**QUESTION 1: Do you have designated advisors and clear processes for making decisions on disability issues? If yes, please describe.**

**ANSWER:** I have learned about disability issues from constituent calls seeking assistance as well as disability community meetings as a member of the legislature. While I do not have a designated advisor on disability issues as my staff is quite small and we lack resources to research many issues as we would like, I would very much like to learn more and appreciate input from advocated both nationally and in state.

**QUESTION 2: Is your campaign accessible and inclusive to people with disabilities? If yes, please describe.**

**ANSWER:** Of course.

We hold meet and greets at various locations including restaurants. We ask the locations if their events are accessible prior to setting an event up and it is our goal to hold events at locations that are accessible.

Going forward, we will ask if any accommodations are needed on registration forms. In addition, we have begun the process of learning about adding captions to videos for people who are deaf or hearing impaired and alt text to images on our website for individuals using screen readers.

**QUESTION 3: Do you have a proven record on improving or a plan to improve the lives of people with disabilities? If yes, please describe.**

**ANSWER:**Throughout my legislative experience, I have been a strong advocate for those with disabilities.

**QUESTION 4: Do you have a plan/commitment to reduce the stigmas about people with disabilities that are barriers to employment, independence and equality? If yes, please describe.**

**ANSWER:**Getting people with disabilities integrated into the workforce and as independent individuals is good policy, not just because it is fiscally responsible, but also because they are our friends and neighbors and deserve these opportunities. 55,633 people in Delaware have a disability, and it is the only minority group anyone can join at any time. Just 36 percent of people with disabilities in Delaware are employed, compared to 75 percent of those without a disability. It is necessary to break down barriers that people with disabilities face and ensure that the 3,800 youth with disabilities between the ages of 16 and 21 living in Delaware who are hoping to enter the workforce have the opportunity to do so.

Reducing stigma must begin by highlighting Delaware-based employers who best showcase the benefits of hiring people with disabilities and recruiting diverse talent to meet employer needs. The best way to fight stigmas is to let employers see the facts from other employers who are already succeeding by hiring people with disabilities.

**QUESTION 5: Do you have a proven record on enabling, or a plan to enable, people with disabilities to have jobs, careers and to start their own businesses? Do you have specific strategies for youth employment for people with disabilities and/or sector strategies such as jobs and careers in STEM, hospitality, healthcare and elder care? If yes, please describe.**

**ANSWER:**I completely support enabling folks to have jobs and start businesses. By increasing opportunities for people with disabilities to have jobs, careers and start their own businesses, the entire state will benefit. Previously, I have made calls on behalf of constituents to get their children with disabilities employment at local businesses.

**QUESTION 6: Do you have a plan to enable students with disabilities, including those from historically marginalized communities and backgrounds, to receive the diagnosis, Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and accommodations/services they need to succeed in school and be prepared for competitive employment? If yes, please describe.**

**ANSWER:**When people with disabilities turn 21, they reach the edge of a cliff and lose many services. They need a transition plan. When I’ve previously looked into it, I was told more money was needed to make it happen. My recollection is tremendous frustration for the jump from the end of IDEA funding to living as an adult.

Getting back in to the culture of work is tough and it is important for a transition plan to be created for students with disabilities for when those services end. I will support and lead efforts to ease this transition.

**QUESTION  7: Do you have a plan to reform the benefits system (Medicaid, Medicaid buy-in) to enable people with disabilities to work to the best of their capacities without losing supports they need to work? If yes, please describe.**

**ANSWER:**In the welfare system, I have been looking at applying for waivers on the formulas on when assistance drops off. I believe the same needs to happen for people receiving disability benefits. People get to the point where they are trying to become self sufficient and then we cut their assistance, frequently forcing them to lose their independence. If we can get some flexibility from the federal government, then states can change the formulas to make it possible for people with disabilities to work without losing necessary supports. I will actively pursue fixing the funding formulas to help those with disabilities have a greater chance at becoming and remaining independent and self-sufficient.

