

September 26, 2016

Dear Candidate for Statewide Office in Missouri,

The coalition of organizations below respectfully requests that you thoughtfully consider the attached questions and provide responses by October 10, 2016.

Addressing issues important to the disability community is critical because we represent a significant constituency. A recent [national study](#) estimated that there would be 35.4 million people with disabilities eligible to vote in the November 2016 elections, representing close to one-sixth of the total electorate. Using their estimate, Missouri alone has the potential to turn-out more than 1 million voters with disabilities. Additionally, the rate of voter registration for individuals with disabilities since 2008 has surpassed those without disabilities by 2.3%. Add to that their families, friends, co-workers, people paid to provide services and supports to them, and the reach of the disability community eclipses that of any other constituency or minority group.

We vote on disability issues because individuals with disabilities, their families and those who provide services to them are fundamentally invested in the decisions made by elected officials.

Imagine a family with a young child with significant disabilities, including medical and behavioral needs. Medical bills pile up. Accessible vans are expensive. Mom considers quitting her job because yet another day care has said they don't have the expertise to support her child.

Imagine a man, injured in a car accident at the age of 16. Once a star athlete, he is now quadriplegic. His dream is to be an engineer. He went to school, got good grades and was supported by Vocational Rehabilitation. When he gets offered his first job, he finds out he would no longer qualify for attendant services that help get him out of bed and ready for work in the morning.

These are just two examples of Missouri citizens and their families who look to elected officials to stand up for them.

When you return your answers, we will share them with our wide network. The members, constituents, customers and employees of our 14 organizations, as well as those of our colleagues' organizations, will hear directly from you.

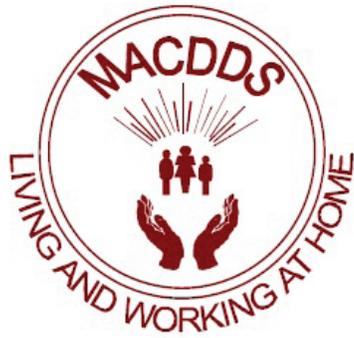
These issues are numerous and complex. We want to help. If you would like to be connected to someone at one of the coalition organizations to talk through an issue, ask a question or get more information, please call or email me. I will connect you to the right person. Our goal is to make sure you have what you need to share your opinion with us.

To ensure you have an opportunity to speak directly to our community, please remit your answers (which should be entered in the attached fillable PDF) to Cathy Brown at [cbrown@paraquad.org](mailto:cbrown@paraquad.org) no later than 12:00 p.m. on Monday October 10th.

On behalf of the 14 partner organizations and all the people we represent, thank you very much.



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Missouri Association of County  
Developmental Disabilities Services



# Candidate Questionnaire on Disability Issues

Please share any connections or experience (professional or personal) you have with people with disabilities and/or the disability community in Missouri.

My stepfather is partially paralyzed due to a severe stroke. The family home has been modified for wheelchair access and other accommodations. A modified van was also purchased for transport. This was all accomplished with private funds.

## **Administrative:**

What do you see as the role of government, local, state, and federal, affecting the lives of people with disabilities and what efforts will you make to ensure state agencies serving Missourians with disabilities have the resources and man-power to carry out their functions?

Libertarians in general seek to limit the role of government in people's lives. The government should strive to ensure that public buildings and jobs are accessible to persons with disabilities. Private businesses and persons, however, should not be forced to make any changes that they disagree with.

How will you include the voice of people with disabilities, their families and those who provide services to them in your administration?

As Secretary of State, I would strive to hire the best person for the job, regardless of disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc.

**Health Care Access:**

Do you support covering people in the health insurance gap by increasing eligibility for MO HealthNet to 138% FPL? Do you think some reforms are necessary to ensure coverage, if so, what kind of reforms?

The Secretary of State's office has only a very limited role in social services. However, I am philosophically opposed to almost any kind of public funding for health care services.

Currently, the Aged, Blind and Disabled category of MO HealthNet recipients are NOT included in managed care. What is your position on managed care for this population and individuals with severe mental illness and addiction disorders? What about the inclusion of long-term supports and services (like Medicaid Waiver services or Consumer Directed Services)?

The Secretary of State's office has only a very limited role (if any) in social services. However, I am philosophically opposed to almost any kind of public funding for social services.

**Housing:**

The availability of affordable, accessible and safe housing is a major barrier for some individuals with disabilities to full community inclusion. What will your administration do to further housing options for persons with disabilities? And how will it do this?

The Secretary of State's office has only a very limited role (if any) in social services. However, I am philosophically opposed to almost any kind of public funding for social services.

## **Employment and Economic Equality and Independence:**

People with disabilities are twice as likely to live in poverty, and have the lowest employment rate, compared to any other minority population. Often, people with disabilities who need to access supports and services only public programs provide (personal attendant services, Medicaid waiver services, etc.) fear losing their services if they make too much money. How will you improve employment and economic outcomes for people with disabilities while allowing people to retain necessary benefits?

