

2020 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire for Developmental Disabilities

Name: Tana Senn

District: 41st Legislative District

Position: House of Representatives

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

I have come to know and love so many people in the DD community, particularly thanks to the legislative forums you hold each year. Constituents, advocates and families have become good friends of mine, like Cathy, Stacy, Diana, Jeremy, Margaret and others. In addition, as a member and now Chair of the Human Services and Early Learning Committee, advocates and families have provided such a clear picture of the needs, drawbacks and challenges facing the community. This has moved me and moved policy forward.

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

1. Child Care: We need more affordable child care across the state. We must ensure there is early detection and interventions, mental health access and a social emotional emphasis and more childcares trained in how to serve children with special needs. In addition, I am pushing for a review of Developmental Pre-School in K-12 settings which for too long has had little oversight as it sits squarely in between Early Learning and K-12.

2. Progressive Revenue: We need new progressive revenue for our state. Lower income families pay more of a percentage of their income than higher income families. In addition, there are so many unfunded services across our state--including the dramatic underfunding of access to services for the DD community.

3. Safety Net: We have been trying to make up for cuts to the safety net from the 2008 recession. We were almost getting back to even as COVID-19 hit. Now, more people than ever need the safety net and we must sure it is there for families. All families. Hopefully people will start to realize that although we are responding and helping people now because of the pandemic, families have their own personal pandemics all the time--whether it is a medical emergency, death in the family or job loss.

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

I/DD issues are bi-partisan and already underfunded. Removing resources from this area would be fool-hearty. Having said that, I do think there will be increased interest in looking at providing services more in the community and less at institutions as a way to reduce costs. In addition, I will continue to push for better and earlier transitions for foster youth with I/DD who are exiting the foster care system. This just makes sense.

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

I am proud to have received a number of recognitions for my work on I/DD issues. The bills I have introduced have been generated directly from conversations with families, during my visit to the ARC of Tri-Cities, and at the legislative forums. You know what

you need and I have been honored to help craft some solutions--my favorite still being allowing a REET tax exemption if you donate your home to a supportive living organization so your children can remain in the house without losing services. Thank you for sharing your stories and experiences with me. It is an incredible honor to serve the 41st Legislative District and as the Chair of the Human Services and Early Learning Committee.

Campaign Website: <https://electtanasen.org>