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

**ANSWER:**Yes. As a former HR Director in state government for over 30 years, I was responsible for ensuring compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and provided training and interpretation of the ADA. As Director of HR for the Department of Administration, I worked very closely with the Director of the Governor’s Advocacy Council for Persons with Disabilities (GACPD), because this agency fell under the leadership of the Department of Administration. I know many people who work on behalf of PwDs including Julia Leggett who is a lobbyist. As with every issue, I rely on those with first­hand experience and expertise for input and advice in my campaign and will continue to include diverse, trusted sources in office.

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

**ANSWER:**Yes. Our office is equipped with ADA designated parking spaces, on-­ramps, wide doors, functioning elevator, as well as wide bathroom stalls and accessible countertops and sinks. We encourage people with disabilities (PwDs) to get involved and volunteer on our campaign.

**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. In my service as a mother, teacher, County Commissioner, State Representative, and Human Resources Director; I have been supportive of increasing support and opportunity for all including PwDs. As Lt Governor, I will have appointments to an array of state boards, particularly those that oversee public education in the state, and a great opportunity to ensure North Carolinians with disabilities have a seat at the table. Additionally, I was happy to stand in support of the ADA in 1990, Help America Vote Act in 2002, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 2004, and the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 among others. More specifically, healthcare for all is something I have always strived for. Universal access to high­-quality, affordable healthcare is essential, and expanding Medicaid is a key component of that mission. As we improve healthcare in this country for everyone ­ PwDs are direct beneficiaries. I will continue to fight to improve the lives of all North Carolinians, including North Carolinians 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:**Yes. I am committed to ameliorating the stigmas that face PwDs. I believe that education and opportunity are two key areas of improvement. We need to educate our children and adults about disabilities in schools and through public relations. The other piece is providing economic opportunity to PwDs. I support Secretary Clinton’s plan to build an America that leads the world in tearing down the barriers that PwDs face and expanding on the promise the ADA ushered in a quarter­-century ago. We need to look at specific programs that provide economic opportunities to PwDs and expand them. Additionally, we need to repeal House Bill 2 which limits municipalities’ authority to set employees’ contractual obligations.

**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. I am proud to have supported lifting many barriers to economic opportunity for PwDs ­ such as architectural requirements and educational programs. Today, only 30 percent of PwDs are working, while 70 percent want to work. Providing resources to successfully implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act as well as cultivating partnerships to create programs that connect PwDs to jobs, internships, and apprenticeships is pivotal. We need to expand affirmative action and anti­-discrimination protections for all minorities, which will directly benefit PwDs ­ the largest minority in the country. As Lt Governor, I would sit on the State Board for the NC Community College System, where I’d advance career training programs in our community colleges and expand access for PwDs.

**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. Education is the great equalizer, but it needs to be adequately funded, designed to connect with its target audience, and executed effectively in order to work well. The state constitution requires the State to provide adequate funding and services to ensure that all students receive “the opportunity for a sound basic education.” The first step here is to fulfill our commitment to properly and fully fund public education for every student in North Carolina. The second is to identify the needs of each student, which requires diagnosing disabilities. If we’re miseducating our children, then we’re setting them up for failure, and that is unacceptable. As Lt. Governor, I will advocate for our youth on the State Board of Education and build coalitions in the General Assembly.

**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 need to expand Medicaid per the ACA immediately. It is an irresponsible waste of taxpayer dollars and a grave disservice to the state’s public health to not expand Medicaid. Moreover, we need to expand Medicaid further to PwDs by raising the income and asset restriction so as to not discourage PwDs from pursuing economic advancement because the policy forces them to choose between coverage and quality work. Expanding Medicaid not only the right thing to do, it is smart policy.

**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. As a proponent for expanding access to high­-quality, affordable healthcare, I stand by the ACA. Although we should build on the ACA to guarantee better care at a more affordable rate, the ACA is a necessary step in the right direction. One of the most important clauses of the ACA is guaranteeing coverage for those with pre­existing conditions. Discrimination is unacceptable, and denying coverage to PwDs or those with pre­existing conditions is discrimination with life and death consequences. In any reiteration of the ACA, anti­-discrimination clauses and guaranteed coverage for pre­existing conditions must be included. Furthermore, we need to provide our Commissioner of Insurance with the tools needed to increase the competitiveness of our current market and increase the number of options for coverage. I will work with all of the stakeholders to to provide access to quality 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:**Yes. Home care is one of the best, most efficient methods of care. I will to continue to advocate for the expansion of home care and community-­based services to PwDs through the expansion of Medicaid. Increasing the cap on income and asset eligibility as well as providing more funding to attract and retain talented home care workers are key to providing quality care in the home and community. As Lt. Governor, I will build coalitions in state government and expand the training programs in our community colleges.

**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. We need to be more sensitive to disabilities and better adept at treating patients and correcting criminal behavior. In order to be more sensitive and take a more effective approach, we need to be informed as to whether a suspect has a diagnosis. With that knowledge, we can implement effective treatment toward a solution as opposed to exacerbating the current situation of having 750,000 PwDs behind bars and setting our most vulnerable citizens up for failure. As Lt. Governor, I will continue to advocate for funding our court system and public education system to ensure there is a nurse in every school, as well as support mental health and drug treatment courts.

**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. We need better public education on PwDs, without that we will only perpetuate the stigma against disabilities. In regard to police violence, we need to improve training programs and incorporate disabilities into anti­-discrimination and cultural sensitivity curriculum. We need a comprehensive review of our police conduct in conjunction the Governor and the State Bureau of Investigation.

**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. Every nine minutes an adult with a disability is sexually assaulted or raped. The statistics on sexual assault against PwDs are horrifying, but we need to recognize the reality of victimization. In order to prepare PwDs for the current reality, PwDs should receive training in self-­advocacy skills, self-­defense education, and how to seek assistance in the event of an attack. Furthermore, consequences for sexual assault against PwDs should be more severe, similar to a hate crime or a violation against a minor. We need to strengthen our sexual assault and rape laws and increase services for victims.

**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:**Yes. Veterans return from service with a unique skill set that can benefit employers and the overall community. We need to protect veterans from discrimination. Veterans, especially those with service-­connected disabilities such as PTSD, need job training and job assistance programs to ensure they and their families are able to live with respect and dignity. I support employers and employment programs that seek to hire our skilled veterans. Those employers should be rewarded with grants and tax credits for connecting veterans with jobs.

**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. The current housing situation for PwDs is unacceptable. Nationally, the average SSI payment puts a PwD 23 percent below the federal poverty level. PwDs are already a vulnerable minority, but forcing a PwD into an unstable, potentially dangerous housing situation due to poverty­-level income puts his or her basic human and civil rights at risk. I support housing vouchers to expand access to affordable, integrated housing for PwDs, and I am also interested in exploring additional programs as options to improve this situation. Additionally, we should explore alternative models and initiatives from other states and localities to implement best practices.

**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. We need to improve access to affordable, reliable public transportation in general. As our state transportation infrastructure becomes better connected, PwDs will enjoy a direct benefit that will weaken a major economic barrier to the disability community. As Lt. Governor, I will work with my partners on the state and local levels to advocate for federal dollars to expand transportation options.

**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. I am a strong supporter of fostering innovation in general. In North Carolina, the Research Triangle Park is an invaluable asset to our community as a hub for innovation and advancement, which we can support with government incentives and supportive infrastructure. I plan to advance innovations in assistive technologies for PwDs, which will lift limitations on the disability community, by targeting incentives to encourage research to strive for advancements in engineering targeted to improve the lives of PwDs. As we develop new assistive technologies, we need to make them accessible to PwDs.