

2020 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire for Developmental Disabilities

Name: Brett Borden

District: 9

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?

Two personal experiences come immediately to mind when considering this question: first, I think back to my collegiate studies when I was seeking to become a history teacher. As part of the program we learned about special education but also had an opportunity as part of my classroom observation schedule to sit in and learn from a special education teacher at the school. Second, I think further back to my own experience as an adolescent, where my family worked with Shriners' Hospital in Spokane to help with a back problem I'd developed through the growth process. Through my visits to the hospital I met many other young people who were dealing with developmental disabilities of both physical and mental varieties, just as I later did in my educational studies. I suppose the greatest impact that these experiences made on me was realizing that these folks are regular people whom you can get to know and enjoy being around. Seeing the professionals who work with the developmentally disabled and how much of a positive impact they can have on so many lives was also a truly heartening experience.

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

Strictly speaking, my top legislative priorities are criminal justice reform, election reform, and protecting civil liberties of all kinds. I realize these do not specifically address the needs of people with developmental disabilities, however, my commitment to civil liberties is as relevant to these folks as anybody else. As with anybody, those with developmental disabilities deserve to live their freest and best life without unnecessary limits placed upon them by the State. This includes free access to employment without having to deal with barriers to entry.

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

As a Libertarian, I believe strongly in free association. The beauty of this is that through building relationships with other people and with charitable organizations like Arc, you have these connections to rely on even in difficult moments like an economic crisis. Indeed, this is when mutual aid and charity shines brightest in people's lives. While government services are not generally something my party prioritizes, as a state legislator I would certainly look first at other potential cuts than those disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable.

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

I appreciate the opportunity to discuss issues pertaining to people and families with developmental disabilities, and being an open-minded sort of person am willing to continue discussing such issues going forward. My family has given to the Arc of Spokane on multiple occasions before and through this I know what important work the organization has done for the citizens of Spokane. Thank you for the work that you do.