



Many Voices / One Vision



2026 Congressional Candidate Survey

*Questions for Congressional Candidates – The Arc of Washington
The Community Advocacy Coalition for Developmental Disabilities*

Name: Jerrod Sessler

Position: House

Congressional District: Washington's 4th

Email: yes@jerrodforcongress.com

Website: www.jerrodforcongress.com



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 have a close and personal friend who is developmentally disabled. I've worked for years to advocate for and to support many people in this community even hiring some of them to work in my companies. I've also supported other companies that either deliberately make an environment for disabled folks to thrive or one company that literally exists to support them, Northwest Center.

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?

I am not aware of any laws that directly impact the IDD community which is both good and bad. It is good because laws could be harmful but bad because there may be pathways for improved support and encouragement for both businesses and members of the community to support IDD people and families. I would support and encourage us to develop mechanisms that inspire businesses to create environments that enable people to thrive even if they are limited by natural causes such as many of the folks in the IDD community.

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

The government must stop wasting our money and taking us more and more into debt each year. This helps the IDD community by ensuring that America remains strong economically which provides plenty of opportunities for successful people to invest back into their communities in ways that would support folks who need a bit of support.

We have many public projects in our district but none bigger than irrigation projects that enable our farms to thrive. We must fund and expand those projects to ensure they continue to support a strong economy, agriculture industry, energy generation industry, and manufacturing industry. Once again, a strong economy and one that is vital to the country is important to provide the financial means to ensure that people are fruitful and generous in support of policies and actions that support those in need.

We must hold people accountable if they break the law even if they are from the political or elite class. Having a single tier system of justice provides security and safety for all citizens including IDD folks.

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

As mentioned, I have friends that are directly in the midst of this but I don't feel it is appropriate to mention their names directly although they are the

very best source of information because they experience the results of all policies and laws directly and first hand. I also lean on Rhonda Jones who is an incredible resource as well as Mike Quinn who has a tremendous amount of experience in the space especially as it relates to encouraging and promoting businesses that support the IDD community.

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 HRI 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, IDD individuals should be able to access and tap into support right from their home environment and their families should also have support mechanisms because the energy and effort expended to support family members is often daunting and totally unseen by the majority of the population. These are the real heroes as they are on the front lines each day. Sadly, the services received within the skilled centers such as many nursing homes is lower or less than in homes not because the people don't care but because the capacity is just too difficult at scale and these facilities are obviously designed for maximum profits. We are better to keep the opportunity for this support in the community rather than in a facility and we ought to provide support for that to happen. I would also like to mention that it is vital for us to provide incentives for members of the community, especially businesses to provide supportive systems for the IDD community to engage with their business as the mission orientation for these folks is also vital to their peace, pleasure, and enjoyment in life.

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, I support raising the SSI limits and funding it properly. It is frustrating to see us (our government) spending countless sums of money on things we would never agree to or support yet we act as if we cannot cover these basic items. This is not even remotely a large investment and it is vital. We do need guardrails to ensure it does not turn into a gift as so many public programs have recently but that is not difficult to put in place and monitor.

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

I believe the key in developing the right policy and laws lays in the effectiveness of developing incentives that push people and businesses to take the steps and actions that are best in improving local life which includes IDD community.