**Question 1: What policies and actions do you support to reduce the stigmas of people with disabilities that are barriers to employment, independence and equality?**

**Answer:**Few things remove stigma like success. A recent study out of the University of Kansas show that states that expand Medicaid are substantially more likely to see increases in employment by people with disabilities. I will expand Medicaid on day one. Without expansion, many people with disabilities will continue to be caught in the disturbing trap that keeps people from finding work because the income will disqualify them from Medicaid. Also, the Alabama Education Lottery will provide the means to pay for college and workforce scholarships that will help lift people with disabilities into higher paying jobs and careers.

**Question 2: What is your record on improving the lives of people with disabilities, specifically in enabling people with disabilities to have jobs, careers or start their own businesses?**

**Answer:**I’m mayor of Tuscaloosa where, with my support and executive mandates, city policy contains strong prohibitions against discrimination against those with disabilities. Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Equal Employment Opportunity Act are mandated by ordinance, and the City’s Diversity Plan specifically includes disabilities. Discrimination based on disabilities is prohibited in multiple regulatory frameworks of the City such as public and private facility and transportation access. Agency funding contracts prohibit outside agencies receiving city funding from discriminating based on disability. The City’s anti‐bullying employment regulation prohibits “attempting to exploit an employee’s known psychological or physical vulnerability.”

**Question 3: Do you have specific strategies for youth employment for people with disabilities? For example, what are your thoughts on apprenticeships for youth with disabilities?**

**Answer:**Apprenticeships for those with or without disabilities are a significant part of the scholarship portion of the Alabama Education Lottery. Alabama must expand its apprentice programs through partnerships with local unions, Apprenticeship Alabama, and other qualifying entities that meet USDOL guidelines. Apprenticeships create a skilled labor to meet the growing demands of our economy. Further, it provides Alabamians an opportunity to learn a trade, earn a paycheck and pave the way to a brighter future.

**Question 4: The jobs of the future will largely require post‐secondary education. However, on average only 65 percent of students with disabilities complete high school and only seven percent complete college. What policies do you support to enable students with disabilities, including those from historically marginalized communities and backgrounds, to receive the diagnosis, Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan and accommodations/services they need to succeed in school and be prepared for competitive employment?**

**Answer:**The Alabama Education Lottery will generate $300 million per year, including $125 million for college and workforce training scholarships, plus $25,000,000 for Community Innovation Grants to assist schools in utilizing existing medical, mental health, social assistance, and psychological support programs to solve problems that clearly affect the quality of education.

**Question 5: Today there are more than 750,000 people with disabilities behind bars in our nation. Most of them are functionally illiterate and 95 percent of them will eventually be released. What are your views to ensure that individuals with disabilities who are incarcerated gain the skills and mental health supports that will enable them to be successful when they leave incarceration?**

**Answer:**Alabama’s prisons are a disaster. It’s a system that releases 95% of its inmates back into society and yet provides virtually no rehabilitation. Very little work skills training, drug counseling, and mental health treatment is provided in a system that is at double its design capacity, under federal court order for its horrendous failure to treat mentally ill inmates, and that offers no supervision for a third of those released and virtually no reentry services for any of them returning to society. Not only is it a recipe for disaster during incarceration, it leads to a disturbing rate of recidivism. Forty percent of state inmates have previously been in prison, and studies show that half of released prisoners return within three years. Warehousing instead of rehabilitating prisoners makes for career criminals. Our Department of Corrections must be funded to a level that we can start making progress on all these issues, something we’re currently not seeing in Montgomery.

**Question 6: People with disabilities are twice as likely to be victims of crime as those without disabilities. This includes the fact that both children and adults with disabilities are more likely to be victims of rape or sexual assault. They are also far more likely to suffer from police violence, partially because manifestations of disability can be misunderstood. How would you address these issues?**

**Answer:**Just as I meet regularly with Tuscaloosa’s police administration to discuss active measures to combat crime, the governor should meet routinely with leaders in law enforcement and experts in criminal conduct to find the most effective ways to reduce crime through identification of public safety threats; behavioral intervention programs; using technology tools that detect patterns of criminal behavior and provide evidence to make arrests; providing our youth with opportunities for learning skills, recreation, and service to the community as alternatives to drugs and crimes; community policing; eliminating blight; and responsible and reasonable gun laws. Tuscaloosa Police are highly trained in recognizing and properly handling situation involving individuals with mental health challenges or disabilities, and as governor I will expect the same statewide.

**Question 7: How would you ensure that people with disabilities have access to healthcare and the benefits they need while enabling them with opportunities to work to the best of their capacities without losing the supports they need to live?**

**Answer:**Expanding Medicaid will increase the number of disabled people covered by insurance and allow more people to work while keeping benefits. Importantly, by allowing more rural hospitals and health clinics to stay open, expansion will improve access to healthcare for non‐Medicaid recipients as well as improve services overall for those with disabilities.

**Question 8: What are your thoughts on ensuring that people with disabilities have the option to live in their homes instead of institutions and still have the community attendant supports they need to live?**

**Answer:**Expansion of Medicaid would increase availability of home health assistance and allow people to stay in their homes longer.

**Question 9: How would you advance innovations (i.e., assistive technologies, devices) that can help people with disabilities become more successfully employed, productive and independent?**

**Answer:**My research investigations have not extended into this level of detail. Rather, I want to promote programs like Medicaid expansion, a meaningful statewide health plan, antidiscrimination policies, and programs that will foster innovations in technology assistance, precision medicine, telemedicine, and genomics.

**Question 10: Are your office, website and events accessible to people with disabilities? If yes, please describe.**

**Answer:**To the best of our abilities, all our facilities and events are accessible, and in all cases we will make accommodations for anyone who needs it.