



Many Voices / One Vision



Questions for Legislative Candidates- The Arc of Washington

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The Children's Campaign Fund

**1. Do you have a personal connection or professional experience with someone who has an intellectual/developmental disability (IDD)?
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 was diagnosed as legally blind and after two separate eye surgeries my vision was mostly corrected. However, my ability to read did not improve as expected. At this time, I was classified as mentally disabled and placed into the slow learner class in my grade school. It was a graduate student who was doing her PhD thesis on learning disabilities that provided a diagnosis of severe dyslexia. Over the next two years, myself and 5-6 other students from my slow learner class were taught how to read and learn with her revolutionary methods.

These years were formative; I learned never to judge someone based on outward appearances or labels. We all have a unique perspective on life, and we can all be both teachers and students. Everyone I meet can teach me something, if I listen to their story.

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 aware of the streamlining of the Waiver system from 5 to 2, school restraint and isolation policies in schools, funding issues due to the budget constraints, caregiver shortages, caregiver training options, and expanding resources for families

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

No response provided.

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

I would want to hear from both those IDD and their families/caregivers. Complete and thorough stakeholder work includes those with lived experience. That is my basic method for policy generation and decision making.

5. The national trend -- and legal mandate --- supports transitioning individuals with IDD out of institutional settings and into community-based care, which is not only the best practice but also the most cost-effective approach. Studies consistently show that community-based services cost significantly less per person than institutional care while providing greater independence and quality of life. In Washington the cost of care in a Residential Habilitation Center (RHC) is more than double the cost of equivalent services in community settings.

Although Washington has made progress, continued efforts are needed to align with best practices, civil rights, federal priorities, and fiscal responsibility. Transitioning more individuals into community-based care will allow the state to reinvest savings into services for much needed community-based services.

How do you believe Washington state should approach investment in home and community based services for people with IDD in the next five years?

I want to support the WADDC 10 year strategy, A Path Forward: Transforming Developmental Disability Services in Washington State. The goal is to transform our states support and services for those with developmental disabilities. It is a good plan with appropriate stakeholders at the table to develop this plan. I believe that as we fix our tax system and improve our budget through this work, we must ensure that we provide appropriate budget considerations for realizing this plan.

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

What I do not know I am willing to learn from those who have learned experiences and who have worked within the system.