The Secretary of State's office has only a very limited role (if any) in social services. However, I am philosophically opposed to almost any kind of public funding for social services.

In the last three years the U.S. Department of Justice has taken over 50 legal actions in 25 states including Federal lawsuits and court settlements enforcing the civil rights of persons with disabilities under the ADA which states people with disabilities have a right to live and work in integrated community settings. This past July a new federal law, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) went into effect. This law creates new standards for transitions from school to integrated work in the community for persons with disabilities. School and other community agencies are charged with focusing on integrated work before exploring sheltered work options. Given these mandates, what can Missouri do to move forward to be in compliance and be leaders in this area?

The Secretary of State's office has only a very limited role (if any) in social services. However, I am philosophically opposed to almost any kind of public funding for social services.

## **Education:**

Please outline the steps your administration would take to ensure that students with disabilities in our public schools are educated in their neighborhood schools and included in classrooms with students without disabilities. These students would be provided equal access to the curriculum, and are able to obtain assistive technologies and other related educational supports that adequately prepare them to become productive members of our communities.

All public facilities should be accessible to persons with disabilities. Beyond that, the Secretary of State's office has little exposure to education policy.

When we invest in the education of all children, including those with disabilities, we're investing in a strong economy. What steps would your administration take to ensure that students with disabilities are adequately prepared to transition to competitive employment and/or post-secondary education?

The Secretary of State's office has little exposure to education policy.

**Rights:**

Following the events of Ferguson, Police Officer Standards Training (POST) requirements were increased. Missouri has Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) and CIT councils in a number of areas in the state whose focus is to help improve interaction between law enforcement and persons with mental illness. In addition, First Responder Disability Awareness Training (FRDAT) for each first responder discipline (law enforcement, fire/EMS and 911 dispatchers) will be implemented in Missouri. These trainings are vital given the number of people with disabilities who are not properly identified or understood, which has led to ongoing victimization on persons with disabilities, inappropriate interactions, false arrests, unjust incarcerations or even death. What would your administration do to continue and expand this much needed education for law enforcement officers and other first responders?

The Secretary of State's office has little role in law enforcement.

In 2015, for individuals determined 'incapacitated/disabled', courts awarded over 2,400 full guardianships and only 63 limited guardianships. Missouri courts disproportionately award full guardianship, which strips a person with a disability of all their rights, even though there are less restrictive options available. How will you support the reform of Missouri's 30+ year old guardianship statute to better support Missourians and assist them in retaining and restoring more of their rights as they are able?

The Secretary of State's office has little role in guardianship statutes.

## **Funding and Access to Services:**

A history of inconsistent and underfunded rates has led to a system that no longer covers the cost of doing business for community provider organizations. Providers are experiencing a workforce crisis hampered by low wages, a lack of health insurance, high turnover, and a shortage of staff. Demand for these workers from private industry and other human services sectors compete for these workers. In addition, nearly 65% of the 95,000 individuals with developmental disabilities are not connected with the service system and many live at home with aging parents, representing a significant future demand on the system. How will you ensure a robust service system for Missourians with developmental disabilities now and in the future?

The Secretary of State's office has little role in social services. However, I philosophically oppose almost any use of public funds for social services.

Many rural Centers for Independent Living have catchment areas of 4,000 square miles and 9 counties and urban Centers have extremely high population densities to serve. How would you make sure all CILs have capacity to serve people with disabilities in their catchment areas?

The Secretary of State's office has little role in social services. However, I am philosophically opposed to almost any use of public funds for social services.

Hearing loss can be a significant impediment to seniors wanting to stay connected to, and remain independent in, their community. Over 600,000 Missourians, including seniors, have hearing loss and 90% of them are not Sign Language users. Instead they rely on hearing aids. This group often cannot afford hearing aids (they are not covered by MO HealthNet). What will your administration do to ensure access to hearing aids?

The Secretary of State's office has little role in social services. However, you would be hard pressed to find any Libertarian who believes it is the government's job to provide hearing aids to citizens.

**Behavioral Health:**

What would you do to improve the opioid epidemic facing our state?

The Secretary of State's office has little role in health insurance or drug policy. However, like most Libertarians, I favor the legalization of nearly all drugs and oppose any law requiring tracking of opioid prescriptions.

What will be your plan to address the leading cause of disability (behavioral health) in the nation? And for those in recovery, what would you do to help access recovery supports (such as employment, housing, education, etc) for individuals with serious mental illness and/or substance use disorders?

The Secretary of State's office has little role in disability determination or providing social services pertaining to behavioral health. However, it is widely thought that there is widespread fraud in the awarding of disability benefits solely due to alleged mental issues. Like most Libertarians I philosophically oppose the use of public funds for nearly any kind of social service.