Accessibility

We must continue to educate the general public about the full range of disabilities and how they are recognized and appropriate responses to ensure that we ensure that those with disabilities have the same opportunity as everyone else to succeed.

Physical disabilities are obvious and most people can relate to them and see what people with physical disabilities must deal with as they function day to day. Invisible disabilities are not so obvious and often are not considered. One thing I will do is to share with others the daily struggles we all face in terms of challenges that are not so obvious to others. I will then after I have their attention on their struggles expand that to the even greater struggles that are faced with those who have an even larger challenge in terms of intellectual, developmental, and neurological disabilities. If people can see in their own lives the struggles they confront, then expand that beyond to the challenges of others, they are more apt to understand the struggles and needs of others and that those situations must be addressed.

## Employment

We need to reward and fully support employers that provide opportunities for those with disabilities. We can do that through providing support to both the individuals involved and the employer. We do that now with transportation, housing and training, but we need to expand that service area.

People with disabilities should not be discriminated against period. I will work to see that they are paid a full and complete wage for the work that they do. I will work to highlight businesses who have and are hiring people with disabilities and are treating them as full employees who contribute to the business on the same level as all their other workers. It is high time we treat all citizens as full citizens and pay them a full and complete salary and benefits.

## Individualized Services

They must be given priority, all too often those that are blessed with not suffering from disabilities push to the head of the line for funding and services. We have to make the hard choices on funding and not allow those that are capable to drain off support from those that through no fault of their own have to deal with challenges of a disability.

A priority of mine will be to make sure that any of our citizens who require individualized services keep those services. In times of trial and struggle how we treat those who depend on us for help is the true measure of just who we are and what matters to us. I will fight everyday to see that individualized services are maintained and even expanded if necessary to help maintain a high quality of life for those requiring individualized services.

## Discrimination

We must look beyond race and directly at the individual, treating each as a human, not as a special group or community. They are special by virtue of a disability, we must stay focused on that. We must reach them where they are at and support them regardless of the all the many things that may make them different from each of us.

I do not like bullies, I never have and those who treat others as less. We are at a turning point in our country and society as to how we are going to treat each other. Every person deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. They must be afforded equal opportunity to succeed in our society. I will first work to highlight those individuals and businesses who are doing the right thing and doing right by those they work with. We do have wonderful organizations who get it and know the best way to work. On the flip side of that I will work to root out the systemic racism and discrimination that exists and change to the better. By working together and helping each other understand our unique challenges and strengths we can make our state a better place for everyone.

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

House District 14A  
Tamara Calhoun  
TamiForMN.com

House District 14A  
Tama Theis  
TheisforMNHouse.com

## Special Education

I am on the SCERAC board, St. Cloud Educational Rights and Advocacy Council, which is advocating for the cross-subsidy funds for St. Cloud Public Schools. I would advocate for fully funding special education mandates from the state and federal government.

Broadband access is so important in this time, so making sure we continue to fund as much as we are able to get that access to students is crucial. Special Ed funding needs to be worked out. It is so important to all our districts and yet it continues to be an issue every year.

## Accessibility

With the help of your organizations in identifying all disabilities, teaching me as a legislator what accommodations are necessary and advocating for the implementation of the accommodations.

Listening is our best tool. I have worked with hearing impaired folks in getting so additional wiring in place to work with those with hearing aids. We need to really decide what will work and how do we get that in place.

## Employment

As we are moving out of the lockdown and are recovering economically, while still maintaining planned protections against COVID, I support job training, connecting education systems with businesses to fulfill needed and appropriate jobs matching skills.

I attended an event last year that focused on just that subject in our community to different community leaders. Hearing from employers that hire folks with disabilities really made an impression on employers in the audience. They heard that anything is possible. I would like to see that message statewide. I am unsure if employers really know what the options are.

## Individualized Services

I believe any investment we can make as a state to help people remain in their homes, will reap good returns on that investment. Home care would be less expensive than institutional care.

We make it a priority. I don't feel like we have done that.

## Discrimination

Education is the most important avenue to create a more equitable Minnesota. I will work to increase educational funding that successfully funds schools anywhere in Minnesota.

We continue to work hard, do our best and push to do what is right.

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

House District 16A  
Doria Drost  
Doriadrostforhouse.com

House District 16B  
Mindy Kimmel  
www.kimmelforhouse.com

<p><b>Special Education</b></p>	<p>We must invest more into K-12 special education programs so that educators have the resources they need to teach our children with all need levels, especially during a pandemic. I'd like to specifically focus on closing the gap seen in rural districts with even scarcer resources for children with special needs. We should also do more to implement a multi-tiered system of support in schools so students are connected with resources they truly need instead of being assigned into a mold.</p>	<p>The current ratio of school counselors to students in Minnesota is unacceptable. Distance learning has only increased the dire need for support staff who can provide individualized care for students with disabilities. I support increased funding for counselors and paraprofessional educators to ensure that our students get the support they need.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p>	<p>We must expand our mental health resources across the state for folks to expand opportunities for them to gain access to necessary resources. I'd like to also create a revolving grant funding program to create more accessible community spaces, like sensory friendly playgrounds in towns across Minnesota.</p>	<p>Accessibility is a lens that should be applied to all legislation. We need bonding bills that increase the ADA compliance of public facilities, funding for state agencies that provides support for state employees with disabilities, with a particular focus on supporting the Minnesota Department of Human Rights' civil rights enforcement division.</p>
<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p>We must move our state towards a \$15/hour minimum wage, including wages for those with disabilities. Folks should not be discriminated against in terms of wages and compensation because of factors they cannot control.</p>	<p>There are no subminimum people, so there should be no subminimum wages. Far too many people with disabilities live in poverty, in large part because society continues to allow disparate treatment in the workplace. As a legislator, I will work to outlaw subminimum wages. Personal care attendants serve a vital role in supporting independent living for people with disabilities. The state of Minnesota needs to guarantee that PCAs receive a living wage, to ensure that the personal care sector is attracting and retaining high quality employees to help Minnesotans with disabilities enjoy life integrated in their communities.</p>
<p><b>Individualized Services</b></p>	<p>Funding for healthcare supports must be protected at all costs, including supports for folks with disabilities. With the looming budget deficit, we must find others ways to become more efficient as a state that does not result in cuts to education nor healthcare. We must also diversifying revenue streams by exploring new markets, such as legalizing cannabis to increase state funding.</p>	<p>Difficult times require difficult decisions, but budgets should not be balanced on the backs of Minnesotans with disabilities. Even in times of recession, I will always protect funding for disability support services and advocate for savings through closing tax loopholes and eliminating wasteful spending.</p>
<p><b>Discrimination</b></p>	<p>Identity is very interconnected. While we must work to close the disparities faced by folks with disabilities, we must also recognize and work to address other disparities like income gaps, education and opportunity gaps, racial disparities, etc. Investing in community programs that support these communities as well as improving overall education on different identities and backgrounds is a critical step in moving Minnesota forward.</p>	<p>As a legislator, I will always listen to the communities affected by the decisions I make. The disability community is not a monolith. To truly understand the intersectional struggles of Minnesotans with disabilities, I will seek out different perspectives within the disability community to gain a deeper understanding of the barriers different segments of the community face, rather than relying on a small set of voices to speak for the 1 in 5 Minnesotans who have a disability.</p>

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

House District 21A  
 Matt Bruns  
<https://mattbrunsformn.org>

House District 22B  
 Lynn Herrick  
[herrickfor22b.com](http://herrickfor22b.com)

<p><b>Special Education</b></p>	<p>As a special education teacher to high school-aged students at an Alternative Learning Center (ALC), this question hits close to home. I witness the inequity everyday and feel like when constructing the solution the goal posts are moved every time I believe I am heading in the right direction. Ultimately, we need more resources, specifically funding, in our special education programs so we can adequately meet the needs of our students, with increased staffing, access to technology, and the ability to maintain the relationships that keep our kids connected to school. An increased number of teachers, education support professionals, and mental health workers, are what our students need right now to maintain or improve upon current successes.</p>	<p>Students with special needs have a strong priority for routine and we need to have a school system that offers a routine that meets their needs. It is important to provide an environment that accommodates this. Students with special needs often get forgotten in the juggling of regular classroom activities. I would be sensitive to how any changes offered in our educational system stays attentive to these student needs.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p>	<p>Like most issues, improving accessibility to and within spaces for all Minnesotans starts with a comprehensive understanding of the problem. You begin by auditing existing structures with stakeholders, including Minnesotans with physical and invisible disabilities, service providers, and other advocates. Once the empirical data is in our hands we begin making the necessary adjustments. Removing sensory triggers, confusing signage, and other obstacles to equal access.</p>	<p>It is imperative that we better use technology to present material to the specific student in a ways that is most understandable for the student. This would mean to improve our Broadband accessibility throughout our region.</p>
<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p>Gainful employment is what every Minnesotan is after. A job that matches their skills and interests and provides a respectful living. Allowing Minnesotans with disabilities to be paid less than the minimum wage is a signal that you do not view them as whole. Minnesotans with disabilities should be paid the minimum wage and continue to work with service providers and employers to match their unique skills and interests with jobs or careers that allow them to live a life of purpose.</p>	<p>It would be helpful to increase the vo-tech options in high school to give students with disability opportunities to explore vocational options and see if they feel that those particular careers work for them.</p>
<p><b>Individualized Services</b></p>	<p>In my mind, ensuring that individualized services are available for people with disabilities, statewide is a two-headed monster. First, we need to meet the basic needs of Minnesotans and ensure that as we work our way through and out of this pandemic the Department of Health and Human Services is fully-funded and able to work to its greatest capacity. Second, we fight against insurance companies pulling services away from Minnesotans that they deem to be non-essential. No matter the intensity of these supports they are essential. These services represent the real-world accommodations and modifications and personal growth pathways that allow Minnesotans with disabilities to succeed, living happy, productive lives.</p>	<p>It very important to realize all of the ramifications that cutting programs will have long term. All too often in the past, immediate solutions have created tremendous unanticipated long term problems. Best example is the closing of state mental health hospitals where former residents or people who could have used those services have ended up in the judicial system and incarcerated.</p>
<p><b>Discrimination</b></p>	<p>Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in Minnesota, as well as LGBTQIA+ and women, with a disability often run up against twice exceptionalism. Two distinct markers impacting their lives in ways many Minnesotans will never understand. Improving outcomes starts early with fully-funded schools that provide an equitable education with mental health supports, proper special education services, and teachers and administrators that look like them. We then examine societal barriers and make healthcare a human right - improving access and driving down costs with a single-payer system, fully-fund social services and mental health services, and end discriminatory practices across our institutions including "broken windows" policing and zoning laws.</p>	<p>Those discriminated against need a strong voice to advocate for them and the services that are essential for their quality of life. It is likely to need increase in taxes along with some program cuts to be able to get past this budget crisis Minnesota is finding as a result of the Pandemic.</p>

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

House District 25A

Kim Hicks

<https://www.kimhicksformnhouse25a.com/>

House District 26B

Randy Brock

<http://randybrock.mn>

## Special Education

As a former special education teacher and the parent of three children who are distant learning with IEP's during the pandemic. My eldest graduated last spring during the pandemic, he was on an IEP. I understand how difficult this time is for students and families. I believe we need to look at each child as an individual, as we always should have done, and develop a plan with the child and family that meets the educational, safety, and emotional needs of the child and the family. I also believe that districts need guidance from MDE that is clear and includes collaboration with DHS to ensure families are getting the support they need.

