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Q1 Candidate's Name

Cynthia Cunningham

Q2 Candidate's District

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Q3 Will you support closure of any State Operated Developmental Centers and shift corresponding resources toward integrated, community-based living options? **Yes**

Q4 Would you support legislation to eliminate the subminimum wage for workers with disabilities in Illinois? **Yes**

Q5 Do you support per-beneficiary funding caps in the Illinois Medicaid system? **No**

Q6 Should Illinois Medicaid and SNAP benefits have a mandatory work component? **No**

Q7 Would you advocate raising Medicaid reimbursement rates for home-based nursing services? **Yes**

Q8 Do you support a fair (graduated) income tax? **Yes**

Q9 Will you demand improved disability access to the State Capitol complex and General Assembly, including but not limited to a formal reasonable accommodation request process for public proceedings, provision of key materials in alternate formats, and captioning of floor proceedings? **Yes**

Candidate's Questionnaire 2018

Q10 What will you do to ensure people with disabilities, who identify as members of other marginalized communities (e.g. black/brown, LGBTQ, immigrant, etc.) know they are welcome to live and pursue their full potential in Illinois? In other words, how can you address systemic oppression against multiply marginalized disabled people?

I don't think that we've done a good job at involving the stakeholders in the decisions that affect them. I see disability advocates testifying at hearings after decisions have been made that affect them negatively. I believe we need to make policy by involving multiply marginalized people on the front end, which I will do if elected.

Q11 How will you ensure a free and appropriate public education for Illinois students with disabilities?

First, we have to provide schools with the funding to do so. I am hopeful that the new school funding formula will do that. Second, our schools need to recognize the importance of doing so, which doesn't always happen now. Third, we need to structure our income tax so that we continue to shift the funding of schools from local communities to the state. The schools in my district struggle to meet the needs of kids with special needs. Funding would help.

Q12 How will you work to expand affordable, accessible, integrated housing options in Illinois?

In short, we need to implement building codes, going forward, that make housing accessible as a rule. Then, we need to increase Illinois's inventory of affordable, accessible, integrated housing that is not tied to services. We need an overarching plan that addresses our aging population which is going to further drive this need. Several states, such as Virginia, have already developed plans.

Q13 What would you do to make Illinois more compliant with the Ligas, Williams, and Colbert Consent Decrees?

We have to increase housing options for persons with disabilities. We have to toughen our rules for nursing home pre-screens so people aren't automatically funneled to nursing homes following a hospitalization. And most of all, we need to increase funding for home and community based services so that these services are options all over Illinois instead of just highly populated areas.

Q14 How will you play a role in making business accessible to all customers with disabilities?

We must start with the building codes so that all new businesses are accessible. Then, we need a public awareness campaign that can begin with Illinois government as a model--so that any place where a meeting is held is accessible to people of varying abilities. I would champion accessibility.

Q15 What will you do to provide full and equal access to public transportation in Illinois?

I would be a champion here as well. All new public transportation should be accessible. And any replacement transportation must also be accessible.

Q16 How can wages for Illinois' Personal Assistants, Direct Support Professionals, Community Care Program and Homemaker service providers be improved and/or stabilized?

The General Assembly has to increase reimbursement rates for providers. As the president of the Illinois Adult Day Services Association and legislative chair for the Illinois Association of Community Care Program Home Care Providers, I have been advocating for the rate increases that are needed in order to improve our employees' wages.

Candidate's Questionnaire 2018

Q17 Illinois has 19,000+ residents with disabilities on the PUNS (Prioritization for Urgency of Need for Services) waiting list. Thousands more are waiting for DON (Determination of Need) assessments to become eligible for home and community-based care. What concrete steps will you support to reduce these backlogs and improve Illinois' laggard status (we rank #47) when it comes to home-based disability services for eligible Illinoisans?

It's absolutely ridiculous and probably part of the plan of the current administration to reduce spending on services to seniors and disabled people that we have this big backlog. We need to increase funding, increase the number of case managers, and increase the number of state employees who process applications.
