

MNSCC Candidate Questionnaire



Jerry Hertaus
Running for MN
House District 33A



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 am fortunate to reside in an area where citizens and law enforcement work hand in hand in respecting the rule of law. I believe that to be true of the preponderance of our metropolitan area and greater Minnesota. I do not have an inherent fear of the urban center, but unfortunately the street violence and shootings particularly in Minneapolis have had a serious and detrimental effect upon the perceptions of many who do not reside in the troubled areas. It appears that gangs and gang violence are at present, statistically on the rise.

What does the phrase “public safety” mean to you?

Public Safety to me means a system and/or network of first responders who are able to respond with expedience to perons distressed or in need. It also means trust in those whom we give

<p>What builds safety? What detracts from it?</p>	<p>responsibility to for providing the service. Distractions to public safety include incidents and situations in which de-escalation was unsuccessful and results in negative reactions and perceptions.</p>
<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>In my legislative district many constituents share divergent opinions. Most believe that trust is essential to public safety and that lawless behavior invites unnecessary interaction with those charged with maintaining public safety.</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>Violence and unlawful behavior knows no boundaries. Much of the violence of today is perpetrated by individuals with severe emotional and mental disorders. Improving public safety could greatly be enhanced by intervening with individuals who are suffering from mental illness, chemical dependency, addiction and depression.</p>

Police Issues

<p>What are your thoughts on the general culture of the police departments in your district?</p>	<p>The culture of police departments in my district is one of honor, respect and service to community.</p>
<p>* What police reforms, if any, do you think would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.</p>	<p>Overall, the vast majority of those who serve our districts and state do so honorably and have earned the respect of the citizens and the community that they serve. Each situation is unique from another. Use of force, deadly force, and all manner of restraint or restraining an individual being taken into custody are serious matters that cannot be tried in the court of public opinion before all of the facts are known. Unfortunately, many individuals who are subject to arrest and/or detention are not cooperative. In such instances, horrible outcomes can result from escalation that becomes out of control and puts those whom are charged with protecting public safety at risk of great harm.</p>
<p>* What changes to police budgets, if any, would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.</p>	<p>Adequate funding to maintain, recruit and retain sufficient staff and resources to maintain civil order and public safety.</p>
<p>Are there any bills around policing that you would join or champion? What are they and why?</p>	<p>I would support any legislation that enhances recruitment, training and retention of qualified trained individuals into law enforcement as a career. An ordered and civil society cannot be achieved without the rule of law being enforced.</p>

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?

The criminal justice system and the courts appear to be overwhelmed. Accordingly, behaviors may be perpetuated by the lack of serious adjudication of offenses. Instead, Minnesota is long on probation and short on incarceration. Increased probation most often results as a confession of judgement for a crime in lieu of adjudication in exchange for probation. Terms of probation often result in further inevitable offense(s), making it difficult to become ever free of the system.

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?

Probation should have certain guardrails around the amount given relevant to the offense as charged. Most of the court system is overwhelmed by alcohol and drug abuses resulting in charging of crimes. Treatment for addiction may be less costly in the end than the unknown cost of repeat offenses and potential injury to others from sentencing which otherwise does not change the underlying problem.

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 should be reserved to those whom either are recalcitrant to changing their behavior consistent with our laws or to those whom have been determined through due process to be an inimical threat to the safety and security of others.

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?

Our jails and prisons have become mental health institutions since the closure of many of our state mental health hospitals.

* 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

The goal of incarceration should be rehabilitation and lawful return to society. All of the aforementioned services aid in that goal.

programming while incarcerated affect your constituents?	
* 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?	I do not have any strong opinion about this issue. Given that there are approximately 10,000 individuals incarcerated in Minnesota, I do not think the distribution of inmates divided by 134 legislative districts would have a significant impact upon the legislative maps concerning redistricting.
Are there any bills around incarceration or probation that you would join or champion? Which ones and why?	I would support probation reforms that match the offense. Overall, more laws are created each session that lead in a direction of criminalizing behavior. We have added more than 400 felony offenses to the statutes since our statehood.

Reentry Issues

* 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?	These issues affect the offender more than the constituent neighbors. Since only felons go to prisons and not jails, people returning from incarceration from prison, due to their felony convictions find it difficult to secure housing and jobs with a felony conviction on their record.
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?	I support restoration of voting rights after release from incarceration.

Public Health Issues

What are your thoughts about how the Department of Corrections has responded to the coronavirus pandemic?	Congregate living conditions are a risky situation concerning the control and spread of infectious diseases. Initially little was known about Covid-19 with certainty. Unfortunately, an infection within our prisons became quickly widespread.
* What, if any, public health crises do you think have inequitable impacts on people who are involved in the criminal	Mental health issues appear to be the most impactful issue concerning a significant part of the prison population. Much of mental health anomalies are treatable, while for others treatment may be prove difficult. Properly trained staff and resources in

<p>legal system, and how can we count on you to respond to these public health crises?</p>	<p>our prisons could make a significant difference for many of those whom are incarcerated and have any hope of resuming a productive and lawful way of life upon release.</p>
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Personal Connections

<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>None personally. As a past health care provider and during my training as an R.N. I witnessed the challenges of those afflicted with mental health issues.</p>
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<p>How can your constituents support you in accomplishing any changes you've outlined here?</p>	<p>Understanding more about the criminal justice system, sentencing, parole and probation in lieu of adjudication.</p>
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