This pandemic has exposed many cracks in our system, even where we thought everything was "good". I can not claim to have the answer or a specific plan on my own accord. I will need to work with you and those with whom you are connected who are living through these struggles to figure out a way forward that works to overcome these challenges and find solutions.

## Accessibility

Accessibility is close to my heart, it is important to remember that accessible spaces are good for all. I believe to do this whenever the state is authorizing funding for development we need to ensure all contractors complete a full accessibility review which should include a broader lens. I am also in support of expanding regulation to ensure adult changing tables are available in all state owned or financed facilities, with the goal of all public buildings have them in the future.

We still have so much work to do in addressing equity across our systems. I will have an empathetic ear to those who face these daily struggles and want to learn what changes will be most beneficial and equitable. This again is a space where I do not have the answers, but you have a good head start, and I look forward to learning from you on the right path forward.

## Employment

All Minnesotans deserve the right to work in whatever manner to whatever capacity the person chooses. We need to utilize customized employment supports and the WIOA interview process to ensure that each person's voice is being heard. We need to focus on the narrative of finding work that works for the PERSON instead of work that works for the support providers. We should utilize medicaid funding to reward providers who help individuals find employment with employers as opposed to in center sub-minimum wage work. However, in respecting individual difference we need to ensure that we allow for flexibility and funding for alternative options for individuals who choose to not work in the community. MN is and should continue to be a work first state, while respecting that not everyone will choose work, and that is their choice.

From employment to housing, education to transportation, there is so much required to reach equitable employment for Minnesotans with disabilities. I look forward to being an ally in the push to move toward a more inclusive and equitable workforce.

## Individualized Services

I believe that part of community based living is affordable housing. Many people want to and CAN remain in the community with cheaper more cost effective services, but they cannot find housing they can afford. In this budget deficit we need to focus on ensuring individuals do not lose services and recognize that the removing silos and looking at issues with a broader system lens allows for the blending and braiding of funding streams is more cost effective. Additionally, as an advocate I know far to well the inequities that exists trying to access services. We need to work to ensure equity throughout counties utilize a lead agency review process that includes statutory requirements of equity analysis and intake cold calls to provide support to lead agencies. I would also propose legislative language that directs and dedicates funds to peer and family navigation programs to provide the support individuals and families need.

The budget deficit ahead is daunting. We need to be extremely careful to maintain health and human services for all, and I look forward to digging in and finding solutions that work for struggling Minnesotans.

## Discrimination

Minnesota's disparities are wide reaching and systematic. The change must be the same. As I mentioned above I believe equity evaluation needs to part of lead agency reviews. Assessment, intake, and completion of service process occur on the local level individual biases can come into play. We need to create policies that remove the opportunity for that bias. To do so we need consistent messaging, access and knowledge of advocacy, and support for lead agencies. but I also believe we should work to include equity evaluation throughout the system including schools, providers, partners, etc. If we begin requiring equity and examining the reason it is lacking we can begin in a small part to change the system.

There should not exist a universe where discrimination is tolerated. We need to take fast action to address inequities in legislation. Acknowledging that discrimination exists is the first step, and following through by finding the problems, naming them, and addressing them is going to be critical.

To learn more visit [www.ausm.org](http://www.ausm.org)

# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

House District 28B  
Jordan Fontenello  
JordanFontenello.com

## Special Education

Education, along with healthcare, are probably the two most important foundational elements of our society. Ensuring that every single person has access to the best possible learning opportunities, environment, and instructors is pivotal in maintaining a community -- a nation -- to the degree that its citizens demand. A major challenge with this question, with any education question, but ESPECIALLY with this particular question, is staff: Where do we get all of the properly educated and licensed people to do these jobs? It takes a particular personality to be able to work effectively and continuously with mentally and or physically disabled persons -- not everyone is qualified to perform these important duties. My wife is a prime example: She's been doing work of this sort her entire life: First as a nursing assistant in high school, then after being awarded a BA in Early Childhood Education, she spent several years working in daycare facilities, followed by the last 19 years as a member of the Cardinal of Minnesota In-Home Care leadership. I know from listening to her that finding staff to do these jobs is extraordinarily difficult; the pay does not entice people to this line of work, and the State of MN, along with Federal input, should put the '!' of importance next to the list of priorities in training, paying, and keeping people in these jobs. For the immediate frame, increasing the base pay rate for these jobs, offering free training to those who want to have a career in one of these fields, making sure that every single school -- public, private, religious-based, home-schooled -- has all of the necessary resources to keep everyone on a level playing field, e.g. books, materials, technology, infrastructure, etc.

## Accessibility

The entire process begins early on, with instruction in school about the different kinds of disabilities that people experience. Making a strong point that anyone who has a disability should not be pitied or stigmatized or be seen as 'less'. Everyone should be afforded the opportunity to succeed to the best of their abilities. Mental health disabilities need the same attention as any other sickness -- your brain is an organ in your body just like your liver or heart - - in order to help diagnose and treat the underlying issue. Psychiatric disorders have historically been seen in a negative light: If you have a mental health problem, there's obviously something 'wrong' with you and you should be shunted off to the side of society. This type of negative stereotyping of people who may be experiencing non-obvious intellectual, developmental, or neurological issues need to be addressed by education, outreach, empathy, and understanding. We do not stigmatize people with kidney disease, so why should we stigmatize people with a mental disease? I receive regular correspondence from NAMI of MN that speaks about the issues related to mental disorders. Funding for inpatient services, hospital beds, treatment, reimbursement are low and do not cover the cost of those many needs. Community-based approaches to many mental disabilities has proved effective, but must be properly integrated into the whole of medical care. Housing needs must also be taken in to consideration, because discharging a patient from the hospital setting to a lower level of care can lead to homelessness, which then inevitably leads to further admissions which becomes a revolving door that accomplishes nothing for anyone. There are many individuals affected by a disability, whether it is obvious or not. We cannot leave anyone behind simply because some committee or agency says there isn't enough money -- that's baloney. We've got to commit ourselves to simply doing the things that need doing regardless of any imagined cost in dollars and cents -- we're talking about the real cost of the lives of human beings.

## Employment

If there is going to be a 'minimum wage', then it needs to be THE ONE AND ONLY minimum wage FOR EVERYONE, period. No exceptions for age, disability, sex, number of employees, size of business, jobs that receive tips, etc. NO EXCEPTIONS. All of the exceptions that exist are loopholes designed for the singular purpose of making the rich richer and the poor downtrodden. It's always about the money. There are plenty of opportunities where a person could do a job -- it may be a simple job or one that doesn't require a lot of physical labor -- that people can do. My wife works with individuals who fall into both of these categories. These individuals, while their abilities may be different, remain able to provide useful work. And if they are earning money, they are paying taxes, which then helps to provide the very services that they may use. In a society based on money, any fiscal input into the system is a plus for everyone. State agencies that assist people with disabilities should have at their disposal the means to search and find work that will fit the abilities of the people they are helping. Businesses and industries need to work cooperatively with the State so that any possible job opportunity for someone who is looking for work can be investigated. Think of it as compartmentalization, kind of like union labor: Carpenters don't do masonry, electricians don't paint, etc. It is a division of labor, of jobs, of duties, into some smaller parts that would be able to be undertaken successfully by disabled persons. There's plenty of work out there to be done -- we can find a job for everyone, including those with disabilities.

## Individualized Services

Well, since you asked about budget deficits, OK. Look at these facts: The current national debt is over \$27,000,000,000,000 -- 27 trillion dollars. The Congress of the United States passed a one-time pandemic-related fiscal stimulus bill of over two trillion dollars. The debt is never going to be paid off - - NEVER. It's too big now to waste time on. The money that was spent by the Federal Government came from nowhere -- it's not going to be recouped in taxes or extra exports or fewer imports or bigger tax-rates on businesses or anything else -- it is simply money from nowhere. These two facts, that the debt is so huge it'll never be paid off, and the money the Fed is spending comes from nowhere and will not be paid back, should tell everyone that our whole economic system is baloney. It is smoke and mirrors, it is a sham designed solely on the premise of unlimited capitalism where the only people that can succeed (excepting rare instances of luck in timing of product/service insertion into the economy as a whole) are the wealthy who have money and power, thus relegating everyone else to their heels as they tread all over the working people without thought, care, or condolence. The rich keep getting richer while the poor keep getting poorer. The simple fact is that money is power, and those who have money have power, and they will not willingly give up that power. We the public need to demand that our economic system changes to one where the needs of people are taken care of, opportunity is available to everyone equally, and the betterment of society and humanity is the ultimate goal. This can be done now, because since we demonstrated above that money is essentially a pipe dream and means nothing, the resources exist to provide everyone the eight basic necessities of living in the modern world: Food, shelter, clothing, education, healthcare, employment, communication, transportation. So the answer to your question is this: Simply provide the services to the people who need them. Money is useless, it is a barrier, it keeps people from having opportunity. Get rid of money in its current form and instead just do the things that need doing because the physical resources already exist. This imaginary thing we refer to as money is the only thing keeping us from surging ahead into our next phase of existence. At this juncture, then, the only thing that is a real difficulty is the same as I answered in another of the questions previously: Staffing -- finding people who are qualified and want to do the work. This truly is the hard part -- money is only there to keep those who don't have it from ever having enough of it to make a difference.

