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

**ANSWER:**Yes. Having served six years in the state legislature and five years in the governor’s cabinet, I developed a network of advisors on disability issues. As a member of the House Appropriations Committee in 2008 and 2009, I had special responsibility for the budget of Vermont’s Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living. I worked with government managers, advocacy organizations, individuals with disabilities and their families. I continue to draw on their experiences and expertise as I work to expand my commitment, and Vermont’s commitment, to guaranteeing that all citizens have lives with opportunities, security and dignity.

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

**ANSWER:**Yes. Our offices are accessible to those with disabilities, and we strive to ensure that events and activities are accessible.

**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. I am proud to have been an active supporter of Vermont’s longtime commitment to promoting opportunities for individuals with disabilities to live independently in their communities and have access to jobs and needed services. For example, as a member of the Appropriations Committee, I successfully fought back against budget cuts proposed by Governor Douglas in 2008 and 2009 that would have led to a serious erosion in programs and employment opportunities.

**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 have a deep commitment to the civil rights and full inclusion of all citizens. As governor, I will be outspoken in opposition to all forms of discrimination, using the power of the office to educate, communicate and advance the cause of full inclusion for Vermonters with disabilities. That will include access to independent living, education, affordable and accessible housing, health care, and job opportunities. I believe that the most effective means of ending stigma is full inclusion in all aspects of community life.

**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 will make sure that the federal requirement that 15 percent of resources for individuals with disabilities be focused on youth is effectively implemented. As governor, I will continue Vermont’s financial commitment to supported and competitive employment. For example, I support Vermont’s application for a federal grant that will assist high school students with disabilities to focus on desired career paths.

**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. My plan is to strongly support public education and the mainstreaming of children with disabilities. Vermont has been a national leader in this area and I am committed to keeping it that way.

**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. Vermont has been and should continue to be aggressive in seeking Medicaid waivers to allow maximum flexibility in benefits. Our Choices for Care waiver program has provided thousands of Vermonters the opportunity to receive health care and other services in their homes.

**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. Not only do I support the ACA’s protection of people with pre-existing conditions, I strongly support Vermont’s ongoing efforts to reform our health care delivery system to guarantee universal access to high quality and affordable 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. Over two decades ago, Vermont closed its last institution for serving citizens with disabilities. We have a very strong community-based system that provides the highest level of independence possible. Vermont also has a strong system of home health services. Matched with our Choices for Care program, over 50 percent of Vermonters eligible for nursing home care opt instead for home care.

**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. I support recent Vermont initiatives to use alternatives to the criminal justice system for nonviolent offenders when appropriate. Vermont already has a law that diverts many of those with intellectual disabilities who are convicted of violent offenses to secure non-institutional placements. When incarceration is appropriate, protections and services for those with disabilities and mental health issues must be greatly improved. And to face the challenges involved with reentry into the community, I strongly support Vermont’s fledgling efforts to better integrate our Corrections Department with our mental health and disabilities agencies in government as well as in the community.

**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. In recent years Vermont state government has initiated programs to better train law enforcement officers in deescalating situations involving perceived erratic or defiant behavior. Mental health and other professionals are now routinely called in for those situations. I will support those initiatives as governor so that training and refreshing courses are always required and available.

**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. I want a strong system that allows suspicions of abuse to be reported and investigated as quickly as possible. Vermont’s protection system for children is currently under considerable pressures brought about by substance abuse and understaffing. Vermont’s Adult Protective Services division, which addresses abuse of elderly Vermonters and those with disabilities, is currently strong. I support the continuation of a recently established advisory committee of advocates, Legal Aid attorneys and others to monitor the case files and activities of our Adult Protective Services division.

**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. I do not feel that we are providing enough support for our veterans, especially those with disabilities. I will work with our Veterans Administration offices, including Vermont’s VA hospital, and Vermont’s National Guard to identify and support those veterans encountering barriers to employment, whether those barriers involve health care, housing, education, training or the need for supportive services.

**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 plan to work with housing developers and local officials to make sure that Vermont addresses its affordable housing crisis. In addition, I support programs to address homelessness that help people stay in their homes in times of financial or other personal crises.

**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:**As Secretary of Transportation, I worked to expand public transit options throughout the state, including to people with disabilities. As a State Representative, I helped initiate a program in my district to bring seniors and people with disabilities to a community center for meals, care, and socializing. I will continue to explore innovative ways to expand public transit options for people with disabilities.

**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 plan to support the creative work done by Vermont’s assistive technology division in our Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living to develop the new ideas and technologies that are needed to better serve Vermonters with disabilities.