2026 Congressional Candidate Survey

Questions for Congressional Candidates — The Arc of Washington

The Community Advocacy Coalition for Developmental Disabilities

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1. Do you have a personal connection or professional experience with someone who has an intellectual/developmental disability? (I/DD) If yes, would you describe its impact on you and your candidacy? If not, what have you learned about people with intellectual or developmental disabilities and how has it impacted your candidacy?

I do not want to overstate a personal connection that is not mine to claim. What has shaped my candidacy is listening to families and advocates explain how often people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are forced to fight systems that should be supporting them. I have learned that inclusion is not just a value statement. It means reliable services, accessible housing and transportation, strong schools, employment supports, respite for families, and policies that let people live safely in their own communities. That has made disability policy part of how I think about

every federal decision: who is left out, who carries the burden, and whether public money is actually reaching the people it is supposed to help.

2. What policies and systems are you aware of that impact the lives of people with IDD and their families? If elected, what responsibility would you have to change those policies or systems?

The major federal systems include Medicaid, Home and Community Based Services, SSI, IDEA and special education, housing and rental assistance, transportation access, workforce and vocational rehabilitation, caregiver supports, and civil rights protections under the ADA and related laws. If elected, my responsibility would be to protect and strengthen those systems, not treat them as optional. Congress controls funding, oversight, eligibility rules, and enforcement. I would use those tools to reduce waiting lists, protect Medicaid, expand community-based care, modernize SSI rules, support the direct care workforce, and make sure agencies are accountable when people with IDD and their families are forced to navigate delays, denials, or inaccessible services.

3. If elected, what are your top three priorities, and how would people with IDD and their families benefit from each priority?

My top three priorities are: First, protect and expand health care and long-term supports, especially Medicaid and HCBS, so people with IDD can live in their communities with dignity and families are not left to provide care alone. Second, lower the cost of living through housing, transportation, and caregiver support, because affordability is disability policy when families cannot find accessible homes, reliable transit, or respite. Third, build a more accountable government that follows the money and measures outcomes. Through my Vanguard work, I focus on identifying what is hurting people locally, where public money is going, and which federal levers can fix it. People with IDD benefit when policy is based on lived experience, evidence, and results.

4. When you have questions about how to best support people with IDD and their families, what or who are your trusted resources?

My trusted resources would be people with IDD, families, self-advocates, direct support professionals, educators, case managers, and local disability organizations. I would also look to The Arc of Washington State, the Community Advocacy Coalition for Developmental Disabilities, Disability Rights Washington, Parent to Parent networks, and providers who understand where services break down in real life. I believe the best policy starts with the people who live the consequences. My job would be to listen carefully, test claims against evidence, and keep those voices involved after an election, not only during a campaign.

5. Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) are Medicaid services that are essential for individuals with IDD. They provide support for daily living (such as bathing, dressing, eating, and managing medication), having a job, accessing the community, and giving families a break from providing 24/7 care. Currently HCBS services are optional but nursing home services are an entitlement. The average US cost per year for a nursing home is $111,000, compared to $17,000 to provide in-home supports. Currently, HCBS services are under threat because of the HR1 cuts to Medicaid. Many states have years-long waiting lists for HCBS services. Do you support strengthening Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) and making them an entitlement? Why or why not?

Yes. I support strengthening HCBS and making it an entitlement. People should not have to enter institutions or wait years for help when community-based support is safer, more humane, and often less expensive. HCBS helps people with IDD live at home, work, participate in their communities, and gives families needed relief from 24/7 caregiving. I oppose Medicaid cuts that would push more responsibility onto families or states while reducing actual care. Congress should protect Medicaid, expand HCBS capacity, support the direct care workforce, and make the federal commitment clear so services do not depend on geography, waitlists, or state budget pressure.

6. People with IDD frequently rely on The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program as their basic source of income. SSI has not been updated since 1984. Currently, individuals on SSI will lose their benefits if they have assets of more than $2000 (Excluding their home and care) and married

couples can only have $3000. This creates a disincentive for individuals with IDD to marry. Do you support raising the asset limit, and eliminating the "marriage penalty" for recipients of SSI? Why or why not?

Yes. SSI rules are badly outdated. The current asset limits punish people for saving, create unnecessary fear, and make marriage financially dangerous for people who should have the same freedom to build a life as anyone else. I support raising the asset limits substantially, indexing them so they do not become outdated again, and eliminating the marriage penalty. People with IDD should not be forced into poverty to keep basic support. Modernizing SSI is about dignity, independence, and fairness.

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

I want constituents with IDD and their families to know that I see this as a core federal responsibility, not a side issue. Disability policy touches health care, housing, education, transportation, employment, civil rights, and family stability. If elected, I would work with self-advocates and families directly, protect Medicaid and HCBS, modernize SSI, and use oversight to make sure programs actually work for the people they are meant to serve. My goal is simple: people with IDD should be able to live safely, participate fully, and be treated as equal members of our communities.