## Discrimination

I heard this statement many years ago: " 'Normal' is what everyone else is and you are not." As Joe Biden is fond of saying, think about it: Apply that statement to yourselves, to each person individually, and it is true. We are ALL different. Different from each other in every single way -- thinking, doing, being. And those differences are what eventually bring division and fear and hatred when the differences become more than any one person or group can mentally handle within their own framework of existence, experience, expectation. Therefore, 'normal' is a quality that is a unique frame of reference that each person defines to themselves and for themselves. But as thinking human beings that can see into our own minds, can see entire groups of people acting together, can recognize our own individuality and our own consciousness, we are capable of redefining what 'normal' is. We can move, if we choose to, beyond our current understanding and into a new frame of reference based on learning, knowledge, experience, empathy, logic and rational thought. It is this ability to move past a familiar existence, beyond a comfortable thought pattern, that will give us the opportunity to rid ourselves of discrimination in all its forms. We must acknowledge that we are ALL different, and therefore, we are all alike; we are all normal to ourselves. This logic needs to be introduced as soon as a child comes home with its parents, continuing through all years of schooling and instruction. Discrimination is a result of mischaracterization, misunderstanding, poor learning, substandard education, and negative examples by peers and those we look up to. Just as with all other segments of the population that have routinely been left behind, all programs that are public in nature need to be focused on providing services to those who are most in need first. Whether the need is for clean water, electricity, broadband, education, healthcare, employment, and on and on, those who are most at need are those who must first be given the resources and opportunities. Those who purposefully choose to discriminate and segregate and treat as 'less than' should be held accountable for their actions, be given the proper instruction for interpersonal relations, and have follow-up contact to ensure that the actions/behaviors do not continue.

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

House District 31A  
 Brad Brown  
 Brown4mnhouse.com

House District 32A  
 Renae Berg  
 bergforrep.com

<b>Special Education</b>	Pass a comprehensive bonding bill	I will support any increased funding going to schools to add support for our kids who have disabilities as well as teachers and students face with the struggle of this pandemic.
<b>Accessibility</b>	By leveling the playing field with additional opportunities for all	Communities need more education about disabilities so that neighbors can all be helpful and respectful for those with disabilities. I would encourage continued policing in fining of those who are not respectful of handicap parking. Also to support community transportation help such as The heartland express in our district that is currently faced with funding issues.
<b>Employment</b>	By creating a “One Minnesota” task force to explore additional employment opportunities for Minnesotans with disabilities	People need to be properly paid for the job they are skilled to do. In our area I’m aware of a program called Industries as well as the program Phase that provide employment opportunities for those with disabilities; I will support these as well as encourage new opportunities for Minnesotans with disabilities.
<b>Individualized Services</b>	By brain storming ideas where we can not only create jobs but, create marketable products so as to be a self sustaining enterprise.	I have a friend named Bryan that has Cerebral palsy he lives at home with his mother and would like to remain in his homework is comfortable and in a setting he deserves. He and his mother have fight to have in-home cares but find it to be a struggle due to the low pay that home healthcare workers get locally \$11 an hour. This is a shame I have spoke with several people and I find it shocking how difficult it is for someone like Bryan and his mom. I will support all legislation going forward to provide training livable wage and benefits for those caregivers to help people like Bryan who are disabled.
<b>Discrimination</b>	By reaching out to churches, Masonic Lodges, and other community based organizations	I work as a licensed alcohol and drug counselor and daily meet people whose addiction and mental illnesses have put them in a situation near unable to thrive. I believe most investment should be made in treatment and counseling services that will help people find the resources they need to move forward in life. Mental health services are few and far between specifically psychiatric care. After care, continuing care needs to be a priority Needs once a person is discharge from a treatment center or institution. income-based housing is highly needed for the disabled. Lawmakers need to talk to the workers the people that work with minorities with people with disabilities and become more aware of the discrimination and stigma they suffer from.

House District 27A: Thomas Martinez  
 Thomasfor27a.com

<b>Special Education</b>	By funding para educators and building up community education programs.
<b>Accessibility</b>	By enforcing laws that require handicap accessibility
<b>Employment</b>	By advocating for funding to programs that assist disabled Americans find jobs.
<b>Individualized Services</b>	By working with disabled groups to find innovative strategies at addressing these disparities.
<b>Discrimination</b>	By representing everyone we all win. People with disabilities already play a large role in our economy and they deserve our assistance. I will support our all disabled Americans in the legislature equality.

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

House District 35A  
 Mike Erickson  
[www.mikeericksonforhouse.com](http://www.mikeericksonforhouse.com)

House District 29A  
 Renee Cardarelle  
[www.ReneeForHouse.com](http://www.ReneeForHouse.com)

## Special Education

My wife is a retired teacher and my niece is currently a special education teacher. I am aware of the perennial unfunded mandates that currently burden special education delivery. I will be a strong advocate for full funding of special education programs and I will lean heavily on my niece for subject matter expertise.

I currently work with a youth who is isolating at home because of a high risk mother. He has autism and ADHD, along with some mental health concerns. He and I meet twice a week to do Spanish together. This allows his mother a break from home schooling him but more importantly, it provides him time to interact with others, which is difficult for him even when there is not the added frustration of a pandemic. My belief is that all students deserve comprehensive education and that as a society we can provide the resources, including individualized attention, that allow students to thrive. Of all the areas to slash funding, education is the worst. It does not serve this country and has historically been used as a way to leave many behind. Education is critical for a well functioning democracy and so we need to fund it appropriately. At the state level I will always fight to do this. Right now schools are innovating to find the best systems for their students during this pandemic. This should be measured and tracked to determine which innovations created barriers, what are those barriers and how do we do things differently to remove those barriers. We don't have to do things the way they were always done, we can innovate and learn to do things differently. The important thing is that we not tell ourselves we have to accept less just because we must adjust our methods.

## Accessibility

As a systems engineer I am comfortable using a systems approach to solving complex system problems. Until the invisible disabilities become visible, designing solutions will be problematic. I would look for ways to remove the barriers and stigma surrounding the invisible disabilities which would identify the requirements an accessibility system needs to address

Both my daughters have invisible disabilities. They both received assistance through an IEP and personal attention while in High School. This made a huge difference for my one daughter with ADHD and anxiety who has just graduated with her Bachelors Degree in Psychology. My other daughter, who has mental health concerns, did not have much success in high school and still struggles. She is often labeled as difficult and blamed for her problems. As a single mother I appreciated the extra services they got. It made the difference in their being able to successfully graduate and move into adulthood. I also know that had I not been aggressive in getting them these services they could easily have fallen through the cracks. We need a cultural change that stops blaming students who face invisible barriers, and the best place to begin this change is in our schools. Systems that support students who have invisible disabilities also provide great systems for students who don't have these challenges. Smaller classrooms, embracing diversity, a willingness to implement adaptive systems, there are so many things that can be done. Educating teachers more completely on how to work with and even recognize when students have invisible disabilities is the first step, but we must also then support teachers with the resources they need to help all their students.

## Employment

I was unaware of this situation and I think it has to be reformed. All workers, regardless of disability have a right to earn a livable wage. I believe the return for paying livable wages far outweigh the cost and not only in financial terms but in improved quality of life as well

No person in the United States should be in a financial system where they are not paid a fair and going rate. I would work to change this.

## Individualized Services

As we come out of the pandemic that will be hard. I have committed to resisting any raiding of the education budget, including for special education. I would also look for ways to stretch out or delay projects with longer term projected returns to guarantee needed services as we lift ourselves out of the current crisis

When it comes to economic decline and recession, it is well proven that government intervention through economic stimulus has a major positive impact. Now is not the time to pull back services and put even more people out of work. An economy that is strong and supported creates a greater stream of revenue for our government than one which is hobbled. I would encourage investing in communities and people, including the workforce that supports our most vulnerable adults.

## Discrimination

I have become a fan of Ibram Kendi's antiracism movement. The actions he suggests to remove racist policies and ensure no new policy/legislation can be applied to all forms of discrimination. I would be creative in finding ways to incentivize the behavior we want to see and disincentivized the bad behavior

I have found that the best way to address structural inequities is to listen to the voices of those who are impacted by those inequities and to work with them to create solutions to barriers. It is hard to legislate changes in public attitude, and unfortunately this is a huge barrier that people of color and people with disabilities face. However, we can create policies that address these cultural issues. For instance, we can work with our policing units to build systems that first elevate de-escalation techniques. As representatives it is our duty to examine all legislative policies being proposed to determine how they help create or diminish barriers to our most marginalized citizens.

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

House District 41B  
Sandra Feist  
www.feistforhouse.org

House District 45B  
Mike Freiberg  
www.mikefreiberg.com

<p><b>Special Education</b></p>	<p>This is a critically important issue. I co-hosted an event over the summer at the home of a good friend who lives in my district whose daughter has severe epilepsy and requires extra support from the school district. Our event focused on how we can best support families with children who have special needs. My friend and the other parents who attended shared stories and frustrations that their children were not receiving the same level of support and were experiencing unique struggles with distance learning. We need to provide generous, consistent, and equitable funding to our public schools to ensure that the mandates around special education are truly met. We need to ensure that all children can thrive in the least restrictive environment possible. As a legislator, I would work to continue my outreach to impacted families and support services to meet their needs.</p>	<p>The federal government has failed to live up to its promise to fund special education services, and the state may need to pick up the tab. In addition to providing more resources to schools, the state should consider other measures to help parents of children with IEPs or 504 plans. I have a child on a 504 plan (formerly an IEP), and distance learning has been particularly challenging. If school districts have the ability to provide special education services in person in a safe manner, they should be given flexibility.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p>	<p>We need to ensure that all spaces are equally accessible, regardless of any type of disability. I would begin my role as a legislator through information gathering from advocates and the impacted community. I am running for office to make Minnesota a place where everyone has opportunities and all are welcome and feeling comfortable and having access to all spaces is part of that mission.</p>	<p>The state can provide grants to organizations to increase accessibility. State facilities themselves should be as accessible as possible.</p>
<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p>In my district, I have a number of neighbors who work in the field of providing employment support to Minnesotans with disabilities. In addition, as an immigration lawyer, I have had the privilege to assist with work visas for professionals in this realm. I also have a personal connection to this issue, as my family pharmacy participated in a program that supported employment for people with disabilities, and for my entire life, I saw how these employees thrived and contributed in their roles within the pharmacy. I support proposals to eliminate the subminimum wage thoughtfully, to ensure that it does not result in workers with disabilities to lose jobs.</p>	<p>I was a coauthor of House File 3433 and testified in support of it in the Labor Committee. This bill would eliminate the subminimum wage and create a taskforce looking at the best way to move forward.</p>
<p><b>Individualized Services</b></p>	<p>These services are so critically necessary to ensure that Minnesotans with disabilities are able to live to their fullest potential and in the community, rather than in congregate settings. We need to acknowledge the connection between these services and the healthcare system. When Minnesotans get the in-home support they need, medical issues are identified earlier and costly emergency medical care can be avoided.</p>	<p>The state must do more to provide these services, and the budget situation will make it challenging. I will do everything I can to make sure these services are not overlooked during budget discussions.</p>
<p><b>Discrimination</b></p>	<p>Fully funding our public schools and in particular special education services is the first step towards a more equitable Minnesota. As children with disabilities in all zip codes across Minnesota are able to thrive in the least restrictive environment, they will be set up for professional success. We need to address systemic inequality as a legislative priority. Inequality persists in our schools, our criminal legal system, our housing policies, the tax code, our environmental protections, and myriad other spheres of life. We must address this unequal access to a safe, abundant life for all Minnesotans on all fronts.</p>	<p>I will seek input from groups and individuals representing those with disabilities and those who bear the impact of racism. I will look at legislation through an equity lens.</p>

