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Q1 Candidate's Name

Laura Ellman

Q2 Candidate's District

Senate District 21

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?

We need legislation that takes an intersectional view of addressing the barriers faced by marginalized communities and people with disabilities. Listening closely to people and constituents about their needs is a great place to start. We should direct funds to mental health and community services, paying special attention to lower income areas and communities of color, and work to improve educational equality, job opportunities, and access to services and facilities for these communities.

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

Increasing funding to schools specifically to increase accessibility to all aspects of schooling and to expand and improve programs for students with disabilities.

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

More funding for group homes, community based living facilities and services, shifting away from institutionalized care, more funding for caretakers in homes, and easier navigation of services.

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

We must prioritize home and community based care and allow more people with disabilities to access the services they need to live a fulfilling, independent life as much as possible. Most people with disabilities are able to and best suited for non-institutionalized care, and have a right to those services. We must shift away from institutions and expand the care that most people need and want.

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

I can work to support legislation and programs that incentivize businesses to be more accessible to customers with disabilities and strengthen business regulations for things like handicap parking, ramps, etc as well.

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

Support and/or introduce legislation to reduce the barriers keeping people from accessing subsidized transit quickly and easily, increase funding for public transit especially in expanding services, and expand accessibility on public transit to make it easier to navigate.

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

Passing legislation to increase the minimum wage, and increase the wages specifically for these service providers above the minimum wage. Programs for training service providers could be offered with an incentive of higher wages as well. Stronger benefits would also help.

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?

Streamlining the processes and cutting redundant applications or approval processes will move the process further. Providing more funding, especially in community-based and independent living services, will help provide more services to more people. We need a plan to reduce the backlog, which means more staff to work through the the paperwork as well as more funding to expand home and community care services and hiring more caretakers. We can look to other states doing significantly better to emulate some of their best practices.
