

MNSCC Candidate Questionnaire



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Running for MN
House District 17A



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he/him/his | bendolanmn.com

Public Safety Issues

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

I do for the most part, the crime rate is relatively small and we are not densely populated.

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

public safety means all people feeling safe. I believe communication between law enforcement and the community can build safety. I also believe economic development builds public safety, having jobs and building necessary resources for members of the community can go a long ways. Understanding others differences and keeping an open mind among cultures is important to move forward. A lack of all the above will detract from public safety. Also giving people who have made a

	mistake or convicted of a crime an opportunity to succeed is also key.
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?	People in my district require more education on diversity and other subjects. Many believe that one size fits all approach. I believe we need to work on taking more progressive approaches throughout the state to work with social workers and community programs to better our communities. Many believe this as well, we just need to start working towards that with action.
What changes do you think would help prevent violence and other undesirable behavior in your district? How will you go about making those changes?	Better paying jobs and education. I will promote affordable and available daycare, healthcare and housing. I will advocate for these everyday whether I elected or not.

Police Issues

What are your thoughts on the general culture of the police departments in your district?	I believe the culture is not as toxic as it is in more densely populated areas. Our law enforcement live in our communities and usually know most people. I believe nationwide we need to work towards progressive policing which includes putting more resources into the community to help people with jobs, mental health etc.
What police reforms, if any, do you think would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.	I believe that allocating more money towards mental health and building our communities economically would go a long ways. Education is key, far too many from my community finish high school or GED and maybe get a job and have no skills. Education for everyone in the community can make a world of difference for self work and job skills to gain employment.
What changes to police budgets, if any, would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.	I believe we need to think about allocating money to other programs that are more proactive in crime prevention not just reactionary.
Are there any bills around policing that you would join or champion? What are they and why?	Police overreach is a real issue as evidenced with George Floyd and countless others. I would support anything that would take the case out of the county attorneys hands and put into a less bias attorney for prosecution.

Criminal Court Issues

Do you notice any inequities in the courts in your district? What do you see as the driving	I see many young people who come from poverty stricken families who find themselves in trouble. Wealth distribution and economic issues seem to recycle and leads to young people
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<p>force in those inequities? How can we count on you to respond to any inequities?</p>	<p>getting into more conflicts with police and adults. I work in the court system currently and it is sad to see young people make mistakes and getting put into the system. I would towards alternatives to assist these children. We need to break the cycle by providing better environments for them.</p>
<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 believe it is wrong that those who can afford bond may go home to their families while those with less money may have to sit in jail for extended periods of time without even a conviction. I would work towards making this more fair.</p>
<p>Incarceration Issues</p>	
<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>I believe we need to work more towards rehabilitation. We should not throw away someone's life based on a mistake they have made especially if it's an isolated incident. It is the moral and fiscally responsible thing to do, working towards rehab and not just locking away children or even adults. We all matter despite our mistakes.</p>
<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>I support alternatives that will not simply punish mistakes, but help people improve and learn to be better in our society and live a meaningful life.</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>I believe a strong support network can go a long ways. I have known people who have gone away to prison and jail. It is a very scary time and can lonely. Support in these vulnerable times can make the world of difference. Encouragement to improve and know you're cared for matters.</p>
<p>For purposes of drawing legislative districts, should incarcerated persons be counted</p>	<p>I would need more information for this.</p>

<p>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>Are there any bills around incarceration or probation that you would join or champion? Which ones and why?</p>	<p>I would work towards less incarceration for non-violent crimes. It is the moral and fiscally responsible thing to do for our citizens.</p>

Reentry Issues

<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>I have dealt with this firsthand with my brother who had gotten into some trouble around 10 years ago. He is the nicest person you'll meet he just made a mistake. I think access to these things would help a great deal. They already feel like they are being judged, let's give them an opportunity to succeed. Self-worth is always important all those things listed help that. IF one is taken way it causes problems not only for the person but the community.</p>
<p>What, if any, changes would you make to re-entry policies? And what investments, if any, would you make to re-entry supports in your district? Why?</p>	<p>I would work towards skills training so folks can make a decent wage. Voting is also crucial, a mistake should not take away ones right to vote.</p>

Public Health Issues

<p>What are your thoughts about how the Department of Corrections has responded to the coronavirus pandemic?</p>	<p>I believe if possible being imprisoned should not be a death sentence. We must protect those in the states care. if they are in for non-violent crimes they should be able to serve their sentence in different ways or at a later date. Racism is a real issue in our society, I have always known it to exist. However, it has been very eye-opening to learn how many people are closet racists that i have known for years. It is a health crisis, anything that keeps others from having equal opportunity life, liberty and pursuit of happiness is wrong and must be dealt with today.</p>
<p>What, if any, public health crises do you think have inequitable impacts on people who are involved in the criminal legal</p>	<p>I believe people of lower incomes, non-white, and different cultures are impacted greatly by our current legal system. I will work towards breaking down barriers and ensuring justice is</p>

<p>system, and how can we count on you to respond to these public health crises?</p>	<p>blind as it should be. What we are currently doing is not working.</p>
<p>Personal Connections</p>	
<p>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?</p>	<p>My brother got into trouble about a decade ago and had to serve some time. It was very hard on my family and I believe good people do commit crimes sometimes and they deserve a second chance. I also have a law degree and have worked as a public defender as well as have been a judicial law clerk. I have seen firsthand what current policies and laws do to families and it's heartbreaking. I cried myself to sleep a few times when my brother was sent away. He has never been a bad person, just mental health and poor mistakes.</p>
<p>How can your constituents support you in accomplishing any changes you've outlined here?</p>	<p>I think we can all try to listen first and speak second. I believe in second chances and open forums and more awareness of better options could go a long ways. Donations, and volunteering to help me be a voice in St. Paul would be a good start as well.</p>