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

House District 42A  
Candy Sina  
[www.candysinaforhouse.com](http://www.candysinaforhouse.com)

House District 42A  
Kelly Moller  
<https://votekellymoller.com>

<p><b>Special Education</b></p>	<p>I would definitely introduce or support legislation to help those with disabilities assured they are guaranteed the education they deserve and not experienced interruptions. We have a grandson who is on the Autistic Spectrum and we have a nephew who was born with Down Syndrome.</p>	<p>As a parent of a high school student and a college student, I have seen how difficult learning has become under COVID-19 for students, teachers, instructors, and parents. However, I recognize that disparities for families of children with disabilities become even wider due to the coronavirus. I have heard from constituents who have children with disabilities about the inadequate education their children are receiving in the distance model. I have also learned how this model of learning can negatively impact a parent's ability to work. I have been checking in with MDE, DHS, a family in my district, disability advocates, other representatives (including chairs of the relevant committees), my school district and Congresswoman McCollum about this. I realize that the system is complicated because it involves federal, state, and local jurisdictions in addition to various agencies. However, the bureaucracy that results in children not receiving services is unacceptable. I have recently reached out to the Governor's Children's Cabinet. I support many of the ideas that were presented in the letter by advocacy groups. While most are not legislative, I will continue to raise the importance of this issue and do what I can to make sure children are getting the services they deserve.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p>	<p>This is a tough question I would have to do more investigation on where there might be break downs if accessibility for all people.</p>	<p>As I have talked to constituents with disabilities and their families in my first term, they have increased my understanding of their capabilities and of the barriers that still remain, including accessibility. In addition to talking to constituents via phone, email, and at the Capitol, I have toured group homes in district. Reps. Richardson, Cantrell, and I hosted a disability town hall to learn about concerns related to the pandemic. We compiled the information we heard and shared it with our colleagues. Hearing directly from people most impacted is the best way to learn about the lack of supports in our systems. When I'm not at the Capitol, I'm a prosecutor. I have learned more in the last couple of years about the disparities in policing and school discipline for students of color with disabilities. I have seen a family member with autism get fired from a job and suspended from school because of his disability. I strongly supported the autism police training bill and would support other efforts to bring awareness to this issue and decrease disparities – I'm open to your ideas! I support Rep. Richardson's bill to end discrimination in organ transplants, and I'm interested in ways to improve Metro Mobility. Finally, I have authored and supported legislation to bring more resources for mental health services.</p>
<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p>I would work with schools for individuals with disabilities to offer better vocational training and create a network to employ these individuals.</p>	<p>I support The Arc's position that "People with I/DD should have the supports necessary from individuals and systems to enable them to find and keep community jobs based on their preferences, interests, and strengths, work alongside people without disabilities, receive comparable wages, and be free from workplace discrimination." I'm interested in eliminating the subminimum wage. In 2020, I authored HF4032, which would eliminate Medical Assistance asset limits for people with disabilities.</p>
<p><b>Individualized Services</b></p>	<p>Our 2020 Democrat House Legislators cut funds for long term care facilities. I would first address the waste and abuse in our current systems and not cut funding with the services that are needed.</p>	<p>I have authored two bills that relate to a more flexible approach for people with disabilities. The first bill, which was brought to me by constituents working with The Arc, allowed more flexibility for consumer-directed community supports. It passed in 2019. In 2020, I worked with disability advocates to pass a law that modernizes our Guardianship laws and encourages supported decision making. By allowing people to choose the services and supports that work for them, there can be a cost saving. With the upcoming budget deficit, it will be important to highlight these savings.</p>
<p><b>Discrimination</b></p>	<p>I am a Native American, I am registered with the White Earth Ojibwe Nation, and we have 3 adopted Korean children. We have taught our children and grandchildren that race doesn't matter and if they get an education and work hard they can experience the American Dream.</p>	<p>I supported the resolution we passed in the House declaring racism as a public health crisis. Rep. Richardson's leadership in this area has been outstanding, and I welcome any opportunities to work with her on this topic. Because of my job as a prosecutor, I'm especially interested in decreasing disparities in the criminal justice system for people of color, particularly those with disabilities.</p>

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

House District 48A  
Laurie Pryor  
lauriepryor.org

House District 49B  
Steve Elkins  
www.elkinsforhouse.com

House District 56B  
Roz Peterson  
Www.rozpeterson.com

<p><b>Special Education</b></p>	<p>For most of our children with disabilities, in person education is irreplaceable. We need to ensure our Minnesota public schools have the resources they need to provide in person education in a safe way.</p>	<p>The State (and Federal) Legislatures need to step up and fully fund special education to eliminate the so-called "cross subsidy" that generates local resistance and resentment to funding special education services out of local property tax revenues.</p>	<p>I think that providers/teachers/caregivers and parents need to work collaboratively to decide how to best meet each child's needs—now more than ever. I received Autism Hero of the year award for my work with children &amp; early intervention services.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p>	<p>State Government can take the lead to ensure that access to accommodations are readably available. One area that we can improve is training for front line employees who work with the public. We an promote education programs to organizations and businesses to help train on hidden disabilities and biases. The Department of Human Rights can also support people with hidden disabilities who have been discriminated against.</p>	<p>In the 2019/20 Session I sponsored a bill on behalf of the Minnesota Council on Disabilities to improve accessibility to ride sharing services (Uber/Lyft) and another that would provide grants to local governments to improve the digital accessibility of their websites. I am an advocate for ADA compliant access to the State's parks and trails. I will continue these initiatives on behalf of Minnesotans with disabilities in the next session.</p>	<p>I would work with all stakeholders to help determine the best path to find solutions including your organization.</p>
<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p>We need to invest in what works and make sure programs that are successful are available across the state. The legislature did act to help programs to "pay the rent" during this temporary time of reduced services because of the pandemic. I was glad to be able to vote yes to this funding.</p>	<p>I will support initiatives to provide employment alternatives that provide more challenging work opportunities than are typically offered at "sheltered workplaces" paying below minimum wage.</p>	<p>I will support initiatives to provide employment alternatives that provide more challenging work opportunities than are typically offered at "sheltered workplaces" paying below minimum wage.</p>
<p><b>Individualized Services</b></p>	<p>This is an area where we will need expedient, but thoughtful action in conjunction with the Department of Human Services to reduce barriers especially in communities that are most disadvantaged. We must maintain oversight, but ease of access is an equally important goal.</p>	<p>I have been, and will continue to be, an advocate for higher pay for Personal Care Attendants so that every person with disabilities has access to the individualized support they need. I have been a strong advocate for supplemental funding to sustain adult day services programs during the Covid-19 pandemic. I will oppose attempts to cut funding for these services. I will support initiatives to reform the "waiver" process so that it is more fairly and consistently applied.</p>	<p>It is important to work with employers and employees to help bridge this gap. People should be paid equitably for their work.</p>
<p><b>Discrimination</b></p>	<p>The House of Representatives recognizes that racism is a public health crisis. As we legislate we are committed to using an equity lens as we set priorities and craft legislation and budgets. I am committed to continue listening, learning, and striving to do better.</p>	<p>I will continue to support the work of the Minnesota Council on Disabilities and their programs and initiatives to prevent discrimination against Minnesotans with disabilities.</p>	<p>For starters, I would allow the economy to open back up so that we don't have a budget deficit. Clearly these services need to be protected from cuts.</p>

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

House District 48B

Holly Link

hollylinkmn.com

<b>Special Education</b>	<p>I would continue to support personalized education for each student in school districts. According to the Safe Schools plan adopted by the State of MN, school districts currently have the ability during the pandemic to bring special education students on site, or for them to receive in home and online personalized teacher support.</p>
<b>Accessibility</b>	<p>First learn more about the broad range of disabilities and challenges faced by individuals who experience them, then review of accessibility policy wording and appropriation in an effort to improve accessible spaces for those individuals.</p>
<b>Employment</b>	<p>To make informed policy decisions, I would gather information as to what percent of individuals with disabilities are being paid below the minimum wage for comparable work as those who do not have disabilities.</p>
<b>Individualized Services</b>	<p>These services are obviously very important for people with disabilities. I would need to know from what sources individuals currently receive support and funding: federal, state, local and individual (insurance, etc.) and what, if any shortfalls are projected for the next biennium from each of those sources.</p>
<b>Discrimination</b>	<p>I would work to ensure that each individual has the opportunity to discover their strengths as well as their areas of need, and with that knowledge and needed support, to have the opportunity to contribute positively to society through meaningful work.</p>

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

House District 51B  
Liz Reyer  
<https://lizreyer.com/>

House District 59A  
Fue Lee  
[www.fuelee.org](http://www.fuelee.org)

