CANDIDATE SURVEY

# Part 1: Engaging the Disability Community

1. **Disability Hiring:** Does your team include people with lived disability experience? If elected, will your team include paid staff who you can turn to for advice and counsel when making decisions regarding services, programs and laws that impact people with disabilities?
2. **Accessibility:** How does your campaign prioritize accessibility within your digital and in-person engagement? If elected, how will you ensure that your communications, from websites to press conferences and more, will be accessible to people with disabilities?
3. **Engagement:** A key slogan of the disability community is “nothing about us without us.” How would you engage the disability community, if elected, in the policy decisions that affect our lives?
4. **Intersectionality:** Disability exists across every community, including people of every age, race, ethnicity, LGBTQ identity, gender and sexual identity, and more. How will you ensure that you engage people with disabilities across the full diverse spectrum of the disability community?

# Part 2: Addressing Issues Important to People with Disabilities

1. **Urgency:** What do you think are some of the most urgent issues facing people with disabilities?
2. **Community Integration:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was first signed into law over 30 years ago, protecting the equal rights and access of people with disabilities. However, people with disabilities face isolation and segregation throughout our lifetime, from receiving education in segregated classrooms in school to having to live in nursing homes or other congregate settings when they are not able to afford support services at home and in their community. How would you make sure that the government fulfills the goals of the ADA to eliminate discrimination of individuals with disabilities and end unnecessary segregation?
3. **Community-Based Services:** Home and community based services, typically provided by direct support professionals, enable many people with disabilities to live and work in community, rather than live in isolation in a long-term care facility or other congregate setting. How will you work to ensure that individuals receiving Medicaid have full access to the broader community and are able to access home and community based services in the most integrated setting?
4. **Direct Support Professionals and Personal Attendant Services:** Most direct support professionals, many of whom are disabled themselves and are primarily women of color, receive low wages without sick leave, vacation, or health benefits. How do you plan to support policies and funding to improve the working conditions of direct support professionals and increase the number of available direct support professionals to provide critical services and supports to people with disabilities in their communities?
5. **Education:** Under federal law, eligible students with disabilities in public schools are entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Currently, federal funds from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) fall short of what schools need to support students with disabilities. Additionally, remote learning and disruptions in life from the pandemic led to students with disabilities largely being [left behind](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/20210608-impacts-of-covid19.pdf). What steps would you take to ensure that public schools have the resources and training necessary to meet the diverse needs of students with disabilities in an integrated and inclusive classroom setting?
6. **Voting Rights:** Federal laws such as the ADA and the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) seek to ensure voters with disabilities have equal access to the ballot, including voting methods that allow them to mark and verify our ballots privately and independently. However, voters with disabilities still face many barriers, from registering to vote to getting to a polling place or accessing information about how to vote. As a result, the turnout of voters with disabilities in the 2020 elections was about 7 percentage points less than those without disabilities. What steps would you take to remove barriers to voting?
7. **Police Violence:** Disabled people of color, and particularly Black disabled people, face police violence, incarceration, and other impacts of the criminal justice system at extremely high rates. How will you address police violence and ensure that disabled people of color are safe from police violence?
8. **Emergency and Disaster Preparation and Response:** As climate change accelerates, many Americans are facing increasingly severe natural disasters. Existing disaster and emergency response plans largely exclude people with disabilities, who are [2 to 4 times](https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/disability/reports/2018/09/24/458467/serving-hardest-hit/) more likely to be seriously injured or die during disasters. How will you make sure that emergency and disaster response plans center people with disabilities and take into account the diverse needs of our communities?
9. **Transportation:** Accessible and reliable transportation is essential for people with disabilities to participate in community activities, such as work or voting, and to obtain medical care. People with disabilities are far less likely to own and drive a car, making public transportation a key part of accessible transportation infrastructure. What actions would you take to increase accessible, reliable, and affordable transportation options for people with disabilities in urban, suburban and rural parts of our community? How will you ensure that streets and public areas are accessible to people with disabilities?
10. **Housing:** Across the U.S., accessible housing options are scarce. Currently, only about 5% of housing is accessible to people with moderate mobility challenges, and only 1% is wheelchair accessible. Additionally, nearly half of people experiencing sheltered homelessness have a disability. How will you increase access to affordable, accessible, integrated, and stable housing options for people with disabilities?
11. **Access to Broadband Internet:** Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, access to reliable and affordable broadband internet has become even more critical than before to participate in work and community and access critical medical care. People with disabilities disproportionately lack access to broadband internet, which can impact every facet of their lives. How would you make sure that people with disabilities that you represent have access to reliable and affordable broadband services?
12. **Wages:** For over 80 years, Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act has allowed some employers to pay people with disabilities a fraction of minimum wage. Over 100,000 people with disabilities still work in [sheltered workplaces](https://www.npr.org/2020/09/17/912840482/u-s-agency-urges-end-to-below-minimum-wage-for-workers-with-disabilities) where they are paid subminimum wages of an average of $3.34 per hour. What would you do to ensure people with disabilities have equal access to integrated employment with competitive wages?
13. **Social Security:** Supplemental Security Income (Social Security) provides critical support to many Americans, including people with disabilities. However, the federal government structures social security benefits to keep recipients in poverty by limiting income and assets recipients of social security can have. Social security also punishes people with disabilities who marry. How would you change Social Security benefits to make it possible for people with disabilities to work, wed, and achieve the American dream?
14. **Cannabis:** For some people with disabilities, medical cannabis provides both rehabilitation and pain relief. Would you support OR oppose changes to protect medical cannabis patients and providers? Please share the reasons behind your position.

# Part 3: Including People with Disabilities in COVID-19 Recovery

1. **Inclusive COVID-19 Recovery:** Throughout the pandemic, people with disabilities faced some of the highest impacts of COVID-19, including death, loss of employment, isolation, and more. How will you ensure that people with disabilities are included and prioritized in the recovery from the health, economic, financial, and mental health crises brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. **Getting People with Disabilities Back to Work:** Even before the pandemic, people with disabilities were [three times](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/disabl.nr0.htm) less likely to be employed than people without disabilities. During the pandemic, about [1 in 5](https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/legal-and-compliance/employment-law/pages/coronavirus-unemployment-people-with-disabilities.aspx) people with disabilities lost their jobs. How will you ensure that people with disabilities have access to employment and economic recovery going forward?
3. **Long COVID, Disability, and the Lingering Pandemic:** Many people who recover from COVID-19 may have new disabilities from the long-lasting health impacts of COVID-19. How will you ensure that our communities and infrastructures will support people with newly developed disabilities due to long-COVID-19 and ensure that they have any necessary support to live and work in their communities?