**EDUCATION & SKILLS: What is your plan for ensuring that all students with disabilities, including English Language Learners, receive a quality and appropriate education to acquire critical and marketable skills?**

All students deserve equal access to high-quality education and work needs to be done to close the developmental and graduation gap between students with disabilities and their counterparts. We have to increase IDEA funding to extend the accessibility of classes to cover all eligible students and eliminate barriers for students with disabilities so they have access to the same opportunities as other students, including training teachers on how to better accommodate students.

**EMPLOYMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP: If elected, what will you do to advance opportunities for people with disabilities who want to work and earn an income, just like anyone else? How will you support employers, large and small, to recruit and hire workers with disabilities? How will you promote evidence-based policies and best practices leading to meaningful careers as well as disability entrepreneurship opportunities?**

I believe that one of the largest barriers to employment of disabled individuals is that many workplaces create barriers for people with mobility disabilities. That means that workplaces lack the physical infrastructure to accommodate persons with disabilities, there is a lack of training and education materials that are accessible to all, public transportation is not fully accessible, and many disabled persons find themselves victims of discrimination because of the stigma that comes with being disabled. These things can be fixed by training employers and staff, creating funding for employers that transform their workplaces to make them more accessible, and encouraging and incentivizing private sector programs that focus on training people with disabilities for full-time employment.

**ACCESS & INCLUSION: Whether or not you have a formal platform, what specific plans do you have to incorporate the voices of people with disabilities into your decision-making processes, if elected? What steps, if any, have you taken to make your campaign accessible for people with disabilities and to ensure that our voices are heard?**

The entire philosophy behind my campaign slogan “Every County, Every Vote” is that Pennsylvanians are being left behind, and they shouldn’t be; no matter where they are from or who they are. As Senator, I look forward to partnering with the vast disability community leaders in Pennsylvania to advocate for continued equality and accessibility for persons within the community. COVID-19 has highlighted the advancements in technology and work from home accommodations that should be more widespread to Americans. One example that we still struggle with in Pennsylvania is supporting commuters’ accessible transportation through SEPTA, the public transportation infrastructure in the Philadelphia area. Many of the affordable options are not accessible; however, the pandemic has eliminated and reduced this burden on many Pennsylvanians by completely changing our culture around the ability to think creatively about different work environments that will benefit all Pennsylvanians and be more accessible to all. In addition, the pandemic has also affected many people struggling with exacerbated mental health issues. Part of the additional COVID-19 relief funds and reforms to the Affordable Care Act need to greatly change how we address mental health issues and the rising amount of Americans suffering from the after effects of the pandemic. Mental health care should be included more within our healthcare system because right now, it is not affordable. Our campaign strongly believes in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our hiring practices have been inclusive and accessible, and we have incorporated a hybrid work from home policy to accommodate the fluctuation in the COVID-19 pandemic. My team includes staff who identify with the disability community and regularly have input into how we communicate with Pennsylvania voters and make our content accessible to as many voters as possible. We are intentional about the venues we use, the office space we lease, and the technology we use to make sure our team and each staff member feel they have the resources they have to be successful.

**FIGHTING STIGMAS: If elected, what will be your plan to fight stigmas, highlight the disability community, and promote higher expectations for success?**

To fight stigmas and support the disability community, we must first educate people through training, to remove misconceptions and inaccurate presumptions they may make about people with disabilities. Second, we must collaborate with people with disabilities on advice because their input will be crucial in educating others about disabilities. And lastly, we must eliminate unnecessary barriers during the hiring and onboarding process to allow more opportunity to people with disabilities.

**OTHER KEY ISSUES: What additional policies and priorities, other than those already discussed above, do you plan to focus on to improve the lives of people with disabilities? If you have yet to develop them, what is your plan to learn about disability issues?**

Several of my top priorities directly impact people with disabilities. They include income inequality and economic injustices; raising wages and benefits for working families and eliminating subminimum wages for people with disabilities; reforming the criminal justice system; passing antidiscrimination protections for the LGBTQ+ community; protecting and expanding the right to vote; and protecting and expanding the union way of life.

I want to continue to partner and collaborate with disability advocates and experts on ways to continue to break down barriers for Pennsylvanians and Americans alike.  There is no better way to educate oneself and be an ally to the community than to collaborate with and employ the advice of the people who are impacted by these issues on a daily basis.