<p><b>Special Education</b></p>	<p>I would definitely introduce or support legislation to help those with disabilities assured they are guaranteed the education they deserve and not experienced interruptions. We have a grandson who is on the Autistic Removing barriers to learning and achievement for children with disabilities, including those who are children of color, is an important priority for me. To a degree, I believe my support for statewide high speed, broadband and access to special computer technology will help. For many, I know in-person learning is the only real answer. That takes me to measures that provide teachers and children the protection they need to safely teach and learn in home and in school. This must be a state and national priority. I would like to meet with representatives from your organizations immediately following the election to discuss practical steps that could be taken immediately to help special education students during the pandemic. Spectrum and we have a nephew who was born with Down Syndrome.</p>	<p>I will listen to the families in students in my district and advocate on their behalf at the school district and for the resources they need from the state.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p>	<p>One part of answer lies in how and how often we educate service providers. Adding a concerted, statewide element to all public employee training programs that incorporates recognizing and understanding hidden disabilities might be helpful. But since we are unlikely to anticipate all the circumstances in which accessibility might be affected, we should make sure that people have easy and effective ways to raise the concerns they may encounter. We also need to ensure that there are consequences for discrimination. My approach to policy making, which relies on seeking expertise from those close to the need, also will lead me to partner with your organizations to ensure that any solutions are properly targeted to the need.</p>	<p>I will work with constituents and organizations that advocate for people with all types of disabilities, including invisible disabilities, to identify barriers in accessibility and address them.</p>
<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p>I would be interested, again, in meeting with representatives from your organizations and the Vocational Rehabilitation Services unit at DEED to discuss the need and potential for better or expanded programs or services. I would support increased state funding for practical and realistic opportunities and services that would result in better employment options for people with disabilities.</p>	<p>I will fully support the move toward full inclusive and equitable employment for individuals with disabilities to be paid at minimum wage or better.</p>
<p><b>Individualized Services</b></p>	<p>I look forward to learning more about the barriers and inequities people with disabilities face with the service system. Earlier in my career, I worked for Ramsey County Human Services as an evaluator, so have some understanding of the basic infrastructure of service provision. Moreover, I would like to serve on the Health and Human Services Finance Committee. I would like to understand the degree to which denial of services is a financial issue and what other factors are at play. Regarding the budget deficit, I am committed to raising needed revenues by increasing the tax rate for the wealthiest individuals and corporations, and closing tax loopholes so that everyone pays their fair share. I am hopeful that our budget problems will be temporary, and that the economy will recover quickly when the pandemic ends. In the meantime, I see keeping people in their homes and not pushing them toward congregate settings as a top priority in budget decisions.</p>	<p>I will prioritize removing bureaucratic barriers in our service system to ensure that individualized services are available for people with disabilities.</p>
<p><b>Discrimination</b></p>	<p>My campaign and my commitment is all about inclusion and the real listening it takes with those often left out of the conversation. Without giving those most affected a seat at the table, little will happen. We need to address inequities in virtually every aspect of society, and I would view any and all legislation with an eye for its impacts on disparities and whether it provides opportunities to address them. I am particularly committed to change regarding education. Prekindergarten and K-12 education must be fully funded so that all students are provided the same high-quality education, and cross-subsidy issues need to be resolved. Regarding health, I support access to Minnesota Care for all those who need it. I also support better tracking of health disparities, coupled with public health initiatives that are designed and implemented in partnership with affected communities. I am also very concerned about police violence and incarceration rates for people with disabilities, particular those of color, and will insist that the Legislature do more to address police and incarceration reform.</p>	<p>I will continue to work alongside community members fighting for a more equitable Minnesota to address issues impacting people with disabilities living at different intersections of our communities.</p>

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

House District 63A  
 Jim Davnie  
 jimdavnies.com

House District 4A  
 Heather Keeler  
 heather4house.com

<p><b>Special Education</b></p>	<p>I have been working with legislative colleagues and both the Department of Health and Education to try and gain support for those students who are in distance learning but require PCA services.</p>	<p>I have done teacher talking circles to hear what our Special Ed Teachers need, I have also done this with local organizations like Hope, Inc. The main thing they are missing is the relationship building piece, it's so hard for some students to engage in a virtual setting, so we need to get create and think outside the box with this. We also need to support the parents/guardians who are not able to provide the same resources that the school offers. When we talk about our most vulnerable populations in our community, we can not forget about our students.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p>	<p>I am aware that this is an issue especially for those with invisible disabilities. Too many have experienced being challenged when using accessible parking spots when they don't "look disabled" to someone passing by. Public education should certainly be part of any policy response.</p>	<p>We have to create spaces where all are welcome, valued and heard. One idea that we have talked about in our community is create playgrounds and splashpads that are more than just accessible but very inclusive by design. We want all of our kids to be able to enjoy each other, laugh and grow in our community spaces. I will continue to be a voice for inclusion and making sure that we are going above and beyond to make sure every individual feels welcomed in our community.</p>
<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p>There is a growing awareness of the inherent inequities in pay for some people with disabilities. We need to close that loophole.</p>	<p>We have to be intentional in building trusting relationships as we provide employment, we also have to make our work spaces comfortable and accommodating to all. We should create mentorship or work buddy programs that help our community members get out and work. We also need to value their work and fight to increase our minimum wage to \$15 per hour.</p>
<p><b>Individualized Services</b></p>	<p>Respecting the dignity of all Minnesotans should be a core value in our approach to handling the budget. That means working with individuals as well as service providers on how to maintain individual supports.</p>	<p>I will continue to be a voice for people over profit. We have to take care of our community members in times like this. I was raised with the idea that it's a communities responsibility to take care of each other. When we do that, we all thrive. When we only care about money and big business we have people hurting and suffering in our communities and that is extremely unhealthy. I will stand up and be a voice for the unheard and over-looked.</p>
<p><b>Discrimination</b></p>	<p>Any work on eliminating discrimination in our communities needs to start with the voices of those experiencing it. Understanding their lived experiences and perspectives is key. Working collaboratively with them on developing responses that will be effective and empowering.</p>	<p>We have to hold people accountable for this discrimination acts. We as a state and community can't keep turning our head when people in our community are treated poorly. Creating a system that will hold employers, landlords, places of business and city organizers accountable for the lack of inclusion and discrimination needs to be addressed. Then we need to provide education for our community, so everyone has the tools to grow and become more understanding the all of the needs of our community.</p>

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

House District 63B  
Emma Greenman  
[www.emmagreenman.com](http://www.emmagreenman.com)

<b>Special Education</b>	<p>Public education is the cornerstone of our democracy, the lifeblood of our economy and the center of our communities. I owe where I am today to Minneapolis Public Schools. Reading was hard for me, but access to committed public educators, supportive staff and special education services at Barton Open helped me succeed at South High School and put me on a path to Berkeley Law. I believe every child deserves the same, high quality public education. We must support families &amp; young people with disabilities by fully funding our schools including the \$724 million special education funding gap and providing inclusive, culturally-responsive and comprehensive public education. This pandemic has undeniably made it more difficult for students to get the support they deserve while keeping teachers and support staff safe. Students, teachers, educational leaders, advocates, and state and local elected officials have to come together and identify innovations, engage in cooperative problem-solving, and fight for increased state and federal funding for students with disabilities. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, students with disabilities still have a federally protected right to a free and appropriate public education. We must work together to get these students the services they need to thrive. We must ensure schools have adequate funding to provide essential virtual services that are accessible and individualized for students with disabilities. Additionally, we must work with school districts to ensure that children receiving special education services are thoughtfully included in school re-opening plans. The pandemic has exacerbated existing inequities for students of color with disabilities. We know that before the pandemic schools in Minnesota were already suspending a disproportionate number of Black students and that Black students with disabilities are disciplined more than their peers. At a time when access to education is already challenging, we must ensure that Black students with disabilities do not miss out on education because of school discipline. I will work alongside advocates to enact smart state policies to address these racial disparities that uniquely impact the disability community.</p>
<b>Accessibility</b>	<p>I believe deeply in listening and learning from people themselves and creating a policymaking process where people and communities help drive the solutions, investments and priorities that will impact themselves, their families and communities. People with all kinds of disabilities should have access to power and be leading conversations about accessibility for both digital and physical spaces. When we think about accessibility, we should be striving for universal design, which means we do not leave anyone behind regardless of the nature of their disability or the type of accommodations they need.</p>
<b>Employment</b>	<p>As a kid, my mom's experience with mental illness made it hard for her to keep her job as a Hennepin County social worker. It was SSDI (federal disability) and state programs that provided the income, healthcare, housing and support that my mom needed to support herself and care for me. And we need to do more to support people. We can, and must, do better so that every Minnesotan with a disability who wants to work has the supports they need to work in competitive integrated employment. Today, around 6,000 Minnesotans with disabilities are getting paid subminimum wage. This must stop. I will fight alongside people with disabilities for a minimum wage of \$15/hr and end the inherently discriminatory use of waivers that allow employers to pay subminimum wages to individuals with disabilities. We also must ensure the state is meeting its obligations under Minnesota's Olmstead Plan to ensure that people with disabilities are living, learning and working in the most integrated setting. It is time for Minnesota to live up to its 2014 commitment as an Employment First State.</p>
<b>Individualized Services</b>	<p>Any Minnesotan who wants to live and work in the community should be able to access the support needed to do so. We must protect our Home and Community Based Services programs so that no Minnesotan is forced to live in an institutional setting for lack of services. The COVID-19 pandemic has made living and working in congregate settings an immediate public health crisis and we cannot sit by and let these services be eroded at this critical moment. In the Statehouse, I will work with the disability community, advocates, providers, and state agencies administering Home and Community Based Services to ensure adequate funding and I will press federal lawmakers to fund these vital services. I recognize that Home and Community Based Services are essential to the disability community and will fight for these supports.</p>
<b>Discrimination</b>	<p>Disability rights are civil rights. We must protect the civil liberties and civil rights of the disability community using an intersectional approach that recognizes the experience of people of color with disabilities. We must work to build inclusive and innovative forms of participation and engagement in policy making that centers the voice of self-advocates and the disability rights community and allows for engagement in decision making year round. First, I will protect the right to vote for individuals with disabilities by ensuring access to the ballot and polling places. This includes ensuring blind Minnesotans have access to no-excuse absentee and future early voting opportunities. Second, I strongly support the decriminalization of mental illness and support the creation of a temporary multi-disciplinary planning body that could advise and propose criminal justice diversion programs for adults and juveniles with disabilities and focus on redesigned public health interventions capable of providing the services and support those individuals need. We need to invest in evidence-based mental health services like peer support, mobile crisis, and Assertive Community Treatment.</p>

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

Senate District 28  
 Sarah Kruger  
[www.sarahkrugermnsenate.com](http://www.sarahkrugermnsenate.com)

Senate District 64  
 Erin Murphy  
[www.murphyfor64.com](http://www.murphyfor64.com)

