**1. What policies and actions do you support to reduce the stigmas of people with disabilities that are barriers to employment, independence and equality?**

Andrew believes that people with disabilities have much to offer society, and that their contributions are regularly impeded due to the lack of enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). People with disabilities make up a large portion of the population, and everyone loses when these individuals can’t fully participate in society due to structural and systemic barriers. We need to rewrite the rules of our country so that they apply equally to everyone.

Addressing the barriers and stigma around employment should start at the federal level. The government should lead by example through hiring people with disabilities and valuing the contribution of people with disabilities in the workforce. The federal government should also ensure that all of its services, websites, and materials are accessible.

If the government improved enforcement of the ADA, people with disabilities would have more opportunities to find work and integrate into society. Andrew is committed to the consolidation of federal agencies that enforce the ADA into a synchronized single entity, ending the problematic fragmentation of our current system. He will appoint people with disabilities to positions to ensure that they are represented throughout the decision- and policy-making process.

Andrew supports policies that strengthen the enforcement of the ADA and ensure that the civil rights of people with disabilities are protected as the law requires. Andrew supports the Disability Integration Act (DIA), as well as increasing funding for special education.

**2. What is your record on improving the lives of people with disabilities? What have you done to enable people with disabilities to have competitive jobs, meaningful careers or become entrepreneurs?**

Andrew is the proud father of a son with autism, so issues surrounding disability have always been important to him. He and his wife, Evelyn, have been active participants in their community in advocating for the rights of people with disabilities, especially those with developmental disabilities. Evelyn is on the board of Kulture City, a non-profit that aims to make environments inclusive for people with autism. They have also volunteered or donated to causes surrounding autism. Andrew has hired people with disabilities on his campaign, and has ensured that necessary accommodations have been made readily available for those who needed them. He has made provisions for these individuals to work from home, have necessary access to transportation, and provided accessible desks and other needed office supplies.

**3. What specific workforce development strategies do you support that will empower youth with disabilities?**

Stigmas associated with people with disabilities have incorrectly labeled them as liabilities to our economy. But the truth is, if our economic system and government valued the lives and work of people with disabilities, then the nation would have more individuals in the workforce living happier, healthier, and satisfactory lives. Society would be more dynamic with the unique contributions and perspectives that only people with disabilities can offer. To integrate and accomplish this, Andrew will incentivize businesses to hire people with disabilities by offering tax benefits to those that provide adequate job training for people with disabilities.

**4. The jobs of the future will largely require post-secondary education or other credentials. Today 65 percent of students with disabilities complete high school. What policies do you advocate to support the academic and career success of students with disabilities, especially for students from historically marginalized communities and backgrounds?**

Ensuring youth with disabilities are ready for competitive employment will require preparing them early. This means rewriting the rules of our education system so that it works for all of our children. Empowering educators and families to help diagnose disabilities at earlier stages will ensure families can get the resources they need. In our current education system, our kids are not all right. It’s time for Congress to live up to its commitment to support students with disabilities. In addition to requiring Congress to meet its promised funding commitment to Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Andrew will expand federal funds by $10 billion during his administration.

Increasing resources also means providing more aides, making sure that students with disabilities are integrated into the classroom alongside their peers. Resources will also be used for equipping schools with advocates to inform families of the resources available to school-aged children with disabilities. Andrew supports moving away from the current pay-and-reimburse model so that parents don’t have to be financially well off to “front” the money for the resources they need for children with disabilities to thrive in school.

Ensuring that students with disabilities have equal access throughout their educational experience will require community support for families. This will remove the stigma of having a disability and ensure the health and well-being of the child with a disability. Optional support networks for parents who have raised or are raising children with similar disabilities can also help parents better understand what opportunities and resources best fit the needs of their child.

To tackle the low number of high school graduates with disabilities, Andrew will focus on nationwide access to the resources available to school-aged children with disabilities. This includes requiring equal education funding across the board, providing “coaches” for families to help them navigate through the system, and making healthcare more accessible for adolescents to have mental and physical health check-ins through Medicare for All.

**5. Immigration is a major social, political and workforce development issue. Given questions around the new “public charge” rule that impacts immigrants with disabilities, the challenges faced by English language learners with non-visible disabilities who want to develop their skills and the talent needs of the business community, what is your vision for enabling immigrants to succeed here in America?**

The processes that are used to determine who is ineligible for citizenship according to the public charge rule are ambiguous and inherently discriminatory, and they disproportionately target women, the poor, and those with disabilities. It’s inhumane to treat people with disabilities as a burden due to their health needs and deny them the protections that should be afforded to all people. This is a clear case where we need to rewrite the rules to put humanity first. Andrew will reverse the public charge rule. People with disabilities deserve the same immigration or asylum seeking opportunities as non-disabled people.

