

MNSCC Candidate Questionnaire



Michele Anderson
Running for MN
Senate District 8



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

she/her/hers | www.micheleformn.com

Public Safety Issues

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

Yes, I generally feel safe, mainly because I have privilege as a white person to not be discriminated against or targeted for harassment.

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

To me, public safety means that people feel supported by community and public resources when they are in a crisis or an emergency. These resources may include police, but they might also be mental health crisis support, or a community coming together to take care of a neighborhood during a natural disaster. What builds safety is when the community can have input on what they need and when neighbors know one another and look out for each other. What detracts is when there is a lack of trust from both the community and the public safety officers and

	workers, or when people do not know one another well enough to notice when something is wrong or a person needs support or help.
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?	Generally my district is in favor of traditional public safety methods, but there is an increasing lack of trust among minority groups on whether they might be treated differently if they call the police.
What changes do you think would help prevent violence and other undesirable behavior in your district? How will you go about making those changes?	A significant portion of the violence in my district are domestic or drug related incidents. I would like to see more mental health support for people in crisis in order to prevent these issues. To make these changes I would make mental health support and affordable healthcare a priority as a legislator.

Police Issues

What are your thoughts on the general culture of the police departments in your district?	In the last few years, our local police department has successfully de-escalated several incidents that could have ended tragically. There is a strong sense of trust from the *majority* of residents, and I think this partially comes from it being a small community where people have connections with one another. The issue is when people feel less welcome or that they don't belong, and whether they might be written off and treated differently if they encounter the police. I'd like to learn more about how BIPOC people in my community feel about their interactions with the police and I think more needs to be done to hear their stories and concerns.
* What police reforms, if any, do you think would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.	While the recent bipartisan bill enacted some important police reform, I believe we need to do more, including pairing social workers with police responding to crisis calls, restoring voting rights to felons who have served their time, and passing more meaningful arbitration reform.
* What changes to police budgets, if any, would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.	We need to make sure to adequately fund some of the reform measures that were recently passed - particularly training for police to effectively respond to mental health related incidents, and collecting data on use of force. Before expanding any additional police budgets aside from those areas, we need to look at root causes of crime and consider where we can reinvest in social services and education to prevent them from happening in the first place, and also make sure that there are people to call other than police in situations involving mental health crisis.

<p>Are there any bills around policing that you would join or champion? What are they and why?</p>	
<p>Criminal Court Issues</p>	
<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 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?</p>	
<p>Incarceration Issues</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>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</p>	<p>These resources are critical to an incarcerated person's ability to reintegrate into their communities once they have served their time, ultimately making our communities safer and preventing individuals from repeating offenses.</p>

access to health care, 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?	Incarcerated persons should be counted in the district where they last had their residential address. Counting incarcerated people in the districts where they're serving time does not accurately reflect the voting population of that district.
Are there any bills around incarceration or probation that you would join or champion? Which ones and why?	

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 resources and services are critical to successful re-entry. It is in everyone's best interest that people who are incarcerated can return to their communities without repeating offenses. Without access to housing, employment, health care and more, it is more likely that those who have served time for past offenses will commit crimes again.
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?	

Public Health Issues

What are your thoughts about how the Department of Corrections has responded to the coronavirus pandemic?	
* What, if any, public health crises do you think have	The fines and fees in the criminal justice system have a greater impact on communities of color, keeping them in jail more often

<p>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>and for longer periods of time and punishing people for being poor. I would support ending the cash bail system in Minnesota to address this issue.</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? What is personal about these issues for you, and how will that impact your priorities and/or stances?</p>	<p>I am personally interested in restorative justice programs, including the drug court program, which helped someone very close to me stay out of jail and instead supported them in their long term recovery. I would like to make sure programs like this continue and are expanded in other parts of Minnesota.</p>
---	---

<p>How can your constituents support you in accomplishing any changes you've outlined here?</p>	<p>Contact me with their concerns, ideas and stories.</p>
---	---