<p><b>Special Education</b></p>	<p>We need to ensure equitable educational opportunities for all students through proper state funding, while prioritizing the health and well-being of educators and students during the pandemic. EIP teams need the proper resources to navigate hybrid or wholly distanced learning delivery models. Adequate funding is essential in order to provide equal access to educational resources for all communities.</p>	<p>Funding for all levels of education will be a challenge, listening to students, special educators and parents will be the best source of solutions to improve connections and access.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p>	<p>I would set regular meetings with the Minnesota Department of Education, the Minnesota Department of Human Services, as well as non-profit advocacy groups to establish an advisory team to understand the ongoing issues and concerns on a regular basis and benchmark for best practices in all areas.</p>	<p>Public transportation has been a challenge for my older brother with autism, he feels safer on metro mobility. Scheduling rides is more complicated than just waiting for the next bus. I'm sure there is more to learn and ideas to hear.</p>
<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p>I believe strongly that individuals should be paid a living wage for the work they do and that everyone has a right to earn minimum wage.</p>	<p>Identifying skill sets and training for consistent work with better pay should be available to all Minnesotans</p>
<p><b>Individualized Services</b></p>	<p>I will work for more transparency in the funding models and roll back previous funding cuts, particularly regarding Health and Human Services omnibus bills that negatively impact independent living models.</p>	<p>Tele health check ins have helped my brother when his counselor's office was closed this year preventing in person sessions until recently. How these services could be reimbursed was initially the obstacle that had to be adjusted.</p>
<p><b>Discrimination</b></p>	<p>I am a care provider of an uncle who is intellectually and physically disabled. Helping to advocate on behalf of the disability community is something that is very near and dear to my heart. I believe that investing in education at all levels (fully funded pre-school, K-12 education, higher education, community education, etc.) is fundamental in creating a more equitable society. Education is the strongest tool we have to combat systemic inequality and racism.</p>	<p>Inequity and the disparities in opportunity they create are the toughest challenges we face as a state. We must view all issues through an intersectional lens. In the Senate, I will fight to make sure people of color and Indigenous Minnesotans are not treated differently by our social services system or our criminal justice system.</p>

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

Senate District 7  
 Donna Bergstrom  
[bergstrom4mn.com](http://bergstrom4mn.com)

House District 7  
 Jen McEwen  
<https://www.votemcewen.com/>

<p><b>Special Education</b></p>	<p>By supporting school choice, allowing parents and students to choose the educational option that best suits the needs of the child. The public school's response to the pandemic is hurting our children; and will further put our children of color behind their peers. Graduation rates will drop also across the board.</p>	<p>These services are not "extra"-- they are integral and foundational-- and just one of the ways we ensure that the human rights of those living with disabilities are respected and honored. I will work with my colleagues and advocates throughout the state to make sure that special education services are fully funded and that staff are paid living, competitive wages.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p>	<p>By ensuring that people with all types of disabilities, including invisible disabilities are at the table when rules, regulations, guidelines and statutes are crafted so the outcome best meets the needs of that population group.</p>	<p>As an attorney who represents claimants in social security disability appeals, I see this a lot. There are a number of people living with disabilities which are not visually or audibly evident, or for which even diagnosis and medical evidence are lacking. We need to encourage a variety of reforms around this issue-- including making accommodations in education and work settings required, more streamlined, and easier to access-- better education around what these conditions are like and how they affect people, and recognition by our agencies and institutions.</p>
<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p>I still believe in 'honest day's work, honest wages' for all people. I applaud those Minnesotans with disabilities who want to work and contribute to our economy. Minnesota across the board will have a worker shortage in all service sectors, thereby driving demand for workers up. With that momentum, the time to examine wage laws for people with disabilities is now.</p>	<p>I support the legislation passed by the Minnesota House to phase out payment of subminimum wages by Aug. 1, 2024 . I will work with colleagues in the Senate and House, along with disability advocates, to pass this legislation and see it signed into law.</p>
<p><b>Individualized Services</b></p>	<p>What I have seen while working with government social services, is that many of the programs are run from 8:15-4:30, M-F which does not always meet the needs of people needing those services. Although government needs to create and oversee the programs, one option is to have other private, tribal, non-profit agencies run the programs who are better able to align their service hours with those of the client.</p>	<p>Much is being made of the looming budget deficit. It is true that we will need to raise revenues and increase efficiencies. However, and again-- the services available for people with disabilities are not 'extras' in the budget-- they are necessities which help us ensure the human rights of those living with disabilities and allow them to live their lives in equity with others. I will fight cuts to services at every opportunity and will work to improve access and funding.</p>
<p><b>Discrimination</b></p>	<p>As Duluth's next State Senator, my public service is to all my constituents, not just those who elected me. Those within my district will have a strong voice in St. Paul speaking up for all people, knowing that we are all part of community. As a former patient advocate in a small health clinic, I have seen first hand how decades of indifference is perpetuated, simply because of the belief that one party is better at representing marginalized people over the other party(ies). Vote for the person over party. I have been a real model for overcoming many inequalities, and can be a beacon of hope for others.</p>	<p>This is a huge question, and will require system-wide solutions. To start, I believe it is important to be actively anti-racist and to truly listen, affirm, and center the experiences of people who face discrimination due to racism and/or disability prejudice. Foundationally, the outrageous economic disparities in our state and nation have a lot to do with how discrimination-- especially systemic and institutionalized discrimination-- plays out and affects people in their daily lives. We must establish a system based upon care for one another in community, where our basic needs are always met and ensured, including healthcare, housing, education, childcare, work, and guaranteed time for leisure and personal interests outside of paid work. The intersectionality of these issues-- and the need to bring wealth disparity back into a reasonable range-- will be key to creating equity.</p>

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

Senate District 12  
 Jill Abahsain  
<https://jillformnsenate12.wixsite.com/jill4mnsenate12>

Senate District 14  
 Jerry Relph  
[Relphformnsenate.com](http://Relphformnsenate.com)

<p><b>Special Education</b></p>	<p>Pandemic or no-special needs students' requirement for development remain steady if not increased. I believe a COVID or public health rider that will provide present and future funds to keep our special needs students on a path to a fulfilling life.</p>	<p>First, we need to work at improving the cross subsidy payments for school districts. Raise the reimbursement for PCA providers and worker wages. Extend broadband services to help give better access to students who have disabilities.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p>	<p>By keeping up with developing accessibility issues by remaining well connected to advocacy groups such as The ARC</p>	<p>Increase reimbursement for telehealth, especially in the area of mental health. Improve access in schools and public building for people with disabilities. Increase education and awareness of "invisible disabilities and mental health issues.</p>
<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p>There are countering opinions given by constituents of MNSD12. That employers have been using special needs employees as nearly slave labor by paying wages far below minimum-generally on piece work. Others-that such employment is a source of pride and a great benefit for people with special needs-providing them with structure in what otherwise could be a lonely, unconnected life.</p>	<p>First, we need to expand the co-worker program so people with disabilities who want to work can. Raising wages for people with disabilities is important and we need to study how day training and habilitation services can make better use of their dollars to give people with disabilities better wages.</p>
<p><b>Individualized Services</b></p>	<p>The issue of the upcoming budget is so complicated at this time...I can only pledge to monitor, support and work with legislation that will maintain and advance such services.</p>	<p>I have been working on legislation that would change the rate framework for reimbursement of agencies that provide PCA services. we need to find a way to increase workers salaries. More importantly we need to find ways to increase the workforce in the area of services for people with disabilities. While wages are important we also need to find ways to attract people into this field.</p>
<p><b>Discrimination</b></p>	<p>I plan to keep in close contact with all aspects of education and community development. If elected I would form a committee to watchdog issues impacting citizens with disabilities.              How a community treats its citizenry as a whole is a mark or demerit on its civility as a whole.</p>	<p>This is a complex issue that does not have a simple one size fits all answer. First, we must work to educate people with disabilities to their rights both state and Federal, teaching them to be advocates for themselves. I have gotten legislation passed to provide grants for this kind of education. Early detection and treatment for Fetal Alcohol syndrome is an important area to focus on. The issue is not more legislation but using the laws that are on the books today. Reform of the Foster care and child removal statutes are also an important areas to focus on, especially in minority communities.</p>

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

Senate District 20

Jon Olson

<https://jonolsonformnsenate.com/>

Senate District 22

Shawna Marshall

[www.shawna4mn.com](http://www.shawna4mn.com)

<p><b>Special Education</b></p>	<p>Special education services have been mandated, but underfunded, for years. It is time we fully fund all aspects of public education to afford every student in Minnesota access to the nation's best preparation for life. I'll work with all stakeholders to find ways to spend available funding more wisely, while also seeking creative ways to fully fund all aspects of education. The funding formula is completely out-of-date, and doesn't equitably fund education between the large metropolitan school districts and the rural school districts across Minnesota, especially in the area of special education. We're going to fix this!</p>	<p>These are unique circumstances that will require unique solutions, particularly when it comes to providing special education services to students. These are students who need their services the most, yet are the most difficult to provide those services remotely. One solution could be to ensure that all students have access to broadband services, so that providing services remotely is even possible. We need to increase support staff in the schools.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p>	<p>This is a challenging issue for places already built. It's an easy question for new construction and we should absolutely require all new construction to be built with accessibility in mind. Regarding accessibility for people with hidden or neurological challenges, I'm going to need someone to explain the specifics to me so I can better understand this issue. Clearly, we need to build a society that provides fairness, equity, and justice for all, and that certainly includes creating an inclusive society.</p>	<p>We need to begin with education, the state can sponsor community education projects so that community members and small businesses can better understand accessibility, disabilities, and particularly invisible disabilities. Beyond that, it can be included in a bonding bill to provide funds to small businesses in the local communities to make adjustments to their facilities to better offer accessibility.</p>
<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p>I see this as a function of creating public/private partnerships, creating incentives for private enterprise to hire, train, and retain workers, and to ensure the regulatory framework fully protects workers from exploitation. Of course, we also need people to oversee the regulatory framework, which means properly sizing Minnesota government to carry out the duties we want completed to support our society.</p>	<p>I would like to see the state invest in the local programs that are currently in operation that assist people with disabilities to find and keep employment. These programs know the people in their communities, know the opportunities there, and know how to best serve the population. State government can invest in these programs and protect funding sources for them.</p>
<p><b>Individualized Services</b></p>	<p>I have already said that we need to provide support for small business owners, front line workers, and those who are vulnerable - and that clearly includes Minnesotans in this category. We do need to reduce barriers to accessing services that may be needed for Minnesotans to live a life of dignity. I pledge to be an advocate for these issues in the Minnesota Senate, and with your coalition's assistance, I am certain I can be educated on all the nuances of the issues, and then I can push legislation to address the changes we need.</p>	<p>Again, I would work to protect the funding that goes to the existing programs that already work toward these ends. We have quality programs with quality people in our district that are working hard to ensure that people with disabilities are able to get the services they need at the level they need it. The largest issue they are facing is funding, and how so often, these programs are among the first ones cut during a deficit. So I would work to serve this population by protecting these programs and protecting the funds they need.</p>
<p><b>Discrimination</b></p>	<p>Until we build a Minnesota that provides equal protections under the law for ALL of our citizens, we will not have created a more perfect Union. Adding a disability to historic structural discrimination compounds the injustices some Minnesotans face all too regularly. We'll address these issues as we build a more just, equitable, and fair state. It starts with understanding the depth of challenges our fellow Minnesotans face. We'll need people to testify to outline the injustices in an open, honest, and thorough manner, peeling back the "onion" to force everyone to face up to these structural failures. Once we lay bare the failures, I suspect we'll see far more state legislators ready to aggressively address changes to the system, and major improvements to programs that support our fellow Minnesotans with disabilities.</p>	<p>I would work to address systemic racism in all levels of our state and communities. It begins with recognizing that there is this discrimination and inequality.</p>

