

Name:

John W. Aiken, Jr.

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District:

District 6th

Title And Position Number You Are Seeking:

WA ST REP 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?**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?**

I would seek out our universities, vocational schools, and business to do more to support the disabled through new innovations to make working environments more accessible to do tasks. I believe there is not enough awareness to our disabled citizens and this needs to change to get more public support to make their lives better. Currently few are interested in helping the disabled unless they have family or a loved one who is and want to do something to help them become self-sufficient. I would offer incentives to business and academia to come up with new inventions that will help get more disabled employment.

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, I have known several in my life time and each case was different to the severity of the disability. What I find that helps is to overcome your own prejudices by overcoming your fears of someone different than you, who had no choice in this disability by making a good will gesture of acceptance. A small gift often breaks a lot of barriers for a disabled person's distrust of another's intention from what they have endured previously in the past. Accept them who they are and treat them like you would anyone else.

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

Yes, and I knew what their limitations were and how frustrated they got when they want to do something, but their body won't let them. Sometimes it is hard for them to do something we take for granted, so it takes a bit longer, but it will get done. Some also had communication difficulties and try very hard to vocalizes it, but they can do it with sign language or a voice translator. I know they are proud and want to do it on their own, so I let them. Each task is an accomplishment and a feeling of self-worth to do something on your own. They all have feelings and have a sense of humor, too.

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?

As a representative, I would seek a means for business and academia to find means to allow technology and innovation to help give more freedom to the disabled to function on their own in society and have independence. There are not enough people in business or in academia that are aware of the needs of our disabled citizens to find solutions and inventions to give them more

freedoms from their disabilities. I know that there are many types and forms of disabilities and that is the challenge I seek from business and the academia 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?

I am not a candidate for a Federal Government office, but I am for a state office and I have no power over Social Security. I can represent along with CEA with those in Federal Government who have powers and authority to change Social Security when a disabled person makes too much money from earnings and loses their benefits like everybody else does when they earn too much when they quit and want their benefits back. I believe that once you are entitled for a lifetime benefit that is what it means.

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?

I believe that everyone who is disabled that is a resident of Washington state is entitled to the same benefit for the same disability that other receive without prejudice. If these people in this number are not Washington state citizens and have not met the residency time to become one, they should become a ward of the Federal Government. If these people are already wealthy from inheriting money or born with money, they still are entitled to what everyone is receiving for the same disability for fairness.

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 will commit to meeting anyone in business and academia who have benefitted from a work force consisting of our disabled citizens with the hopes of providing more opportunities, if possible and if not what we would have to do to make it happen. The more business awareness there are the more investment they would be willing to give to provide a better working environment for the disable to perform tasks for a wage that would reduce their stress in performing tasks now.

10. 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?

I am willing to meet with anyone from the Community Employment Alliance staff or worker as their representative in Olympia, if I am elected to serve the people. The public needs to be more aware of the needs of those who want to be self sufficient and hear from those who have succeeded for more public support to further opportunities for the disabled.

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?

I live in a community that has state provided facilities for the physical, medical, and intellectual disabled at Lakeland Village and Eastern State Hospital which many of my friends and their families worked as counselors, nurse's aides, and attendants. I have seen residents from these institutions many times in my community when they come and visit the town and aware of the many types and forms of disabilities there are. No matter what the disability is the residents have feelings and rights.

They all are cognizant of themselves, others, and their surroundings and need to be treated the same as they would expect others to be treated without prejudice to their disabilities. My friends and I support Special Olympics and organize Kiwanis Clubs events to provide social activities for the disabled to provide public awareness of their needs and to have compassion toward them instead of fearing them for being different.

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

No I do not at this time

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.

Name:

Dave Wilson

Email

Dave@ElectDaveWilson.com

District:

6th

Title And Position Number You Are Seeking:

State 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?**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?**

Most avenues to starting a career (college, vocational schools, apprenticeships and other training programs, etc.) are rife with barriers that make it difficult for people with disabilities to access them. As a legislator I will work with people with disabilities and their advocates to identify those barriers and craft legislation that either removes them or helps people with disabilities navigate them. I will also consider ways to strengthen workplace protections for people with disabilities so they are treated fairly by their employers and coworkers. More broadly speaking, I will work to ensure people with disabilities have their voices heard in debates over any legislation that will affect them and their ability to find and keep jobs.

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, I started and ran a computer training and vocational school (Interface Computer School) for 30 years. Among our first students in 1984 was a young man named Lonnie, who was born with Cerebral Palsy and confined to a wheelchair. Lonnie was almost 30 years old when he enrolled in one of our training programs. He had tried to enroll in a similar program at the Community College, but was told he could not, because the limited use of his hands that would impede his ability to type at an acceptable speed. Because of Lonnie's typing limitation, he had to spend 2-3 times the amount of time that other students did working in our computer lab, but he did so willingly and without complaint. Although Lonnie was slow at typing, he did excellent work. Because of his work ethic and his positive attitude, he was looked-up to by all the other students and the staff. Lonnie made such a good impression on all of us that we hired him part-time, after he graduated, to work as a computer lab aide. After working for us two years, Lonnie was hired into a good full-time job at the Spokane Transit Authority (STA) utilizing the skills he learned at our school, and where he has now worked for over 30 years. Lonnie also kept working at Interface part-time for a total of ten years, during which time he inspired hundreds of students,

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

Yes, see previous answer.

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?

It starts with changing society's perception of people with disabilities as individuals without the capacity to make decisions for themselves, or advocate for themselves. While some people's disabilities do make it difficult, if not impossible, for them to live independent lives, most people with disabilities, when given the proper support and opportunities, can lead productive lives as contributing members of their community. If elected, I will recognize the agency of people with disabilities by making them and their advocates an active part of conversations surrounding economic policy, so legislation more closely represents their needs and interests as expressed by them. When people with disabilities and their advocates are an active part of the policy debate we can seriously begin to tackle the challenges they face in entering and remaining a part of the workforce.

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?

Absolutely. This catch-22 keeps people with disabilities in a cycle of poverty and dependence by forcing them to choose between employment and healthcare. It is a false choice created by a gap in both federal and state policy. It should be fixed.

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?

The first step is making sure the DDA has the resources it needs to provide services to everyone who needs them. I hope to work on budget and revenue reforms that will make the state budget more sustainable and less vulnerable to massive revenue shortfalls like we have seen in the past decade. Second, we need to make sure DDA policy and relevant legislation reflects the actual needs and interests of people with disabilities so that people who need support are able to get it. If DDA policy prevents someone with a disability from receiving the resources they need, that policy should be re-examined.

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?

I would love to meet with them. As a former small business owner, I am always interested to hear how businesses are able to cultivate a strong, diverse workforce that benefits the company as a whole. Hearing these stories will also help me be a better advocate in Olympia for people and employees with disabilities.

10. 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 am committed to listening directly to the people most affected by state legislation, especially those whose voices often go unheard in Olympia, so I can be an effective representative for every one of my constituents. I would be happy to meet with these families and include their success stories in my campaigning and, if elected, in my advocacy in Olympia.

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?

I am running for office because I believe the people of the 6th LD deserve a visible, accessible, and responsive representative in Olympia. That's why I'm reaching out to people who often struggle to make themselves heard in debates over legislation. I will be an advocate for people with disabilities in discussions and legislation about the issues that affect their lives.

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

While I do not have any specific questions, I would like to learn more about the issues that are important to people with disabilities, and how I can help them lead autonomous, fulfilling lives.

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