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Q1 Candidate's Name

Ann Gillespie

Q2 Candidate's District

27 Senate District

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? **No**

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? **Yes**

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**

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 support strengthening the enforcement and education roles of the Illinois Human Relations Commission to assure a timely investigation and litigation of complaints in the private sector. Additional funding and direction should also be provided to the DHHS, the Il Board of Education and Il Board of Higher Education to address inequalities in schools and address bullying and other barriers faced by marginalized communities.

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

School districts must receive adequate state funding that is specifically directed towards special education needs of school districts based on individual district needs. Districts should be monitored to assure that they are not rejecting special education students or otherwise placing barriers to reduce the special education population to make up for financial shortfalls elsewhere. Reaching full funding under the new evidence based formula is a step in the right direction, but it needs to be supplemented with special education funds because the formula is resulting in some districts seeing reduced special education funding.

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

Individuals who earn the minimum wage in Cook County cannot afford to rent an average 2 bedroom apartment. So my first commitment is to support raising the minimum wage to a livable wage indexed to inflation. Cook County is also highly segregated because of historical zoning and financial actions by local governments and lending institutions. I will support efforts to establish regulations which reverse these practices and provide incentives for providing affordable housing opportunities and CILAs, and expand the Section 8 housing program, in Illinois.

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

The greatest barrier to implementation of these consent decrees has been the state's financial crises, which reached its peak under the current administration and its failure to pass a budget for two years. During a time that additional CILA homes should have been created, organizations operating them had to wait too long for reimbursements. So instead of expanding the availability of least restrictive housing options, homes and facilities were shuttered, unable to pay staff. To reverse this catastrophe, step one will be to resolve the state's financial crises by restructuring the state's revenue structure. That will make it possible first, to provide timely payment of grants and reimbursements. Then, following the lead of such organizations as SILC and INCIL, I would work to expand the funds available to increase housing that supports least restrictive living environments.

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

The state and federal anti-discrimination acts require businesses to create accommodations making them accessible to customers with disabilities. It is not a perfect law because it allows for grandfathering of older buildings until other rehabilitation is performed on those buildings. I would support grant programs to incentivize the rehabilitation of older buildings to provide accessibility. I would also work to assure that funding is available for timely enforcement of all laws relating to discrimination.

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

The good news is that Illinois has one of the most accessible public transportation systems in the country. I strongly support infrastructure improvements in the state. As part of that, I will work to require transportation improvements to take advantage of the latest accessibility technologies and provide the funds to back this up.

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

To the extent that these positions are either employed by or funded through the State, I will support laws requiring job analyses which set comparable wage levels relative to other employment positions (rather than just market-competitive wages that tend to depress wages), and then work to provide funding to support the wage increases.

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?

Again, we are looking at the impact of the state's financial crises, and the resolution must start with increasing state revenues to move beyond the crises. As that happens, I believe that it is critical that funds are made available to increase staffing levels that allow for completion of the assessments and for placement of residents on the PUNS list. I would even encourage funding a short term project to specifically address and resolve the backlog.
