

MNSCC Candidate Questionnaire



Kelsey Waits Running for MN House District 54B

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she/her/hers | www.kelseywaits.com

Public Safety Issues

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

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

What is your understanding of the diversity of opinions around public safety in your district?

<p>How do your constituents think about what builds safety and what detracts from it in your district?</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>	

Police Issues

<p>What are your thoughts on the general culture of the police departments in your district?</p>	
<p>* What police reforms, if any, do you think would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.</p>	<p>We are asking police to do too much, similar to how we ask school teachers to do too much. This comes as we ask police to respond to everything that could be addressed earlier by adequately funding the programs we need to meet our communities where they are at. Programs that integrate community supports alongside law enforcement have been piloted across the state and the results have been strong - this is an idea that has been around and should be further implemented.</p>
<p>* What changes to police budgets, if any, would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.</p>	<p>Police budgets need to be held in balance with other programming that contributes to a more proactive and less reactive definition of public safety. All of these budgets should together make up our public safety budgets.</p>
<p>Are there any bills around policing that you would join or champion? What are they and why?</p>	

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 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</p>	

<p>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>	
Incarceration Issues	
<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>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>* 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 would like to learn more about alternatives to incarceration. I support the use of diversion and special courts like veterans courts, which have been shown to help decrease recidivism. Issues like access to health care, etc. while incarcerated affect my constituents because even if incarcerated, I still represent you and your family.</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>People should be counted in the district where they had their last residential address. Counting incarcerated persons in the district where they are incarcerated has a large impact on communities that house prisons since their population numbers are boosted. Since incarcerated persons are unable to vote, this creates a type of “prison gerrymandering”.</p>
<p>Are there any bills around incarceration or probation that</p>	

<p>you would join or champion? Which ones and why?</p>	
<p>Reentry Issues</p>	
<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 believe that punishing people who are incarcerated even after they have served their time does not make sense. It only creates further barriers that make recidivism more likely. How much punishment is enough? Formerly incarcerated residents must have equal access to housing, employment, healthcare, etc. as other residents.</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>Public Health Issues</p>	
<p>What are your thoughts about how the Department of Corrections has responded to the coronavirus pandemic?</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>Beyond COVID-19, there are a number of public health crises that have inequitable impacts on people involved in the criminal legal system. One that comes to mind is the public health crisis of gun violence. All residents should be able to live free from gun violence, but it is much more present in communities with fewer resources and fewer opportunities. I will advocate for common sense gun safety measures including universal background checks.</p> <p>Another major public health crisis that has inequitable health impacts is the opioid epidemic. Criminalizing addiction and incarcerating people struggling with opioids does not address the roots of the issue. I will support efforts to address this massive public health issue.</p>
<p>Personal Connections</p>	
<p>* Are there any ways in which you feel personally connected to</p>	<p>I have been incredibly privileged in my life because I have not been personally impacted by these issues. For me, that is why these issues are important to me. My job is to use my privilege</p>

<p>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>to amplify the voices of my community members who are typically not represented.</p>
<p>How can your constituents support you in accomplishing any changes you've outlined here?</p>	