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

Senate District 25  
Sara Flick  
flickforsenate.com

Senate District 26  
Aleta Borrud  
<https://www.aleta4mnsenate.com>

<p><b>Special Education</b></p>	<p>We need to provide more professional support for students with special needs. If possible, I would love to see hazard pay provided for those professionals who do go to the home of children with special needs. It's a very difficult situation, but for certain pandemic or not, we need to provide additional resources to these students.</p>	<p>Special Education funding represents an unfunded federal mandate that falls onto local school districts to fund if there is inadequate state funding specifically directed to the needs of students with disabilities. It is clear that the base formula for special education needs adjustment to level the playing field across zip codes. We need to support teachers with expertise in special education so we retain them. Reducing the paperwork burden for them is a request that needs examination so important metrics are still obtained. Clearly our students with disabilities need prioritization for safe in person teaching and increased individualized time with our teachers if in distanced learning. For distance learning, we need teachers with the time dedicated to developing curriculum tailored to student needs. There are no shortcuts. Funding is essential.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p>	<p>My son has sensory issues, so I know firsthand how difficult our surrounding environment can be for those with a wide array of disabilities. I think it's important to make sure that at the state level, we are asking these questions of state projects, in order to make sure tax dollars are being spent on projects who are intentional in their planning for these issues.</p>	<p>The MN Dept of Human Rights states that people with disabilities must be protected in the following areas: employment, housing, public accommodations, public services, education, credit, and business. Thus there must be an education campaign focusing on government services, schools, and essential businesses to increase public awareness of the types of accommodations that all people with disabilities, including neurodiverse citizens, may require. State grants to organizations to provide this training to government entities would be important as well as organizations with the expertise to help families navigate our social service networks.</p>
<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p>I worked for Goodwill Industries, supporting its mission to help those with disabilities find meaningful employment. I believe we must review our minimum wage guidelines to make sure that those with disabilities are paid fairly.</p>	<p>MN has set workforce participation goals for members of our communities of color and women for all state contracts. It would likewise be important to set goals for employment for such contracts and state employment naming disability specifically as diversity category. It is important in applications to reaffirm nondiscrimination in applications and encouraging self-identification by the applicant. The MN Dept of Human Rights seeks compliance with ADA rules by all businesses with at least 15 employees requiring reasonable accommodation. Education is important regarding the types of accommodations that people with all types of disabilities may need, including those with hidden disabilities. The state could play a role in helping employers reimagine work positions to accommodate this workforce, emphasizing the significant numbers of Minnesotans with various disabilities and outlining the steps that could be taken to make accommodations. Finally setting and monitoring hiring targets of large employers in the state is important.</p>
<p><b>Individualized Services</b></p>	<p>My first priority will be to protect those who are most vulnerable. We must create efficiency but also look at new and creative funding mechanisms for our state.</p>	<p>We need to continue funding for non-profit and governmental agencies that are capable of providing specific navigation of our social service network to individuals in need. Another important component is to ensure that our homecare workers receive a living wage, in order to retain this critical workforce. The state needs to continue to provide COVID-19 protections for this workforce, including ensuring that agencies supplies this workforce has adequate PPE.</p>
<p><b>Discrimination</b></p>	<p>It's important to try to work over time to correct systemic racism and discrimination in our systems. The first step for me will be to ask these questions of every aspect of policy-- how does this system or policy current impact those in marginalized communities and what can be done to correct them over time? One that comes to mind is renters rights as well as working with local governments to create more affordable housing.</p>	<p>We have a robust MN Dept of Human Rights and an Attorney General committed to protecting Minnesota's citizens from discrimination in all its forms. I believe that the next biennium will be critical in determining state funding priorities and the commitment to securing the revenue needed to adequately fund our human needs and our essential government agencies. Wealth is a primary determinant of access to specialized services. It should be a priority to invest in affordable accessible and supportive housing as well as fully funding social services to eliminate the privilege that wealth creates.</p>

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

Senate District 29

Chris Brazelton

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Senate District 33

Gretchen Piper

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<p><b>Special Education</b></p>	<p>Provide more support to the families so that they can provide more time to support their children working in concert with the teachers when distance learning is required.</p>	<p>I have been meeting with school district leaders in SD33 about how they are about to meet all their students needs, especially for students in special education. For some districts, staffing is the biggest issue, while for others it is PPE or transportation. All the superintendents I spoke with were prioritizing getting special education students back in the school, and they told me that for now, they have the resources they need. I'm sure that will change as the pandemic drags on and budgets get tighter. Closing the special education cross subsidy gap remains a top priority for all school districts. Staying in touch with schools and communicating with advocacy organizations will be a priority.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p>	<p>Support the schools to provide staff for early identification and intervention strategies.</p>	<p>I would want to hear from those most closely impacted by hidden disabilities how our systems can better support them. As the parent of a child with epilepsy, I know that our advocacy day at the capitol is one opportunity to make our voices heard. I would like to have an ongoing relationship with those closest to the issues so that when a decision comes up, I have people to reach out to to know more on a particular topic. I know in our own family, having access to telehealth, including mental healthcare has been a priority during the pandemic.</p>
<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p>Minimum wage should apply to all. In certain circumstances wages may need to be subsidized, hiring otherwise incentivized, or job coaching provided to help the employee meet the needs of the employer.</p>	<p>In my experience with workforce organizations, such as Goodwill Easter Seals and Lutheran Social Service, it's critical to have strong partnerships between the employer, social worker and the service organization so that the worker and employer have the supports they need to keep the individual employed. I commit to meeting with advocacy organizations, employers and others to understand the implications of legislative changes.</p>
<p><b>Individualized Services</b></p>	<p>Cost/benefit analyses needs to include insights into the long term benefits of helping all of our citizens lead meaningful, productive lives that are as self-sufficient as possible.</p>	<p>Listening to those who are directly impacted by decisions, and understanding the issues is critical before making a decision. With the budget deficit, social services are likely to be impacted. Our job will be to make hard decisions, with as much information as we can to understand how individuals will be impacted. Often, the more independent someone can be, also is the most cost effective and best for the individual as well. I am committed to listening to those who have been working with the system to best understand how it can be more efficient and best meet individual needs.</p>
<p><b>Discrimination</b></p>	<p>We must have fully functioning EEOC and housing anti-discrimination units. I prefer carrots to help incorporate all members of our community into society, but sometimes sticks (enforcement tools) are needed. My husband and I have been foster parents to children with various abilities. One of those children was born with Fetal Alcohol Effect. When frustrated or fed carbs he would get angry quickly. It wasn't his fault he was born with that struggle. He needed extra help and understanding to work through challenges. He still does. One of my grandsons is on the spectrum. He is 11 years old right now. A bright and delightful child, he is currently non-verbal. He can have a bright future, and may need a little extra help and advocacy to address some barriers. He is biracial, and I worry whether the police and others in authority will treat him well. I can be a person who supports laws and funding to help them and others live good lives.</p>	<p>It's critical to understand people's experiences and how policy making at the Capitol will impact individuals. Every policy must be viewed through the lens of equity to avoid unintentional, or worse, intentional discrimination.</p>

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

Senate District 42  
 Jason Isaacson  
 isaacsonforsd42.com

Senate District 42  
 Ben Schwanke  
 schwankeforsenate.com

<p><b>Special Education</b></p>	<p>We need to fully fund special education and make up for federal government shortfalls. I would sit down with the actual teachers to learn what they need to make special education successful for our schools and students. Then write a bill or series of bills that reflect the teachers and the students needs.</p>	<p>As a teacher I have witnessed and know the importance of addressing this issue. The pandemic has greatly increased the inequity of services provided to students with special needs. I will work to make sure that students are provided with a least restrictive environment to learn and work to help school find the funding in order to make this happen.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p>	<p>We need to educate society on invisible disabilities and standardize access to supports for individuals beyond tradition supports like handrails and ramps. the state needs to recognize the importance of acknowledging their needs and move to meet them where ever we can.</p>	<p>I know that one-size does not fit all. Therefore, we need to make sure we are living up to the spirit of the ADA as one law will not fit all disabilities. We need to be advocates for inclusive atmospheres in general, as many disabilities are on a spectrum and each individual will need different levels of assistance.</p>
<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p>It is the responsibility of the state to provide every opportunity for Minnesotans with disabilities the chance to work and live their best lives. We need to revamp the regulations to provide actual financial opportunities for all workers. The current system takes advantage of people with disabilities and needs to be updated to reflect their values and contributions.</p>	<p>This first starts in education. Right now we are not fully funding special education and fully preparing our special needs students for the workforce. We need to make sure we are meeting these students needs and providing them with more job-related skills.</p>
<p><b>Individualized Services</b></p>	<p>I am looking at raising revenue that will be dedicated to supporting the disability community. We must guard against reactionary and harmful cuts that are meant to serve a bottom line without consideration to those they harm.</p>	<p>I would prioritize them as a very high priority in the budget. If everything is a priority than nothing is. The legislative auditor as uncovered many areas of the budget that is riddled with fraud and abuse. We can pull from these areas to make sure proper supports are still provided for individuals who need them.</p>
<p><b>Discrimination</b></p>	<p>We need to dismantle the structural racism that exists in all parts of our society. We must also be mindful of the intersection between structural racism and the marginalization by our society of people in the disabled community. First we need to educate all Minnesotans of the current reality many people face. Next we need to call local leaders in and out of politics to make positive change real for each person who experiences this double whammy of discrimination. We must follow it up with legislation that protects and promotes the wellbeing of those burdened with discrimination. I want to learn more about it and how the disabled community thinks we can address specific issues they face. My door is always open!!</p>	<p>I will look to empower the Department of Human Rights to enforce discrimination laws.</p>

