

# MNSCC Candidate Questionnaire



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Running for MN  
House District 61B



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Public Safety Issues	
Do you feel safe in the communities where you live, work, and play? Why or why not?	Yes, I do. I am privileged to live in a low crime community. I am also a white male, and acknowledge the privilege this provides me in society, from not being profiled to not being harassed.
What does the phrase "public safety" mean to you? What builds safety? What detracts from it?	Public safety to me means a community where all feel safe and protected. What builds public safety to me is legitimacy of the public safety apparatus. Also, focusing on community intervention and reconciliation builds public safety. What detracts from it is "get tough" approaches that over-penalize and have not been shown to actually reduce crime.

<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>My district has a wide diversity of opinions and is engaged in active conversation now about the future of public safety in Minneapolis. One overarching trend though for most constituents is a willingness to consider new approaches to public safety and an acknowledgment that the approach we're taking is not working, particularly for people of color in our city.</p>
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<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>One thing I know is shown to reduce violence is economic development. Those with a job and stable housing are much less likely to engage in violent behavior. That's one of the reasons I believe so strongly in second chances and helping people get back on their feet rather than continuing to punish them unnecessarily. I have been active in this policy space at the Capitol, including my probation cap legislation and the pardon board reforms I've introduced.</p>
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**Police Issues**

<p>What are your thoughts on the general culture of the police departments in your district?</p>	<p>Our Minneapolis Police Department has a deep seeded and unacceptable culture that needs to be uprooted and transformed.</p>
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<p>* What police reforms, if any, do you think would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.</p>	<p>I strongly supported the POCI caucus police accountability legislation. I am glad we made a first step, including some meaningful reforms to arbitration and use of force. But we need to go much further. I have focused on improved trust in the prosecution, such as by moving all officer involved death prosecution to the Attorney General. I also believe we need to reform the POST Board to give them more teeth and to provide more citizen and public involvement and representation.</p>
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<p>* What changes to police budgets, if any, would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.</p>	<p>I agree with the current discussion in Minneapolis about reprioritizing the budget towards other forms of public safety intervention, such as mental health or social work.</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>Yes. I authored bills this year on improving mental health training for police and on taking prosecution for police involved deaths away from the County Attorney.</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</p>	<p>Absolutely. We know that there are racial disparities at every level of the criminal justice system, from who is stopped to who is arrested to who can afford bail to who is more likely to get a harsher charge to who is more likely to get a longer sentence. I am dedicated to ending these disparities, which is why I asked to be on the Public Safety Committee.</p>
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<p>can we count on you to respond to any inequities?</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.</p> <p>Are there any bills around criminal court practices that you would join or champion? What are they and why?</p>	<p>Yes, I am a strong supporter of eliminating cash bail, and have been partnering with Rep. Noor on his legislation. I also believe we need to dramatically reduce fines and fees, and support Rep. Lesch's bill to do so.</p>
<p><b>Incarceration Issues</b></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>Incarceration is supposed to be for: public safety, rehabilitation, and deterrence. We know that the deterrence effect is essentially non-existent. We also know that it is, in general, not rehabilitative. Public safety may be a legitimate argument in some circumstances, but not for the vast majority of crimes.</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 am a big supporter of alternative to incarceration, whether it's taking a restorative justice approach, or a diversion program such as we've seen in drug or veterans courts. I support greatly expanding incarceration alternatives.</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 have spoken to constituents directly impacted by incarcerated family members, and I know they care deeply about the programming their loved ones receive, as well as their ability to keep in touch with them. These are important issues to non-incarcerated individuals as well.</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</p>	<p>They should count towards the last residential address. To do otherwise simply overstates the political power of rural communities where prisons are often located, while furthering disparities in representation.</p>

<p>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 championed the probation reform bill this session, and was so grateful we were able to get that done through the Sentencing Guidelines Commission. I am hopeful we can codify that change in the next session.</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 spoken to many returning citizens in my district about the impact these barriers have on them, and I know they are real and hugely problematic.</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 am working hard on a Clean Slate bill to provide automatic expungement for certain crimes and hope to introduce it next year. This session I also introduced legislation that would create a cause of action to appeal to a judge to overturn a specific collateral consequence, like a bar on housing or a particular job opportunity.</p>

**Public Health Issues**

<p>What are your thoughts about how the Department of Corrections has responded to the coronavirus pandemic?</p>	<p>I know they have been working hard in a very difficult situation. I believe they could be going further with early release than they have been. I've also heard concerning reports about responsiveness to those identifying with COVID symptoms.</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>I know that our prisons are not providing adequate health care. I have learned much from the work of Voices for Racial Justice in this space.</p>

**Personal Connections**

<p>* Are there any ways in which you feel personally connected to issues in policing, criminal court, incarceration, and/or re-entry?</p> <p>What is personal about these issues for you, and how will that impact your priorities and/or stances?</p>	<p>I have worked in this space, spending time in a public defender's office and working pro bono on death penalty and other criminal matters. I have seen firsthand the inequities of the system and this drives my personal motivation for change.</p>
<p>How can your constituents support you in accomplishing any changes you've outlined here?</p>	<p>I can always learn more, and am eager to hear new ideas and perspectives on the difficult challenge of reimagining our criminal justice system.</p>