

# 2022 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire



**Name:** Emijah Smith  
**District Number:** 37  
**Position (Representative or Senator):** Representative, Position 2  
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## 1. Do you have a personal connection or professional experience with someone who has a intellectual/developmental disability (IDD), and if so, would you describe its impact on you? If not, what impact do you want to have for people with IDD and their families?

Yes, I do have a personal connection. It has allowed me to see the world differently. We all have different learning and processing styles. The structures that exist force us to adapt to manners of learning that don't work for us. The glimpse of the world that I get to see through family members' experiences has also allowed me to accept myself more deeply and see how I learn or communicate in my own way. It has helped me to embrace my own humanity and see others' humanity in a deeper way and understand more deeply what equity truly means. What I want for everyone in the 37th district, and our state, is to be healthy, safe and free to realize their full potential. I want to learn from individuals living with intellectual or developmental disabilities what you need to achieve this vision. I will support policies and budgets that support quality of life, sustain people to live in the settings and communities that they wish, and full access to health care. I know that like all our communities, people with IDD and their families are racially and culturally diverse. Black, Indigenous and people of color with IDD and their families are impacted by the harms of racism. I will pay particular attention to ensuring that supports are culturally accessible and welcoming.



## 2. What are your top three priorities and how would you ensure people with developmental disabilities and their families are included in them?

My vision is simple: healthy families and healthy communities. I work in collective, with integrity, and value the strength of our District's diverse communities. I've organized with families to win better Pre-K, equitable funding for special education, affordable housing, healthcare access, safer neighborhoods, justice reform, and more.

My top 3 priorities are:

- Advancing racial justice so that our diverse communities in the 37th district are safe, free and thriving. This includes full access to health care including mental health care, halting gentrification and investing in community-rooted development, reforming the justice system and more.
- Universal, publicly funded, affordable, high-quality child care
- Excellent, high-quality, equitable, welcoming public education for all our children of all abilities

I believe, based on my experience, that the key to inclusion is listening to those most closely impacted by an issue, and crafting policy based on that lived expertise. I know that issues of access to education, health care and affordable housing are key to supporting the wellbeing of people with IDD. State programs need to be scaled to reflect the costs of living and ensure access to caregivers to support healthy, independent living. As a state legislator, I would hope to partner with organizations like the ARC to ensure that the policies I promote and support are inclusive of all members of our community, including people with developmental disabilities and their families.

## 3. If cuts became necessary due to a recession or economic downturn, how would you protect services that people with IDD and their families need?

Our state's unfair, regressive tax system upholds a terrible cycle of harmful cuts during economic downturns and recessions. Just when we need stable supports the most, state revenue plummets and lawmakers craft austerity budgets. Families lose services. Kids suffer with education cuts. Hard times get harder. It doesn't have to be this way.

We can pass progressive revenue reform to create greater economic justice and consistently fund the priorities we all need to be healthy and safe. As a legislator, I will support a wealth tax, the capital gains tax that has already passed, the proposed anti-displacement property tax exemption, among others. All our tax reform should create not only more revenue, but also invest in

economic justice and equity.

I will advocate for collective well-being and our basic needs, ensuring we don't pit communities or needs against each other. I will not advocate for state budget proposals that harm the most vulnerable among us, including people living with developmental disabilities and their families.

**4. Is there other information you'd like constituents with developmental disabilities and their family and friends to know?**

I want to hear from you and work with you. If I am elected I hope you will reach out to me with your questions, concerns and proposals. I will provide a video soon, but didn't want to delay sending these responses to you.

**Your Campaign Website**

<https://www.electemijah.com>