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

**ANSWER:**Yes. As Missouri’s Secretary of State, I am the state’s chief election official and it is my job to make sure everyone who is eligible to vote has the ability to do so. I have made it a personal policy to oppose extreme voter ID laws, which if enacted would disproportionately disenfranchise disabled voters. My staff and I are committed to preventing the disenfranchisement of the disabled and making voting easier for every eligible voter, particularly those with disabilities.

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

**ANSWER:**Yes. In the case of our campaign, I have worked hard to create an environment that is open to everyone, particularly in our hiring policies. Our communications director, Chris Hayden was born with a significant physical disability and is a critical and highly visible member of the campaign’s senior staff as my chief spokesperson. It is of personal importance to me that our campaign is accessible and inclusive of all people, including those with disabilities.

**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. During my campaign for the U.S. Senate, I have traveled across the state talking to Missourians and heard first-hand the problems they face. For those with disabilities, inadequate healthcare can be a major obstacle. As Senator, it is my promise to fight for working Missourians of all abilities and strengthen the middle class. To do that, we need to make sure the minimum wage is a livable wage, provide targeted tax relief for small businesses, give the middle class a tax break, and end the gender wage gap.

As Secretary of State, it is my responsibility to administer the state library, including the Wolfner Library. During my tenure I have championed the Wolfner Library, which serves as a free service for Missourians who are unable to use standard print materials because of a visual or physical disability and provides thousands of books in audio and braille form, as well as magazines and other services.

**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. Everyone should be treated equally and with the dignity and respect they deserve – this is the core value of what it means to be an American. It is imperative that we end social stigmas about people with disabilities, which only can be achieved once we end the systemic and institutional barriers people with disabilities face. That means ending discrimination in the workforce and working with schools to address bullying so children do not grow up unaware of how their actions can hurt others. Throughout my career, whether in the Missouri State House or serving in Afghanistan, I have stood up for all Missourians and will continue to do so in Washington.

**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. As a country, we need to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to succeed. Considering that those with disabilities are more likely to face barriers to the workforce and thus their own financial independence, it is imperative that we strengthen the middle class, improve public education and treat higher education like a public good. I believe that all families should have access to a high-quality public school for their children and have given my support to initiatives that would help achieve that, including funding non-compulsory early education programs, setting clear standards for federal funding so all children have the tools to succeed, and advocating for our teachers so they receive the proper job training and benefits needed to excel in the workplace.

At both the federal and state level, we need to combat the rising cost of higher education. Some of my policy ideas to achieve this include: allowing students to refinance their student loans similar to a loan for a house or a car; placing a cap on federal student loan interest rates; expanding the Pell Grant program to reduce dependency on college loans for low-income students; creating standards for for-profit colleges to ensure graduates are prepared for gainful employment, and that fraudulent recruitment and financial practices do not devalue a student’s degree; and increasing diversity on college campuses, through pre-existing initiatives such as recruiting from underrepresented communities and establishing faculty diversity standards.

**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. I believe the federal government can and should help provide communities the resources they need to empower teachers and parents, ensuring that our children receive the best education possible and giving every child the same opportunity for a quality education. For students with disabilities, it is critical that schools have the resources they need to empower these students to receive the support they deserve. One way to improve conditions for schools and the students with disabilities they teach is increase funding for schools, both at the federal level and here in Missouri through the foundation formula. We also need to do a better job of targeting the schools where it would be most effective. With school funding varying from school district to school district, the federal government needs to set clear standards (with cost-of-living adjustments) for minimum funding to ensure all children, regardless of where they live, have access to a high quality education.

**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 must ensure that Medicaid remains strong for the Americans who need it the most. I support protecting it and fighting back against efforts to turn it into a voucher program. At the federal level, we need to make sure those with disabilities have the opportunity to get ahead without risking benefits they rely on.

I supported Governor Nixon’s recent signing into law a bill that would raise the amount a disabled beneficiary could have in savings and still qualify for Medicaid from $1,000 to $5,000. Disabled Missourians should still be able to have the security of a substantial savings account without losing the benefits they need.

