

2022 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire



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District Number: 45
Position (Representative or Senator): Senate
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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?

A very good family friend has a son who has an IDD. I have seen him grow into adulthood from a young child and seen up close all the challenges that he and his family have faced. He now holds a part-time job with a gardening business and is doing well. Even with the resources this family has, his care needs are overwhelming. As his parents age, the worry about his care is a daily concern.

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

I believe in ensuring that those impacted by legislation, must have a seat at the decision-making table. As Chair of the Law & Justice committee I am focused on criminal justice reform -- ensuring that our state clearly understands that behavioral health (BH) issues need to be addressed by our healthcare system and not the criminal justice system. At times individuals with BH and IID issues are involved in the criminal justice system because our health care system has failed. I am committed to bringing a trauma informed care approach to our criminal justice accountability conversation. As the person who helped champion the 988-crisis system with Rep. Orwall, I am very committed in ensuring WA develops a comprehensive crisis response plan which puts the needs of the individual first. My third priority is continuing to address gender-based violence. Proving resources and support for survivors as well as working on prevention strategies by ensuring our children are learning about consent and healthy relationships.

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?

During a recession, the more vulnerable amongst us have to be given more resources, not less. The decisions made during the last recession had consequences that lasted a decade. We cannot go down that same path and have to learn from those mistakes. During Covid when so many were calling for a special session, I was completely against it because I feared that services would be cut and that would be disastrous. The surplus checks provided by the federal govt proved that when money is given to individuals who need resources, it goes back into the economy and actually stimulates the economy. This is the lesson we need to follow in any future recession or economic downturn. In anticipation of a downturn, the legislature did create a robust rainy-day fund specifically so we don't have to make cuts

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

People thrive when given the right resources and support. I have seen that over and over again in our society. It is important to me that our agencies work towards individualized plan for success for everyone that they serve.

Your Campaign Website

<http://www.electmanka.com>