

MNSCC Candidate Questionnaire



Amy Anderson
Running for MN
House District 65A

This questionnaire is for educational purposes only. MNSCC does not endorse any specific candidate for the Minnesota House or Senate.

Public Safety Issues

Do you feel safe in the communities where you live, work, and play?
Why or why not?

Yes. I live in Frogtown, in a lower income, mixed ethnic neighborhood. There has certainly been crime, but I have never felt unsafe. I love that people are outside all the time, which makes it less likely that someone would do something illegal. In the past we had a stronger block club than currently, but even now we know each other and talk a lot in passing.

What does the phrase “public safety” mean to you?
What builds safety? What detracts from it?

An important factor would be that children are being educated and kept safe from drugs and sexual promiscuity because their schools and parents are helping them find their way into good next steps after high school, that fathers are marrying mothers and staying with their families, and that the the social welfare system is providing opportunities for mental health. In addition, citizens need to stay on top of what is going on in their

	neighborhoods and not put up with inappropriate and illegal behavior, and there needs to be engagement from the police when needed, and responsiveness from city and state elected officials.
What is your understanding of the diversity of opinions around public safety in your district? How do your constituents think about what builds safety and what detracts from it in your district?	There is, as you say, diversity of opinions. But, having had several children with behavioral problems who attended SPPS, I know that I support the presence of school safety officers. They helped keep my daughters from harming themselves and they kept the schools safe for learning. JROTC at Arlington school was also a huge help. Neighborhood block clubs and reporting of criminal activity are important. More owner-occupants means that people care more about what is happening around them and want to avoid property damage.
What changes do you think would help prevent violence and other undesirable behavior in your district? How will you go about making those changes?	I would like to see the minor crime laws enforced, even if they are not severely punished. When you allow disrespectful behavior such as loud music, or you turn your head from obvious drug deals or sex trafficking, you encourage more and more serious behaviors. The line needs to be drawn at disrespect. At the same time, because my district is very multi-ethnic, there needs to be a lot of communication, allowing residents to voice differences of opinion as to what is appropriate and what is not.
Police Issues	
What are your thoughts on the general culture of the police departments in your district?	I have been positively impressed by the police presence and actions in my neighborhood. However, I am white, and I know that people of other ethnic groups do not receive the same respect at times - too often. My students, friends, and family members of color have experienced all the "driving while black" types of discrimination. This needs serious attention. Some of the calls police are required to respond to would be better done by mental health professionals. There needs to be much better and more professional thought about how to help people with mental health conditions that predispose them to violence.
* What police reforms, if any, do you think would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.	I would like to see more officers of color, more female officers, and more on mental health.
* What changes to police budgets, if any, would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.	I would not immediately cut the police budget, but there does need to be serious study put into what duties currently carried by the police could be better handled by other organizations. I am not rosy-eyed about this idea, however. I have had other organizations at my house to assist with a foster child who was having a mental health crises and they were worse than

	<p>useless. They used up our time and did not help her at all. When the police came, they also sat with her and talked about her behaviors, but they had an authority that she respected - different from the social workers who come and say nice things and never follow up. So if we are going to have other groups take on these responsibilities, they had better be effective. I think the most important investment should be in education - every child in Minnesota should have the same amount of funding invested in his/her education, and kids from abusive/neglected backgrounds should have all the support systems they need.</p>
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<p>Are there any bills around policing that you would join or champion? What are they and why?</p>	<p>See my previous comments.</p>
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Criminal Court Issues

<p>Do you notice any inequities in the courts in your district? What do you see as the driving force in those inequities? How can we count on you to respond to any inequities?</p>	<p>I have experience with the juvenile courts, foster care, and juvenile detention of various types. The inequities exist. The system needs to be revamped, but kept effective. This will require careful planning and not a knee-jerk reaction.</p>
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<p>Diving into topics like bail, services for crime survivors, court fines and fees, special prosecutors, and sentencing and probation guidelines can illustrate how public policy has immense and diverse impacts on Minnesotans. Are there any bills around criminal court practices that you would join or champion? What are they and why?</p>	<p>I would like to find a better solution to the vicious cycle that occurs when people in poverty incur fines and can't get themselves out of the repercussions. Again, this needs to be done carefully so that it does not simply end up allowing more and more inappropriate behavior. One idea would be that people who owe fines can work them off with public service.</p>
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Incarceration Issues

