

2020 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire for Developmental Disabilities

Name: Frank Chopp

District: 43rd Legislative District

Position: Position 2



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

In my extended family, we have two individuals, (an uncle and a great-nephew), who were born with developmental disabilities. They were provided with state-funded services, since the parents were not able to provide all the needed care by themselves. This had a profound effect on me as a family member, and later as a State Representative. There is a great and urgent need to provide and expand the care and services to people with developmental disabilities, and to increase funding to serve all the individuals and families who qualify for assistance. I strongly believe that it is a moral imperative!

In my professional experience for many years, I served as the Executive Director of a large non-profit community-based agency, where I started a home care program providing critical personal care services for a wide array of people with disabilities, including those with developmental disabilities. On the state level, I played a leading role in the coalition that greatly increased state funding for home care services, increasing the wages, benefits, and training for tens of thousands of home care providers. I saw first-hand the direct needs of people with disabilities and those who care for them in their homes in the community.

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

I initially ran for the legislature to be an advocate for working families, education, health care, housing, and social justice. I am proud of the progress we've made on these and many other important issues, but there is more work to be done.

I'm running for re-election because in this time of rapid change and uncertainty, we need energized, experienced and progressive leadership working for our communities.

A major priority is to deliver relief to struggling communities in the midst of the pandemic, which has disproportionately impacted vulnerable communities, especially people with disabilities. We must invest in foundational public health and an array of health care services for those most in need.

Another priority is to prevent austerity budget cuts. Years ago, in the Great Recession, budget cuts prolonged the economic recovery and caused so many to suffer. This year and next, we must fill budget holes with new progressive revenue. I am firmly opposed to cuts to social services, housing, support for people with disabilities, and other critically-needed, state-funded services.

Earlier this year, I proposed the Health Equity And Recovery Trust --- the HEART plan, to provide significant new funding for public health, behavioral health, and community health, including allocations for services for people with developmental disabilities. This will help prevent budget cuts, and then lead to increased funding for much-needed services.

Despite the daunting state budget challenges, I'm optimistic about a healthier and more equitable future for all Washingtonians. In addition to the HEART plan, I've put together a 5-Point Agenda for Action, which you can see at my website, www.frankchopp.com.

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

This crisis is hitting low-income people, people with disabilities, communities of color, and other vulnerable populations disproportionately hard. Our state response has to recognize this disproportionality and respond in ways that specifically help these folks. That means we can't cut social services and health care to balance the budget.

Instead, we must enact progressive revenue so we can invest more in:

- foundational public health
- homeless survival services
- behavioral health care
- developmental disabilities services
- supportive housing for those most in need.

As we design our response, including the HEART plan, I will seek out members and leaders of ARC, so that we can help ensure that services for those with disabilities are fully included.

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

I care passionately about helping people in need, including those with disabilities. I am very proud of my leadership in creating and vastly expanding community-based home care services for people with disabilities and those who provide the services.

I would like to work with ARC over the next few months, to refine the HEART proposal, so that the new revenue will be used in the most effective manner, keeping in mind the best interests of people in need.