

2020 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire for Developmental Disabilities

Name: Frances Chvatal

District: 16th Legislative District

Position: House of Representatives, Position 1

1. If you have a personal connection or professional experience with someone who has a developmental disability, would you describe its impact on you?

Yes, my cousin. He lived with a mental disability similar to down's syndrome and serious spasticity. He was an absolute delight. He was a BIG UW husky fan and frequently reminded everyone of it. He was the youngest member of his family and was adored by everyone. He was independent, earned his high school diploma, held a full time job and earned his driver license. He had an enormous memory and heart. The family of his mother (and my mother) was very large, 17 children. He knew everyone, never missed a family reunion and took charge of sporting competition during these family gatherings. He often determined the rules and served as the referee. He laughed with his whole face, and spread big joy. He died at the age of 54. His funeral was as well attended as his birthday parties. The main difference was birthdays were often celebrated at bowling alleys. There is less joy in the world now.

2. What are your top three legislative priorities and how would you help people with developmental disabilities in them?

My top 3 legislative priorities are healthcare, agriculture education. As a Registered Nurse, I understand how important healthcare is for everyone, especially people with developmental disabilities. Healthcare is a human right and must be accessible and affordable for every person. Government should work to improve our overall health, and collaboratively work to assure access to high quality affordable care for all. Attention to the social determinants of health are critical to health care policy, with focus on high quality primary care and mental health parity. Strong agricultural policy and supporting our family farms benefits all of us, as we all are dependent on nutritious food and a flourishing economy. Education is my final top legislative priority. I am the mother and step mother of four children, and grandmother of four. I understand the importance of a robust education system that challenges and supports all of our students. One of my children utilized the speech therapy services at her public school throughout elementary school. Those services were critical to her success. I will fight for every child to have the support they need to be healthy, educated, curious and happy.

3. With the current economic crisis, how would you protect services that people with I/DD and their families need?

I am deeply concerned that the current economic crisis will hurt the most vulnerable people the most. People with I/DD and their families must be a priority, not an afterthought. I will consult with stakeholders and work with colleagues to ensure the services required by our most vulnerable members of society are protected.

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

As a proud daughter of Eastern Washington, I will represent the people of the 16th LD with integrity, honesty and a keen awareness of our communities and the people. I was born in Walla Walla, raised on a farm in Touchet where I attended public school, and then went on to WSU. I have enjoyed a career in healthcare as a RN for 37 years participating in many different roles; direct patient care, clinical leadership, regulatory, quality and governance. I have seen the real life impacts of healthcare

policy and how health care transcends all aspects of a community and individual lives. I will use this history and knowledge to help shape policy in the state by advocating for robust public health services to include health care in public schools, innovation to bring high quality healthcare to rural areas, focus attention on the social determinants of health and help legislative colleagues sort through and understand the real life consequences of health care decisions.

I was raised on a farm in Touchet and I have personal and great pride in the long history of agriculture in south eastern Washington. We are the stewards of the land and water that sustains us. I recognize that the success of agriculture is inextricably linked to a clean and healthy environment. I would hope to work in tandem with environmental enthusiasts and agriculture representatives to support family farms and together implement practices that are good for the environment.

This is my home and what happens to my neighbors is important to me. I know how to work toward compromise and appreciate incremental change to make things better. My life experience has given me a unique skillset to serve the 16th Legislative District.