<p>In your opinion, what is the purpose of incarceration? Do you believe that incarceration accomplishes those purposes well? If not, why not, and what would you do about it?</p>	<p>Incarcerated people should be provided with every possible opportunity to educate themselves, with seriously good mental health services, religious counseling, and with chances to learn job skills. Allowing volunteers to do any sort of work for little or no pay is not slavery if they want to do it for a chance to get out of the prison and/or be physically engaged. Children should not be in prison, though it can be necessary to intervene in strong ways in order to help them reorient their lives.</p>
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<p>What do you know about alternatives to incarceration and how they address violence and other undesirable or criminalized behavior? What incarceration alternatives do you support and why?</p>	<p>Reconciliation programs such as were developed in South Africa after apartheid, as well as other restitution programs, should be utilized whenever possible to eliminate or reduce the length of incarceration. I support any idea that hopes to help people change their behavior and improve their chances of living a successful life in society.</p>
<p>* Every district in Minnesota is home to people who have experienced incarceration. How do you think issues like access to health care, visits/phone calls/emails, education, and other programming while incarcerated affect your constituents?</p>	<p>Well of course they need access to health care, education, career advice and training, and they need to be able to stay connected to family. The more we can help them the better for the future.</p>
<p>* For purposes of drawing legislative districts, should incarcerated persons be counted as part of the district where they are incarcerated, or should incarcerated persons be counted as part of the district where they had their last residential address? Or something else? Why?</p>	<p>If a district has so many incarcerated persons that it would significantly impact that drawing of district borders, there needs to be more attention paid than just about where they should be counted!</p>
<p>Are there any bills around incarceration or probation that you would join or champion? Which ones and why?</p>	<p>See my comments above.</p>
<p>Reentry Issues</p>	
<p>* People return from incarceration to every district in Minnesota. How do you think issues like access to housing, employment, health care, recovery resources, mental health supports, basic needs, and voting or civic engagement affect your constituents?</p>	<p>Of course they affect them! Re-entry programs should be long-term and provide substantial mentoring and support.</p>
<p>What, if any, changes would you make to re-entry policies? And what investments, if any,</p>	<p>Every possible effort should be made to assist people with re-entry, long before they are released. Probation, half-way houses, and similar programs are meant to assist in the</p>

would you make to re-entry supports in your district? Why?	transition. These are not always effective, but we should look into what is working and what is not, and try to improve on that.
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Public Health Issues

What are your thoughts about how the Department of Corrections has responded to the coronavirus pandemic?	It is not easy to enforce quarantine in the prison system. From what I have heard, attempts have been made, some more effective than others.
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* What, if any, public health crises do you think have inequitable impacts on people who are involved in the criminal legal system, and how can we count on you to respond to these public health crises?	I would like to back up to early childhood and the school system and work very hard to make sure that all children receive the same amount of funding. Funding should not come from property tax, but should be administered by the state. School districts with more children in poverty and broken homes should receive additional funding to train teachers and provide more support staff. We have to invest more in the early lives of our children to help them have hope for the future, stay away from drugs and crime, stay away from early sexual activity, and have a safe home life. If we don't start there we have already lost the battle.
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Personal Connections

* Are there any ways in which you feel personally connected to issues in policing, criminal court, incarceration, and/or re-entry? What is personal about these issues for you, and how will that impact your priorities and/or stances?	I have adopted one child and fostered another, with whom I still have close contact. I have seen the ways in which the system helps them and in which it is ineffective or even harmful. I could fill your ear with the failure of the system to help my second, foster daughter. I have also served on a jury and seen a pretty decent expression of how the court dealt with a juvenile of immigrant background. We are not doing everything wrong, but there do need to be changes.
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How can your constituents support you in accomplishing any changes you've outlined here?	Communicate with me about things that are going well and things that are going wrong.
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