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

**ANSWER:**Yes. I am a candidate who faces challenges and opportunities based on my own disabilities. I lost my sight in one eye many years ago. Our campaign receives advice from disability advocates that draw not only on their personal experiences with disability, but who have extensive policy experience. Bambi Polotzola in the Governor’s Office as Director of Disability affairs advises us and helps us connect with advocacy leaders across the state. As a former school teacher, I have seen how effective community-based advocacy for disability rights has been in Louisiana. On the campaign trail, I learn more and more about what is working and how we are failing citizens with disabilities first hand.

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

**ANSWER:**Yes. My team has worked hard to incorporate technology that makes our campaign more accessible, such as closed captioning on our campaign audio/visual materials and we’ll soon be launching more information on my positions so that it is accessible in writing for members of the deaf community, too. I’m excited to work with RespectAbility to communicate with members of the disability rights community to make our campaign even more inclusive.

**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:**Yes. As a child, one of my biggest role models was my uncle, a man who was challenged with physical disabilities after a terrible accident. My Uncle’s struggle inspired my populist sensibility.

In 2000 I worked to get the wasteful spending rededicated to mental health programs in the Louisiana Senate. I was an early, vocal supporter of stem cell research which has led to and will continue to unlock cures and treatments for people with disabilities.

I’m very proud of my stand against the destructive policies of Governor Bobby Jindal who tried to close state-run mental hospitals – which impacted even outpatient care – creating hardships for families and nursing homes and making it even harder for people with mental health challenges to stay in their homes.

As a State Senator for 27 years, I proudly supported efforts to fully fund waiver programs that pay for home and community based services for all our citizens in need.

**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:**Yes. Constitutional Rights are afforded to all people regardless of whether they are people with a disability. People with disabilities infuse our society with the best America has to offer, as over fifty million Americans live with some form of disability. It’s our job as a nation, to make sure those fifty million people thrive as they contribute to our society at every level. I will fight to grow the impact and reach of the ADA until it is fully effective for every person with a disability in America. Whatever it takes to eradicate discrimination, barriers to employment, and roadblocks to independence, as a person with disabilities, I will not stop until the job is done.

**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:**Yes. Throughout my 40 years of public service and throughout my time as a small business owner, I have seen time and time again the unique contributions that people with disabilities bring to the workplace. Too many businesses aren’t educated about the skill set that people with disabilities offer. And for that reason, too many Americans with a disability are under employed or unemployed.

In order to ensure that we use the talents of every American to grow our economy, I will support policies that promote the independence of people with disabilities and expand employment opportunities in the recently passed WIOA. I will support transitions from graduation to employment that assist students with disabilities that age out of school based services.

**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:**Yes. Full funding for diagnosticians, and full supports for schools across the country is the first step towards achieving equality and setting all our kids up for success. The Federal Government is currently authorized to provide 40 percent of the average per-pupil public expenditure for students with disabilities. I support moving towards that goal more every year. I also support universal preschool which can help get early and much needed support for students with disabilities who currently go without.

**QUESTION  7: Do you have a plan to reform the benefits system (Medicaid, Medicaid buyin) 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:**Yes. We should grow grants that encourage employer incentives. I believe we need a robust conversation and strategy around how to ensure that we don’t disincentive any worker by failing to provide healthcare options to working and non-working people with disabilities.

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

**ANSWER:**Yes. I want to improve coverage for people with disabilities including expanding services and access to mental health and I will support changes to the ACA that accommodate all families that are struggling to access healthcare options for people with disabilities including families affected by autism.

**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:**Yes. Throughout my career I have supported home and community based services waivers at the state level that allow for choices as working families care for those with severe disabilities. I believe that investment helps families continue to work and be productive and gives the best quality of life to severely disabled citizens. I will continue to fight for home and community based services in the United States Senate, especially for more federal match for state funded programs, including interstate portability for home and community based services.

**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 reentry support to help individuals with disabilities leaving jails and prisons reintegrate into their communities and secure jobs? If yes, please describe.**

**ANSWER:**Yes. Louisiana is plagued by the school-to-prison pipeline and our state imprisons more people per capital than any other place in the world. The mental health challenges facing our children cause many of them to end up in the criminal justice system, solely because they went without needed care. I’m committed to any and all policies that can improve access to mental health for our youth and divert them from a collision course with the criminal justice system. Investments in our kids and their health are much more cost effective than paying to imprison them as adults and investing in our kids is the right thing to do. I am committed to comprehensive criminal justice reform.

**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:**I support better training for officers and first responders that will increase trust between citizens and responders and eradicate negative consequences that result from lack of understanding. Law enforcement training is a must. I will fight for federal matching funds for body cameras for local law enforcement. Alternatives to incarceration must be maximized and communication and cooperation among agencies to provide access to services must be improved.

I will stand up for enforcement of student rights under IDEA to make sure victims of bullying are not removed from inclusive settings, and to eradicate the use of physical restraints in public schools. These policies should be written into every IEP.

**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:**We need to ensure the very best screening, training and continuing education for professionals dealing with people with disabilities and their families. Streamlining reporting and investigation is a must. I will support legislation and policies that protect people with disabilities as a top priority.

**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:**I support increased tax credits for those who employ veterans with disabilities. I also want to improve discrimination protections for veterans and military families set out in the Uniformed Services Reemployment and Readjustment Act (USERRA) and the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA).

**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:**Yes. I will work with HUD and all agencies to ensure that housing plans for people with disabilities are part of every single federally funded housing development. Housing that is nearby accepting and accessible work places and provides plenty of choice with regard to where people with disabilities reside is not only the right thing to do, but it makes the most sense for our economy as people with disabilities work to be a productive sector in our workforce and our society.

**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:**I plan to support investment in infrastructure that will improve access to public transportation to assist all American workers and those seeking access to work. I agree that we need to invest in public transit in rural communities and federal investment in local programs that work with vulnerable communities to create transit access for people with disabilities. I support funding and expansion of protections built into the ADA.

**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:**I want to work for better coordination between agencies of government to guarantee full inclusion. We have so many untapped, affordable resources at our fingertips to make sure that inclusive technologies are fully integrated into ever federal and state project, job, and program.

**QUESTION 17: In your foreign policy and national security plan, do you plan to continue America’s tradition of standing up for the rights of oppressed people, including people with disabilities, around the world? If yes, please describe.**

**ANSWER:**Disability rights are human rights. America must set an example here at home, and live our values in a global sense by refusing to accept discrimination in every corner of the world. I will support policies that promote disability rights in our trade deals, diplomatic endeavors and national security projects.