

# MNSCC Candidate Questionnaire



**Kate Luthner**  
Running for MN  
Senate District 31



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

she/her/hers | [kateluthner4senate31.com](http://kateluthner4senate31.com)

## Public Safety Issues

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

Yes and no. I acknowledge that I was born with, and, society afforded me many ways to succeed in the places I have lived and worked. The town I live in is, overall, I believe safe based on crime stats and I feel safe within my community at any time of day or night.

When I look beyond my bubble, and that is what one promises to do when you run for office, I see that there are places in our state that are unsafe for many based on race or belief. Given the awakening over the past months my faith in 'the system' is shaken and I feel we need to make sure that everyone feels safe.

What does the phrase "public safety" mean to you?

Public safety is when one can go about their business without fear. Safety is built when we are all subscribing to the same social contract, that we listen to each other, and know that we

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| What builds safety? What detracts from it?   | will not always agree but treat everyone with respect. It is built by communication and believing the best of motives. Detraction happens when someone feels they are not valued, heard, accepted for themselves. They reject the need to work on the community and work only for themselves.  |
| 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? | I have heard many strong opinions that are based in fear or lack of information. Our district is not very culturally diverse so there is still a strong fear of the unknown. There are many others that feel more like myself and my hope is to build on the good and work on everything else. |
| What changes do you think would help prevent violence and other undesirable behavior in your district? How will you go about making those changes?   | Education. It is my #1 issue overall and I believe with education and communication we can work on root case changes. My start would be town hall meetings to hear about specific problems and amorphous fears.  |

**Police Issues**

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| What are your thoughts on the general culture of the police departments in your district?            | I have put in many calls to meet with the Anoka county Sherref and have had no luck so I have no first-hand data. Based on published public information the police in SD31 seem to all be good and would like to believe that choosing a rural police assignment one is interested in building communities. I would push for more professional accountability just like in other industries, and, training in de-escalation. The 'defund' word is loaded, in my opinion, we should pull back on the military-grade items, invest in training and social work/mental health partnerships, and body camera for the safety of all. |
| * What police reforms, if any, do you think would help your district or the state? Please elaborate. | As in the previous question; I would push for more professional accountability just like in other industries, and, training in de-escalation. We should pull back on the military-grade items, invest in training and social work/mental health partnerships, and body cameras for the safety of all.   |
| * What changes to police budgets, if any, would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.   | As in the previous question; I would push for more professional accountability just like in other industries, and, training in de-escalation. We should pull back on the military-grade items, invest in training and social work/mental health partnerships, and body cameras for the safety of all.   |
| Are there any bills around policing that you would join or   |   |

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| <p>champion? What are they and why?</p>  |  |
| <p><b>Criminal Court Issues</b></p>  |  |
| <p>Do you notice any inequities in the courts in your district?<br/>         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 very little source information on this for our district. From a higher level look too often race and class are factors in inequities. I would attempt to shine a light on this and push for education and social work to fix root causes.</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.<br/>         Are there any bills around criminal court practices that you would join or champion?<br/>         What are they and why?</p> |  |
| <p><b>Incarceration Issues</b></p>   |  |
| <p>In your opinion, what is the purpose of incarceration?<br/>         Do you believe that incarceration accomplishes those purposes well?<br/>         If not, why not, and what would you do about it?</p>   | <p>I believe the point is to attempt to deter people from committing crimes to avoid the punishment of incarceration. The second purpose is rehabilitation. The third is to remove an unchanging and dangerous person from our society. On all three points I do not think we are successful. I will work towards closing the education gap, and, any logical reform that people who study this (psychologist, law, etc) believe will improve any aspect of the situation.</p> |
| <p>What do you know about alternatives to incarceration and how they address violence and other undesirable or criminalized behavior?<br/>         What incarceration alternatives do you support and why?</p>   | <p>I only know a laypersons level of alternatives. I believe restorative justice has a good impact. I am interested in other out of the box options that break the cycle. I also believe there is systemic racism in play and would work to pull out that thread from the system.</p>  |
| <p>* Every district in Minnesota is home to people who have experienced incarceration.<br/>         How do you think issues like access to health care,</p>  |  |

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| visits/phone calls/emails, education, and other 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 would suggest that they should be counted based on projected time in incarceration. If it is greater than 4 years it should be in the district of the facility. If it is less than 4 years it should count as where they will go after (parent, group home, family, etc).<br><br>**I do hope this does not become a political issue where people get longer terms to be counted locally** |
| Are there any bills around incarceration or probation that you would join or champion? Which ones and why?  |   |

**Reentry Issues**

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| * 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? | Again, this is not a system I have personal or firsthand knowledge but the cycle of incarceration needs to be fixed. Being unable to get basics pushes people back to crime, being charged for every required service (testing, probation etc) also creates a burden. I am interested in hearing solutions to this and know there is a problem. |
| 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?   | Mental health and assistance to get back to a productive society. Maybe a program that offers jobs to help people get back on their feet.   |

**Public Health Issues**

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| What are your thoughts about how the Department of Corrections has responded to the coronavirus pandemic? | I do not know all the details of this however nothing covid related has turned out as we hoped. |
| * What, if any, public health crises do you think have inequitable impacts on people                      | I will listen to medical and health experts, this should not be a political football.           |

who are involved in the criminal legal system, and how can we count on you to respond to these public health crises?

### 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?

My personal priority is to improve education, help us close the gap, show that differences are ok and we need to work together.

How can your constituents support you in accomplishing any changes you've outlined here?

Look more deeply, and communicate with the goal of improving society.