**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, while I believe there are still changes that need to be made to the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the fact that individuals are no longer discriminated against or denied coverage based on a pre-existing condition is a major step forward. Additional changes I would support include: introducing a cheaper plan for Americans who are fortunate enough to not need much medical care, like the Expanded Consumer Choice Act, which would create a new tier of coverage through the marketplaces; fully funding the FDA’s Office of Generic Drugs to clear out their backlog of generic drugs for approval, which will provide consumers more affordable options and provide much needed financial relief, particularly to those with disabilities; and lifting the ban on allowing Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices, which would help cut costs for more than 37 million seniors and save Medicare and tax dollars.

**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:**As Senator, I would support initiatives that would allow those with disabilities to live with dignity and independence in their own homes.

**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:**As a country, we need to end the school-to-prison pipeline. It is not just good for our communities, but good economics. Correction costs for states have quadrupled in the last 20 years to nearly $60 billion a year nationally and Missouri has some of the highest rates of recidivism in the U.S. As Senator, I will fight for a criminal justice system that is fair and just, giving all Americans, including those with disabilities the appropriate resources during incarceration so we can reduce recidivism and treat all individuals with respect.

I do support diverting individuals with disabilities who are arrested to treatment options in lieu of jail where appropriate, and ensuring needed accommodations are met for incarcerated individuals with disabilities. There are also things we can do to prevent disabled individuals from entering the criminal justice system to begin with, starting with putting an end to the school-to-prison pipeline. We also need to give those swept up into the criminal justice system a chance to get their lives back on track, which is why I support the “ban the box” movement, job training in communities, and educational programs in prisons.

**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:**Yes, I believe Congress should play a role in supporting state and local law enforcement so that everyone, regardless of their background, feels safe and protected under the law. Commonsense solutions such as body cameras can play a vital role in encouraging transparency and accountability among communities and police enforcement alike. It is also important that law enforcement receives the proper training so they can help identify and work with individuals suffering from disability and respond accordingly.

**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:**Yes. As a nation, we must do better to fight against rape and sexual assault. Given that people with disabilities are more likely to face sexual violence, this is an issue of the utmost urgency. I support criminal background checks for those working with people with disabilities and making sure survivors are given the utmost protection under the law.

I have a record of working to protect victims of sexual assault and rape as Secretary of State. I worked to expand Missouri’s Safe at Home program, which allows victims of rape and sexual assault to use an alternative address to keep their whereabouts unknown to their assailants.

**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:**As a veteran of the war in Afghanistan, I have seen firsthand my fellow soldiers return from active duty with disabilities incurred during their service to our country. With the number of veterans with disabilities increasing, it has become imperative for our country to not turn our backs on the men and women in uniform who gave so much. This includes making sure our veterans, particularly those with disabilities, have the resources and support they need upon return. I fully support laws — such as the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act and Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act – that protect veterans from employment discrimination.

I have also called for a larger solution to fix the broken VA system. That includes cutting red tape and reducing cumbersome paperwork requirements. Government bureaucracy should not be an obstacle to treatment at VA hospitals or receiving benefits that veterans have earned. While I was in the service, much of the paperwork was done automatically, but once men and women become veterans, they’re on their own when they need it most– and that needs to be fixed. In doing so we can provide the care and support our veterans with disabilities need.

As Secretary of State, I pushed for passage of the Startups for Soldiers Act, which would waive all business start-up fees for members of the Missouri National Guard and active duty military members returning to Missouri. It is important to me that veterans, with or without disabilities, who have dreams of starting their own businesses have the tools to do so.

**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. Given the lack of affordable housing options and the disproportionate impact this has on those with a disability, it is imperative that Congress continue to support affordable housing options that encourage independent living while combatting homelessness.

**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:**Yes. Public transportation is a public good, and that includes providing accommodations for people with a disability, particularly when considering the economic barriers many already face. I would support efforts to expand public transportation options so those with disabilities will not be forced to rely on others and can independently get to and from where they need to be.

**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:**Yes. As Senator, I would support efforts to provide assistive technologies for people with disabilities. By leveling the playing field through assistive technologies, we can help promote greater independence among those with a disability and ensure a more inclusive society. I would support incentives for companies that develop such technologies to invest in research and development and bring more new innovations to market for people with disabilities.

**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:**Yes. Throughout my career, I have stood up for those who need it most. As a military intelligence officer in Afghanistan, I worked to investigate groups and individuals suspected of assisting Al Qaeda and the Taliban – oppressive groups who went after the most vulnerable. Fighting against discrimination is an American value and necessary in promoting stability in the world. As Senator, I will make sure the U.S. remains a leader on these issues and assists governments as they make the transitions to a fully inclusive society.