In addition to making sure the U.S. does not discriminate against immigrants with disabilities at the border, we must also ensure that immigrants are sufficiently cared for throughout the immigration process. Immigrants with disabilities deserve the same humane treatment and dignity as those without disabilities, and it’s important that our country provides people with the accommodations they need throughout their citizenship process. Andrew will work with the Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to ensure that people with disabilities have the support they need. Andrew will also implement policies to streamline the pathway to citizenship, and he is committed to supporting people with disabilities equally on that path.

**6. People with disabilities are twice as likely to be victims of crime as those without disabilities. This includes the fact that both children and adults with disabilities are more likely to be victims of rape or sexual assault. How would you address these issues?**

Educators, employers, caregivers, and any other individuals who are responsible for the safety of people with disabilities should be acutely aware of the risk of violence and sexual assault that people with disabilities face. These individuals should receive extensive training on how to recognize any signs and symptoms of abuse, know how to teach preventative measures to avoid increased risk, and know how to appropriately respond to any reports of abuse. Children should be taught to communicate effectively about any assault, violence, or abuse they have experienced or know of, and be provided with a safe environment to communicate those things.

**7. Today there are more than 750,000 people with disabilities behind bars. Many face serious barriers to reentry when they complete their sentences and return home. What reforms do you support to ensure that returning citizens with disabilities have the resources, skills and mental health support to succeed when they leave incarceration?**

Andrew is committed to comprehensive criminal justice reform. We need to move from the current punitive model that disproportionately targets the most marginalized among us, to a rehabilitative model that focuses on effective reintegration back into society and reducing recidivism rates. This will involve rewriting the rules that form the foundation of our criminal justice system so that we don’t continue our legacy of mass incarceration and recidivism.

During incarceration, people with disabilities should be guaranteed proper physical and mental health services. Andrew is also committed to implementing educational programs that will improve inmates’ economic and social mobility upon release. Andrew supports the “Housing First” model, which will provide housing to those experiencing homelessness. This model has proven to be highly effective wherever it has been implemented. He will also support legislation, like Ban the Box, to keep employers from broadly discriminating against individuals with criminal records to empower previously incarcerated individuals in securing employment upon release. Andrew believes the democratic process is only effective when all Americans participate. For this reason, he will restore the majority of the voting rights of inmates and ex-felons, including those with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities and the experience of incarceration can provide important perspectives that are just as valuable as their counterparts.

Additionally, Andrew’s $1,000 a month Freedom Dividend will provide those who are disproportionately at risk for incarceration, like those experiencing homelessness or poverty, with the funds necessary for shelter and other basic necessities. While providing people with the Freedom Dividend isn’t the sole solution to addressing the over-incarceration of people with disabilities, it is an important start. Medicare for All will also ensure that all returning citizens, including those will disabilities, have access to affordable healthcare that meet their needs.

**8. People with disabilities also are far more likely to suffer from police violence, partially because manifestations of disability can be misunderstood. How would you address these issues?**

People with disabilities are often incarcerated when it would be more appropriate to provide them with treatment for their conditions. Andrew will require law enforcement officers to participate in de-escalation training and mental health competency training courses, as well as ensure that they have the funding necessary to provide for mental health first responders. This will give law enforcement better alternatives in handling hostile situations rather than reactionary, unnecessary violence. There is no reason we should be using prisons as hospitals. Andrew is committed to investing in more community-based services and research-based treatments that are also less costly than jails and prisons.

**9. How would you ensure that people with disabilities have access to healthcare and the benefits they need while enabling them with opportunities to work to the best of their capacities without losing the supports they need to live? This relates to private healthcare as well as SSI, SSDI, Medicare and Medicaid.**

Andrew believes healthcare is a basic human right, which is why he plans to make it affordable and accessible to all Americans, without exception. His Medicare for All bill will include provisions requiring ADA compliance at all healthcare facilities, investments in telehealth and assistive technology, coverage for transportation to facilities and assistive mobility devices, coverage for all necessary medical devices and supplies, and access to experts during childhood for detection and care.

Under Andrew’s administration, Americans will receive a $1,000 monthly Freedom Dividend. It will empower people with disabilities more than any other program the U.S. currently has to offer because it is not a means-based program unlike current welfare programs. It is entirely unconditional and will not disqualify individuals from receiving healthcare coverage. It will stack on top of non-means tested programs, and be opt-in so that anyone who prefers their current benefits can maintain them.

**10. What are your thoughts on ensuring that people with disabilities have the option to live in their homes instead of institutions and still have the community attendant supports they need to live? Do you have a plan for affordable housing and to reduce homelessness for people with disabilities?**

Andrew supports the Disability Integration Act because people with disabilities deserve to choose where to receive their healthcare. Community-based services are less expensive and more effective, allowing people with disabilities to remain integrated and to participate in their communities. Past legislation has explicitly recognized the right of people with disabilities to remain integrated in their communities while receiving necessary treatment, but these laws have been poorly enforced. Andrew is committed to holding states and other entities accountable for providing individuals with disabilities the option to receive treatment where they best see fit. Our current system views people as costs, and only by rewriting the rules to put human value over economic value can we create an economy that works for everyone.

