

# MNSCC Candidate Questionnaire



**David Nelson**  
Running for MN  
Senate District 35



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[davenelsonforminnesota.org](http://davenelsonforminnesota.org)

## Public Safety Issues

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

YES - We have excellent partnerships with our Peace Officers and our Anoka County Sheriff.

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

Public safety is a community involvement from the citizen, their elected officials, the Police, Sheriff, and Social Services efforts. Building safety requires participation at all levels. What detracts from public safety is when one of the components either doesn't participate or decides for themselves they are the only voice and act accordingly.

<p>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?</p>	<p>I think we have a diverse opinions base. Those opinions are sometimes at odds with each other.</p>
<p>What changes do you think would help prevent violence and other undesirable behavior in your district? How will you go about making those changes?</p>	<p>In my District we have seen less violence because we have seen law enforcement working with citizens and government reaching out to bring people together and provide the resources needed for success. I think my district has a good mixture of activism and response from the officials and I will work to continue that if I am elected.</p>

**Police Issues**

<p>What are your thoughts on the general culture of the police departments in your district?</p>	<p>In District 35 which is the Anoka County Sheriff, the Andover, Anoka, Coon Rapids, and Ramsey police departments we already have more community oriented law enforcement. I believe our approach is working but we need to also make sure we maintain and increase the social services departments to meet the needs of the citizens. Law Enforcement in my District are Peace Officers not paramilitary enforcement divisions of a heavy handed system. All law enforcement must work on diversity issues and systemic racism but I believe the ones in my district are already moving in the right direction and were before the recent murder in Minneapolis of George Floyd.</p>
<p>* What police reforms, if any, do you think would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.</p>	<p>As I have stated I think my district is already moving in the right direction but on a State Level I think the demilitarization of all Peace Officers should continue and the recent reforms passed by the Legislator and signed by Governor Walz is a good first step. More needs to be done but a start has been made.</p>
<p>* What changes to police budgets, if any, would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.</p>	<p>I would like a review of what the job on a day to day basis for all law enforcement is and what is expected of them. I agree that some of the jobs left to law enforcement they are not the best providers of those roles. This has more to do with under-funding social programs and dumping the job on law enforcement. We need to fund those agencies that are best suited to deal with jobs that have been dumped on law enforcement. Let Law Enforcement do the jobs they are trained for and let's stop relying on them for roles best done by other community and government groups.</p>
<p>Are there any bills around policing that you would join or</p>	<p>First off I am not in favor of the term DEFUND. I think it was a bad word from day one. Bills around reform I would champion. Bills around programs that should be doing jobs that have been</p>

champion? What are they and why?	left to the police I would champion. Bills around demilitarization I would champion.
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**Criminal Court Issues**

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?	Many crimes by youth should be signs of issue that can be corrected but some crimes by youth should fall under the same adult standards. Murder, Rape are examples. Once a person decides they can commit those crimes calendar years are not the equation but their understanding of the seriousness of the crime. Many other youth crimes can be treated by diversion programs etc. I believe Anoka County has a very good handle on crimes by youth vs adults and when a youth be choosing to act out certain crimes no longer should be viewed as a youth.
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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?	None at this time.
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**Incarceration Issues**

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?	Incarceration is mainly to project the public from the individual incarcerated. If while in incarceration the individual has access to education, treatment, and counseling and actively pursues change then that should help in reduction of their sentence and probation. I do not see incarceration by itself as a cure for individuals whom choose to be criminals unless they decide to change themselves. If they do not make that choice then incarceration is strictly to protect society from the person convicted. When it comes to Youth I think they have the best chance to make life altering choices and they should be given those chances to become good citizens.
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What do you know about alternatives to incarceration and how they address violence and other undesirable or criminalized behavior?	
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<p>What incarceration alternatives do you support and why?</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>* 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>Are there any bills around incarceration or probation that you would join or champion? Which ones and why?</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>Programs for re-entry should allow an incarcerated individual the support and programs to become a productive and law abiding citizen. I support the right to Vote. I therefore agree that once the "debt" to society has been paid that former felons should have a pathway to full voting rights.</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>	

**Public Health Issues**

<p>What are your thoughts about how the Department of Corrections has responded to the coronavirus pandemic?</p>	<p>I think the Department of Corrections has done about as good of job as they could and they are adapting as they can and resources allows. Society might change before bureaucracy can adapt but it will and I see Counties adapting.</p>
<p>* 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?</p>	
<p><b>Personal Connections</b></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>Given a chance most everyone wants to be a successful and law abiding member of society. If a person can reform themselves and become a part of society I think it is in societies best interest to help them do so. There are always hard core types that choose to not act within the law and we still will need a system to deal with those individuals to keep the rest of society safe.</p>
<p>How can your constituents support you in accomplishing any changes you've outlined here?</p>	<p>My Constituents whom want to see Systematic Change around Racism can support my campaign. My constituents also can work within the law when ever possible and protest in a way that is honorable like the late Congressman Lewis. Sometimes you have to get into Good Trouble.</p>