**QUESTION 8: Do you have a plan to ensure people with disabilities are eligible for affordable health insurance regardless of pre-existing conditions? If yes, please describe.**

**ANSWER:**Nearly 40 percent of Delaware’s state budget is for Medicaid or healthcare for employees. On the private side, costs are rising. The current system cannot stand; Obamacare is a disaster for Delaware. I do not have a specific policy proposal but it is a very legitimate point that people with disabilities need to continue to receive coverage that is affordable and we need to definitely allow for those with pre-existing conditions access to quality health care.

**QUESTION 9: Do you have a plan to provide home and community-based services to people with disabilities who would rather live in their own homes instead of institutions, and have the community attendant supports they need to work? If yes, please describe.**

**ANSWER:**In Delaware, DHSS is actively working with folks that would otherwise be transitioned into nursing homes and other intuitional settings, working very hard to create incentives and support to keep people at home. I would like to continue this effort that and make that one of our priority policy goals.

**QUESTION 10: Do you have a plan to ensure that individuals with disabilities receive services that would prevent them from being swept up into the criminal justice system, divert individuals with disabilities who are arrested to treatment options in lieu of jail where appropriate, receive needed accommodations in the criminal justice process and while incarcerated, and offer appropriate re-entry support to help individuals with disabilities leaving jails and prisons re-integrate into their communities and secure jobs? If yes, please describe.**

**ANSWER:**Prison needs to be a dramatically more productive place than it is. I am opposed to solutions on the front-end; if someone commits a crime, that individual needs to be in system. And I am not recommending lesser time. That being said, though, the system needs to be more helpful. One of my proposals is changing prison environments. This includes building new facilities. Delaware has no local jails. A huge portion of making time in incarceration more productive is counseling – not just for mental health but also across the entire spectrum. Doing so will help people with disabilities re-integrate into their communities and secure employment upon release.

**QUESTION 11: People with disabilities are twice as likely to be victims of crime as those without disabilities. People with disabilities also are far more likely to suffer from police violence, partially because manifestations of disability can be misunderstood as defiant behavior. Do you have a plan to address these issues? If yes, please describe.**

**ANSWER:**In Delaware, an attack on an individual with a disability is considered a hate crime, which I support. Regarding police violence, more awareness training and education is needed for law enforcement. I know our law enforcement community would welcome more training on these issues.

**QUESTION 12: Both children and adults with disabilities are more likely to be victims of rape or sexual assault. Do you have a plan to address this issue? If yes, please describe.**

**ANSWER:**Education is needed. I was not aware of this information but as people are made aware of the signs and the risk for certain populations that are more vulnerable, then we can hopefully curb this. It’s vitally important that those in our education, non-profit and other communities receive the appropriate awareness training.

**QUESTION 13: Do you have a plan for veterans with disabilities facing barriers transitioning from active duty to civilian employment? If yes, please describe.**

**ANSWER:**Increase incentives for hiring veterans in state government, including for veterans with disabilities. I am a supporter of Victory Village, which provides housing and other supports for veterans, including training for veterans with disabilities and support in the workforce.

**QUESTION 14: Do you have a plan for accessible, affordable, integrated housing to allow people with disabilities to live in the communities where they work or are seeking work? If yes, please describe.**

**ANSWER:**Delaware has a housing shortage on for all people on the low-income side and there are not enough rentals. This is a serious problem up and down the state for people with and without disabilities. The long-term answer is greater economic viability. My proposed policies to strengthen our economy will significantly help the housing shortage.

**QUESTION 15: Do you have a plan to address the lack of accessible transportation options that is a barrier to work for people with disabilities? If yes, please describe.**

**ANSWER:**Delaware has one of the most extensive and generous Paratransit programs in the country. It is expensive, so every year there are debates on how to streamline it. I absolutely support the continued funding of Paratransit, but there are areas that can be improved. For example, the routing is not done as efficiently as it could be. There are software technology solutions that could improve the routing that are not being utilized, which could improve efficiency, save money and help ensure the viability of the program.

**QUESTION 16: Do you have a plan to advance innovations (i.e., assistive technologies, devices) that can help people with disabilities become more successfully employed, productive and independent? If yes, please describe.**

**ANSWER:**Delaware Easter Seals has a relatively new program that showcases what’s available in adaptive technology. I saw some of the most innovative programs at their event and plan on learning more.