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?

Yes. I have a close family member with an intellectual/developmental disability, so I have seen firsthand the daily challenges and the incredible strengths that individuals with I/DD and their families bring to our communities. As a legislator, that experience is one reason I have worked with The Arc of the Tri-Cities and other local partners on meaningful legislation and targeted investments to support people with disabilities and their caregivers.

From navigating complex systems to fighting for basic opportunities, I've seen how easily families can be overwhelmed by bureaucracy rather than helped by it. That has shaped my candidacy in three ways

I am committed to policies that recognize the dignity and value of every person, consistent with our Republican belief in the sanctity of human life and the importance of strong families.

I focus on transparency and accountability in state and federal programs, so that limited taxpayer dollars actually reach the people and front-line providers who deliver services, not just more layers of administration.

I bring my state legislative background and experience working as Ranking member on the Human services committe, in technology, higher education, and workforce development to push for practical supports, like inclusive education, adaptive technology, and real job pathways, so individuals with I/DD in central and eastern Washington can live, learn, and work as independently as possible.

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?

People with I/DD and their families interact with a maze of systems: Medicaid and Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS), Social Security and SSI, special education and transition services, adult guardianship and supported decision-making, housing programs, and workforce and vocational rehabilitation. These systems often don't work well together, are hard to navigate, and respond slowly, especially in rural communities across central and eastern Washington.

In Congress, I would have three main responsibilities:

1. Oversight and accountability: Use hearings and audits to ensure federal disability-related programs (Medicaid waivers, SSI, VR) deliver results rather than just grow bureaucracy.

2. Rebalancing incentives: Support reforms that prioritize community-based, family-centered supports over default institutionalization, while protecting taxpayers from waste and fraud.

3. Improving transitions: Better connect K–12 special education, higher education, and workforce development so that students with I/DD can move from school to training, college, or work without falling off a services cliff.

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

If elected, my top three priorities will be: (1) Agriculture, (2) affordable, reliable energy, and (3) education and workforce development. Each of these directly benefits people with I/DD and their families in the 4th District. My background in human services, energy, environment, technology, and higher education means I will always ask how federal policy affects local services, rural health systems, and the agriculture-based economy on which many families with disabilities rely.

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

My first step is always to listen to individuals with I/DD and their families, including my own, because they know better than anyone what is working and what is broken. I also lean on.

Local organizations like The Arc of the Tri-Cities and other community-based providers that serve people with disabilities every day.

School districts, special education and transition specialists, and higher education programs that are helping students with disabilities move into further education and employment.

ARC of the TriCities, Family members, Medical, behavioral health, and social-work professionals, in the TriCities and surrounding areas, and faith and community organizations that step in where government systems fall short.

I bring the same approach I use in the State Senate and the classroom: ask questions, learn from real-world experience, and then hold systems accountable for measurable outcomes.

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?

Home and Community-Based Services are often the most humane and cost-effective way to support individuals with I/DD, allowing people to live, work, and participate in their communities instead of being pushed into institutions. The cost difference between nursing home care and in-home supports is significant, and it makes no sense that institutional care is the entitlement while many families wait years for HCBS.

I support strengthening HCBS, giving states more stability and flexibility, and moving federal policy toward treating essential in-home and community supports on par with institutional care.

My priorities are to:

1. Protect critical community-based services while we address the federal spending crisis

2. Target resources toward those truly in need and reduce waiting lists

3. Increase transparency and accountability so dollars reach the people and providers delivering care, not more administration.

On any broad Medicaid cuts, my test is straightforward: we must get federal spending under control, but we cannot do it by breaking our commitments to the most vulnerable, including people with I/DD and their caregivers.

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?

SSI is supposed to be a basic safety net, but asset limits that have not been updated since the 1980s and rules that penalize marriage often end up trapping people with I/DD in permanent poverty. I do not believe the federal government should force someone to choose between marrying the person they love and keeping the supports they need to survive.

I support raising SSI asset limits to a more realistic level and eliminating the marriage penalty for recipients with disabilities, coupled with safeguards against fraud and abuse.

We should design these reforms to:

1. Encourage work and savings where possible

2. Coordinate with other disability and Medicaid programs to avoid new “benefit cliffs”

3. Maintain long-term fiscal responsibility.

This approach reflects conservative principles: strengthen families, reward responsibility and work, and focus government support on those who genuinely cannot provide for themselves.

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

As your next Congressman, I want individuals with I/DD, their families, and caregivers in the 4th District to know that you are not an afterthought in my campaign, you are central to what it means to strengthen families, our workforce, and our national security.

You deserve safe communities, reliable energy and infrastructure, high-quality medical and behavioral health care, and real educational and employment opportunities, not just a maze of paperwork and waiting lists.

When elected, I will use my State experience in human services, energy, environment, technology, higher education, and workforce development to make federal systems more transparent, outcomes-based, and respectful of your time and dignity.

I will stand for the sanctity and dignity of human life, support strong families and community-based solutions, and work every day to ensure that people with I/DD in central and eastern Washington can live as independently and safely as possible.