**11. The federal law and benefits system punish people who want to work or whose families want to help them. For example, currently people with disabilities who are on SSI are prohibited of having more than $2,000 liquid assets at any one time. Furthermore, current law limits parents and grandparents to helping their children financially who acquired their disability prior to age 26 but not if they acquire a disability after age 26. What will you do to ensure that people have more options than being forced to choose between access to supports, benefits and service or the opportunity to pursue work, careers and an income?**

People with disabilities who use government assistance should not be forced to choose between necessary benefits and meaningful employment. The Freedom Dividend will rewrite the rules of how our support systems work by doing the opposite of what our current welfare system does: it will empower people to participate in the workforce. Since the Freedom Dividend is unconditional, people with disabilities can become employed without fear of losing essential supports, treatments, or services.

Andrew’s expansion of telehealth services will provide new and more convenient ways for people with disabilities to access affordable preventative care including mobility devices, hearing aids, adequate catheters, and sufficient physical therapy visits to prevent further secondary conditions. He will also ensure ADA compliance for all healthcare providers and transportation options.

**12. How would you advance innovations (i.e., assistive technologies, devices) that can help people with disabilities become more successfully employed, productive and independent?**

Accessible technology is key to community integration. New technologies can have a major impact on the ability of people with disabilities to find options for more accessible employment, healthcare, and transportation. Andrew’s Medicare for All plan has an emphasis on investment in telehealth, which will provide new incredible accessibility and opportunity for people with disabilities to receive the healthcare they need, when they need it.

Additionally, having access to the internet is an essential component of social and community integration. Andrew’s Medicare for All plan will include funding to provide access to Internet of Things-enabled devices to people with disabilities who need them. Doing this would add incentive for companies to ensure their products are fully accessible.

Other technology, like autonomous vehicles, offers promising new levels of access to people with disabilities. Andrew will make “accessible” the new norm in the U.S. by ensuring that people with disabilities have access to all of the benefits that come with new technology. There is no reason that any new technology should lack accessible features so that all people can use it, including people with disabilities.

**13. What are your plans to ensure that the bureaucracy of the Veterans Administration supports and serves veterans with disabilities? What is your plan to support veterans with disabilities, especially female veterans with disabilities?**

Andrew believes veterans should be better prepared for reintegration into civilian life and will establish a reverse boot camp that teaches veterans life skills such as financial literacy and finding a new career outside of the military. Andrew will work with state licensing boards, and other organizations that are involved in certifications, to ensure that those who are trained by the military can seamlessly transition to a job in the civilian economy by modernizing and streamlining the application and payment system so that our veterans don’t need to jump through additional hoops in order to use their GI Bill.

Andrew’s Medicare for All plan will allow the VA to maintain a role and voice in veteran health to transition to focusing on veteran-specific issues (prosthetics, chronic ailments related to battlefield injury, mental health and PTSD) and maintaining expertise in these areas. Until that transition, Andrew is committed to easing the transition from TRICARE to the VA system through improved administration and enrollment. He will also improve funding to veteran healthcare operations, as well as funding to research for suicide prevention and PTSD/TBI treatment, long-term effects of battlefield-related injuries, exposure to substances unique to combat environments, and similar areas should be researched to find the optimal treatments. There also needs to be a push to hire doctors who specialize in treatment of women’s issues, including sexual trauma, and issues facing our transgender veterans, as well as expanding options for these veterans to receive treatment outside of the VA system if they so choose.

Veterans are also disproportionately affected by homelessness. Andrew will establish a census like system that will conduct research and find all of our homeless veterans and get them and their information into the VA system. This will allow the health professionals to treat any mental or physical health issues that are contributing to the homelessness, as well as enroll them in other programs to help with employment, financial literacy, general life skills, and affordable housing. Andrew has more veteran related policies that can be accessed on his website.

**14. People with disabilities are at extreme risk from climate change. What are your plans to reduce the climate crisis and to create emergency solutions for people with disabilities when disasters strike?**

As disasters across the nation are increasing in both intensity and frequency, it’s important that all federal programs like FEMA are inclusive and have provisions for people with disabilities. This is especially important since people with disabilities are more likely to experience the negative impacts of climate change and natural disasters. They are also more likely to experience poverty and homelessness, which exacerbates their risk of harm during disasters. Andrew is in favor of using federal funding to relocate families and individuals whose communities have become uninhabitable due to the effects of climate change. Andrew will ensure that the DOJ and Homeland Security are sufficiently prepared to support the needs of people with disabilities, as required by law.

**15. Are your office, website and events accessible to people with disabilities? Have you identified a process for including people with disabilities in your staff and policy advisors? If yes, please describe.**

Andrew made accessibility on his website a priority early in his campaign. The campaign website has an Accessibility Menu, which provides various features for people with disabilities. It also includes an audio reading of the page and keyboard navigation. Andrew has individuals on his staff with disabilities, including a full-time policy advisor. Accommodations have been made for his staff with disabilities, and Andrew’s campaign has held headquarter building accountable for ADA compliance when office spaces have not met requirements for accessibility.