

Name:

Mark Smith

Email

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District:

20th Legislative District

Title And Position Number You Are Seeking:

20th District State Legislative Representative Position 2

1. Are you an incumbent?

No

2. If yes, what policy or budget item that supports people with disabilities who are employed or seeking employment are you most proud of advancing during your tenure?

NA

3. If you are not an incumbent, what will you do to support individuals with disabilities find and keep jobs and contribute to our economy?

My view of the current program is that we provide money to people with disabilities with a lot of strings and conditions, that limit them from being able to obtain further employment to improve their life. If a person who is declared disabled and receiving monthly assistance, they should not be limited to live only on that amount. People I know who are disabled worry all the time that they can not work or seek work for fear they will lose their support. My feeling is that if we declare these people as disabled, and they receive benefits, that we guarantee their benefits, and allow them to seek further employment, where and what ever they can find to increase their income and quality of life. The additional income would be subject to all applicable employment taxes as applicable. This action will allow disabled people to have a safety net, providing a hand up and allow them to seek employment and participate in the economy.

4. Do you personally know anyone with an intellectual/developmental disability? I/DD includes people who have cognitive disabilities such as Down syndrome, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, etcetera.

Yes

5. Have you ever worked alongside anyone with a developmental or intellectual disability?

Yes, I have worked with and alongside people who are development disabled.

6. Nearly 80% of people with a developmental disability are not employed or are underemployed. What can you do in your role to address this issue?

Most people I know with these conditions are afraid if they seek work or find a job where they get paid, the State will take away their benefits. We need to address this issue and find a way to insure the safety net for these individuals and allow them to freely seek work. We should help promote them to positions and jobs in their community, so they can better their quality of life. It is sad, that many of these people feel they are not permitted to work in order to receive their assistance. This keeps people living at below poverty levels, in fear of working, or forces them to work under the table. We must change the attitude of this program to be a hand up and not a hand out. People who receive assistance should never have to feel afraid to try and make their life better. If elected I will work to turn this attitude around and create the environment to allow people to feel safe and motivated to improve their quality of life and be a working part of the community.

7. Many people with developmental and intellectual disabilities who do work are worried about losing critical lifeline benefits such as medical care and social security because of earnings. Will you commit to working with CEA and other stakeholders to bridge this gap in coverage for people who want to work?

Yes

8. It is estimated that 12,560 people with developmental disabilities receive NO paid services from the Developmental Disabilities Administration. If you are elected, what will you do to ensure services for all?

At this time I do not know what needs to be done to assure services to all. But, I will be willing to work with all parties to assure that DDA is available to all person of our State who are in need.

9. If elected and during your campaign, will you commit to meeting with businesses in your community and across the state who have benefited from having a diverse work force which benefits their bottom line?

Yes, I have an open door policy that I will meet with any individual, business, organization or political party to discuss solutions for our State, with no strings attached. With all of the challenges we are facing today we must work together to resolve them, I want to be part of the solution, instead of part of the problem.

Community Employment Alliance members work hard every day to secure and retain competitive employment, increased wages, benefits and job training for people with disabilities. The impact of community employment on individuals and families is substantial. During your campaign, will you commit to meeting with families whose sons and daughters have benefited from employment services and hear their stories of inclusion, autonomy, and independence?

Yes, I have an open door policy that I will meet with any individual, business, organization or political party to discuss solutions for our State, with no strings attached. With all of the challenges we are facing today we must work together to resolve them, I want to be part of the solution, instead of part of the problem.

11. Is there any other information pertaining to this topic that you would like your constituents with developmental disabilities, their friends and their family members, to know about you?

Yes, I am running Independent, because I am tired of the politics as usual, two party system, I am committed to Common Sense Government that puts People over Political Party and Special Interest. I ask you to consider voting Independent this election.

12. Do you have any questions about people with intellectual and developmental disabilities that we can help you with?

How many people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have been identified in the 20th Legislative District?

Thank you for remitting your candidate questionnaire. Your feedback will be posted on our website exactly as you have written it. Your responses will help inform thousands of constituents in your district and across the state of your positions on these very important issues. Your responses will not be edited. If you have questions or if you need help completing this form, please call or email Executive Director, Adrienne Stuart, at the contact information below. Thank you for your time.