

2020 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire for Developmental Disabilities

Name: Kevin Ballard

District: 28th

Position: State Representative 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?

I have a cousin with Cerebral Palsy who is confined to a wheelchair. I have assisted him in getting a service animal and all the challenges associated with this. Most challenging, was the loss of his primary caregiver, his father. My cousin's life turned upside down without the constant care his father provided. I recognize the daily challenges my cousin faces, and am focused on the issues he relates to me on a regular basis. He is now attending University and is experiencing life away from home for the first time.

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

My priorities are economic recovery, homelessness and related issues, and veterans. All three priorities involve getting people into the economy to lead productive and satisfying lives. Certainly, providing training and education to fill careers available in the region remains a priority, and ensuring those with developmental disabilities falls within the scope of programs I wish to champion as a legislator in the 28th. Understanding many of our group care facilities are run down and have had their certifications revoked I wish to direct funding to build new facilities based on current technologies to help our citizens with I/DD.

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

I'd like to put an end to using the funding for "social service" related programs as a political football during budget negotiations. We should not place criminal justice, foster care, care for our elderly, and care for our most vulnerable at the tip of the budget cut spear, simply to make one political party look heartless and gain political points. This serves no one. Instead, let's seek to delay implementation of all non-social service related new programs created in the last legislative session, and delay the pay raises to government employees until the WA State economy can support our State budget without raising taxes and without cutting key programs for our most vulnerable, including those with I/DD. I believe our State needs to protect our I/DD population and provide a level of care we all would want if our own families were impacted.

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

I have family members who belong to the I/DD community as well as family members since deceased who directly benefited from State programs put in place to care for, educate and place in the workforce those in the I/DD community. I know their wish is to live complete and fulfilling lives, despite their personal adversity. Additionally, I have worked as a volunteer at a state institution and remember the impact community involvement had in the betterment of the quality of life for those institutionalized with I/DD. These people need our compassion and support.

All the best! Consider me an ally.

Kevin