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**COMPLETE**

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**Q1** Candidate's Name

Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz

**Q2** Candidate's District

17

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

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

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

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

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

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

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**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**

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## 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?

The answer is a large one. We must create a more equitable and fair society through purposeful, compassionate government geared towards leveling the playing field for all people. Each of these communities faces unique struggles and those struggles intersect with disabilities in different ways. Addressing the racial achievement gap in public schools, providing ESL and citizenship classes, addressing wealth and income inequality, and creating a more inclusive society are necessary.

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

There are several key components to providing appropriate public education for students with disabilities. First, a well-designed and customized independent education plan for each student is required. Second, schools must have the appropriate staff and faculty that are educated and trained in teaching students with disabilities. Finally, school buildings need to be navigable by people with disabilities, which is a particular struggle in many schools built prior to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Illinois has numerous aging schools that weren't built with the needs of students with disabilities in mind.

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

I would support a state-level version of the Inclusive Home Design Act, federal legislation which would expand the number of affordable housing options to people with disabilities, which requires homes built with taxpayer assistance, subsidies, or incentives to include accessibility features for people with different mobility needs.

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

Illinois must ensure that the most vulnerable people with disabilities aren't segregated, warehoused, or excluded from receiving services that they are otherwise entitled to. To do so, we must invest more funding in home and community based services, shift state priorities from institutional care to HCBS, and invest in higher wages for community based services in order to recruit more staff. People with disabilities have the right to receive services in a community setting at all times with every reasonable effort taken to minimize waiting lists.

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

Part of the solution requires ensuring that building codes are enforced and designed to provide for different types of mobility not in their "hard" architecture such as elevators, ramps, and other accessibility features. It also involves educating businesses on best practices for making their locations more accessible to customers with disabilities, including shelving height, aisle width, and more.

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

I would support funding to retrofit existing train stations, L stations, and other public transit facilities to modern standards and to require that all new facilities are built with inclusive and comprehensive accessibility features.

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## Candidate's Questionnaire 2018

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

Collective bargaining rights must be preserved and expanded to protect these workers. In addition, I support a \$15 per hour minimum wage and earned sick leave at the state level.

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**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?

We need to ensure that state departments, especially those serving people with disabilities, have appropriate staffing and training. I would support legislation requiring the state to increase staff capacity as necessary to address this backlog.

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