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

Senate District 40  
Robert Marvin

Senate District 43  
Charles Wiger

Senate District 45  
Roxana Bruins  
roxanaforsenste.org

<b>Special Education</b>	I would make sure all students had access and were taken care of.	Schedule legislative hearings with stakeholders, local meetings, develop recommendations and take action; and assure followup.	The topic of special education is dear to my heart and I have dedicated much of my professional experience working with and advocating for those with special needs. Having firsthand experience working 1:1 with youth on the spectrum I am familiar with the challenges these individuals and families face. As a professional working in schools and facilities providing specialized services I am equipped with knowledge, dedication and passion to fight for our special needs population to include, education, awareness and advocacy.
<b>Accessibility</b>	I imagine identifying the specific needs of particular people would be a good first step.	Meet with stakeholders, develop and implement recommendations	Being a veteran I am trained to fight, serve and protect and that means for everyone! My human service and mental health background equips me with skills and compassion to listen, hear and collaborate with various people, sources and agencies in effort to provide best practice and meet needs of individual.
<b>Employment</b>	I would try make sure people's particular needs were met and everyone was treated fairly	Meet with with stakeholders, develop recommendations including legislation, seek passage	To start, build trust and show strong personal and professional ethics by being honest, upfront and genuine in all communication and efforts to bridge and build inclusive employment. I will never make a promise that I know I will not or cannot keep and have obligation to always do my best and be a person of strong character and ethics!
<b>Individualized Services</b>	Make sure spending is efficient and not wasteful.	Access is a right. Hold hearings, local meetings, develop and implement a plan of action.	Try to be informed of current services, projects and plans, direct outreach to those individuals and families, then active collaboration between existing organizations providing services to identify best practice and outcomes, then advocate for improvements. Always advocating!
<b>Discrimination</b>	Try to be supportive and fair to everyone and help others to help themselves.	Meet with stakeholders and develop recommendations, implement plan of action. Mobilize action with Attorney General, Department of Human Rights and local governmental units.	It starts with changing attitudes and beliefs...from within ourselves and outward to others. I begin with assessing myself and how I impact others-by my own words and actions. I choose to lead by positive example and be a person of my word.

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

Senate District 46

Ron Latz

ronlatz.org

Senate District 47

Addie Miller

www.addieformn.com

<p><b>Special Education</b></p>	<p>School districts should get best practice information from the State Department of Education on how to best reach and support students with special needs. We should also help school districts with the resources to maintain staffing for this support.</p>	<p>Our special education system is woefully underfunded. Combine that with lack of internet access and the employment strain on many families, it's not a situation we can be proud of. I will work for public education funding, statewide broadband, paid family and medical leave, and PCA funding.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p>	<p>The first step is to identify and recognize people with invisible disabilities so they can be assisted. Also, each facility should undergo an assessment with those concerns in mind to identify barriers.</p>	<p>I will be the first to admit I have much to learn on this. The legislature should listen to the experts in any area of policy, including accessibility. I'm in support of a public campaign to educate the public on digital accessibility so we aren't leaving anyone behind in our digital world. I'm also in support of an accessibility requirement for any buildings newly constructed or improved using state grants or bonding money.</p>
<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p>There is an interesting discussion going on about subminimum wage authorizations and their impact on persons with disabilities, with families and organizations on both sides of the debate. I would listen intently to the conversation to see whether there is a net benefit or not to this way of helping persons with disabilities get jobs and incent employers to afford to pay those who may be less productive than other prospective employees.</p>	<p>In any conversation around minimum wage, tip credits, paid family and medical leave, wage theft, and so on - the sub minimum wage for workers with disabilities should be a huge factor. It is a travesty that this practice is still permitted in our state! I will also work to raise the "maximum" amount of funds someone with disabilities can have in their accounts before not being qualified to receive assistance.</p>
<p><b>Individualized Services</b></p>	<p>We do not yet know how bad the budget deficit will be, but we will need to prioritize our funding decisions to aid those most in need of assistance and assist the most persons that we can. I see a solution including new revenue sources to try to avoid cuts to individualized services.</p>	<p>I would prioritize them as a very high priority in the budget. If everything is a priority than nothing is. The legislative auditor as This just has to be a priority in budget conversations. Period. There are areas where we can cut but disability services is not one of them. The legislature can and should be creative when it comes to resolving the budget deficit - things like opening up new streams of revenue (marijuana for example). many areas of the budget that is riddled with fraud and abuse. We can pull from these areas to make sure proper supports are still provided for individuals who need them.</p>
<p><b>Discrimination</b></p>	<p>As a human rights lawyer in my private practice enforcing the MN Human Rights Act for individuals, I see the impact of discrimination in various settings. I would fight to maintain funding for the Human Rights Department to continue to educate schools and businesses on their legal obligations and to take enforcement action against those who fail to comply.</p>	<p>I support disability competency training for public service officers, healthcare workers, and educators. I support measures to enforce fair employment practices. I support extensive de-escalation training and implementation of techniques like the Vitals app for law enforcement. Additionally, I'll support legislation that ensures integration of people with disabilities into mainstream social and economic life, focusing on civil rights and how our society can adapt to be more inclusive, not the other way around.</p>

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

Senate District 49  
Melisa López Franzen  
melisafranzen.com

Senate District 5  
Rita Albrecht  
ritaforsenate.com

<p><b>Special Education</b></p>	<p>We must first fully fund special education. This pandemic has also showcased the reliance we have on special education services for students in our schools. We must do better for our most vulnerable communities and kids. We need to find innovative ways to help them through this pandemic. We need to make sure that special education services are accessible and flexible with improved technology and dedicated and trained providers. We must also ensure providers are able to deliver services to families safely with the resources and PPE they need. Each individual has different needs so we must rely on our educators and families to let us know what is best for them. We must also not isolate this population anymore than we need to provide services safely for all those involved. We need appropriate funding for technology and workers to make sure that we do not leave our students with disabilities further behind during this pandemic.</p>	<p>The federal government is not funding their fair share of SPED services. That is the first place to look. The state must step up to fully fund education across the state. We have been underfunding public education for years and our schools are falling further and further behind. We need to put more resources into public schools and special ed.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p>	<p>We can start improving accessibility for people with hidden disabilities by providing adequate health care for all Minnesotans. Groups like the Brain Injury Alliance have done a great job highlighting the struggles with housing, transportation and other key social services that are needed for people living with a brain injury that oftentimes is not visible at plain sight. We need to be aware of all the services that impact everyday lives and how someone with a disability might be denied access if we are not intentionally being inclusive. Funding needs to be set aside to take care of our most vulnerable Minnesotans including for projects that directly impact those with disabilities. Infrastructure should be accessible and thought out, we need to involve stakeholders and those with disabilities in the infrastructure planning process.</p>	<p>Making sure that all materials produced by the state and local governments are accessible, including hearing, sight, color, etc. can help. Continue to educate Minnesotans about the differences and challenges that individuals have.</p>
<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p>People with disabilities deserve to be paid the same as any other Minnesotans. We cannot diminish the value of work simply because someone has a disability. We need to support legislation that ensures that all people regardless of ability are paid the minimum wage.</p>	<p>I support increasing the wages paid to people with disabilities and will work for fair wages.</p>
<p><b>Individualized Services</b></p>	<p>The budget deficit will be a challenge for the Health and Human Services Committee, which I serve on. I support funding individualized disability services and believe that they should be accessible and held harmless. Austerity measures should be implemented but should to the extent possible be focused on other areas of our state budget. We should not be cutting funding from disability services, who are the most vulnerable in our community and they should not be used as a bargaining chip. We do not want to isolate this population anymore and should be funding programs that support and keep people safe and thriving. In addition, we want to leverage federal matching dollars for this population of our state.</p>	<p>I believe in equitable funding across the state and will work for that.</p>
<p><b>Discrimination</b></p>	<p>Minnesotans should be made more aware of the scope of disability services needed in our community. 1 in 5 of Minnesotans are living with a disability. We need more self awareness of the bullying and intolerance many of our kids and adults suffer because of a disability. Acting on policy and funding that makes a difference in people's lives who rely on the government to protect and serve them. Increasing PCA funding is long overdue.</p>	<p>I support a Minnesota where everyone has the opportunity to succeed, have safe housing, a job that pays well, and health care for themselves and their families. That will be how I approach legislating.</p>

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# 2020 Disability Community Candidate Survey Results

Senate District 58  
 Matt Little  
 VoteLittle.com

Senate District 8  
 Senator Bill Ingebrigtsen  
 billforsenate.org

<p><b>Special Education</b></p>	<p>While in the State Senate, I voted to increase Special Education funding by \$90 million. That was a good start but only begins to get at the money needed to support special education across the state and create more equitable circumstances for students with disabilities regardless of where they are in Minnesota.</p>	<p>Make sure the student gets what the law states. They should not be excluded in any way.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p>	<p>One of the things I am most proud of during my time in the State Senate is extending Metro Mobility to Lakeville. That program gives many Minnesotans with disabilities the freedom to live dignified lives. Those programs must continually be expanded and advocated for in order to ensure people with all types of disabilities can live and move about freely.</p>	<p>How I can help is to author or co-author legislation that funds the means to diagnose the students and get them the appropriate attention.</p>
<p><b>Employment</b></p>	<p>People with disabilities should be paid the same as everyone else, and deserve the same wage protections as everyone else. Plain and simple.</p>	<p>Very simple. If they are employed and performing up to their ability, they should be paid like anyone else.</p>
<p><b>Individualized Services</b></p>	<p>The budget deficit is real and structural and will result in some hard choices. During these budget conversations, we have to prioritize the most vulnerable. That means protecting day programs, special education, healthcare, and public safety. As we address and improve those sectors, we also have to better engage in mitigating the Coronavirus pandemic and its significant impact on Minnesotans with underlying health conditions.</p>	<p>There are simply other nonmandated services that can be trimmed back to pay for these supports. They should never be left behind .</p>
<p><b>Discrimination</b></p>	<p>It starts with listening, many of the issues that impact the lives of Minnesotans with disabilities do not get the public conversation they deserve. That is why I hosted a town hall specifically to talk about issues facing Minnesotans with Autism in 2017. I learned a lot from that event, but the need to keep engaging with a diverse array of communities across the state has only grown as we better understand the consequences of discrimination in every sector of policymaking.</p>	<p>We have an agency that will deal with any type of discrimination in our state. When elected as I have in the past, I take an oath to protect the rights of every individual no matter who they are. I take that oath very seriously as every elected official should.</p>

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