

MNSCC Candidate Questionnaire



Mindy Kimmel
Running for MN
House District 16B



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she/her/hers | www.kimmelforhouse.com

Public Safety Issues

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

I feel safe in my community for many reasons. I grew up here and have built relationships here. My family has lived here for 6 generations. It feels like a close knit community. I also am aware that my white privilege means that I am given many more reasons to feel safe and to trust that people in power will consider my point of view. I have not feared for my safety in my community.

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

Public safety is built around the idea that people who live and work here are all invested in having a safe community, free from dangers such as those who seek to do harm. Often law enforcement is tasked with maintaining public safety. When law enforcement and community members target/profile individuals

	based on race and kill community members it detracts from public safety.
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 been a member of Welcoming Communities and New Ulm Forward, both focused on helping promote diversity and inclusion in my community. Historically my community has been very white and people of color have not felt welcome here.
What changes do you think would help prevent violence and other undesirable behavior in your district? How will you go about making those changes?	In my district we need better services for those with mental illness. Often the police are called for mental health crisis when a social worker or crisis counselor would be more appropriate. We do not have enough mental health or substance treatment options locally. I support funding programs like the Yellow Line.

Police Issues

What are your thoughts on the general culture of the police departments in your district?	In my district the majority of police officers reside in the community. This gives them a better opportunity to build relationships. They do not allow choke holds.
* What police reforms, if any, do you think would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Banning choke holds 2) Funding programs to reduce homelessness. 3) Funding mental health and substance treatments 4) Partnering with organizations that help people get out of poverty 5) Raising the minimum wage 6) Training for officers to reduce bias including periodic psychological evaluation to assess fitness for duty
* What changes to police budgets, if any, would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.	My district desperately needs funding for mental health services. The local jail added at least one padded cell solely to house people in mental health need. This is not the job officers were trained for.
Are there any bills around policing that you would join or champion? What are they and why?	Requiring more officers to live in the community they police. Banning warrior style training and choke holds.

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?

It is highly likely that there are inequities based on whether someone has privilege (race, family name, etc.). I intend to speak out and be a strong voice for my community.

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?

I support removing the burdensome bail bond system. Court fines, fees, and bail should be affordable based on the individual's income and not arbitrarily given.

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 used in cases when the public is at significant risk of repeat offenders. I think the prison/jail system should focus more on rehabilitation and communities should come together to support people in meeting their basic needs (finances, housing, etc.) which then reduces crime. I also support restorative justice initiatives.

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?

I hope to learn more about these alternatives. I have read about other countries that have shown success in changing people's lives through rehabilitative/restorative options.

* 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?

Often the cost of these services is unattainable for many incarcerated people. I support increasing access to all of the above for all people who are incarcerated.

<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>I think this depends on where they will vote. This is similar to college students who can choose to vote at home or at school. I support restoring voting rights.</p>
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<p>Are there any bills around incarceration or probation that you would join or champion? Which ones and why?</p>	<p>I would support a cap on probation sentence lengths.</p>
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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>Lack of resources especially employment and housing are major issues for people in my district. I've spoke with several people who had difficulty upon completing their sentences.</p>
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<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 support programs especially for those most at risk for eviction, homelessness, mental health difficulties, substance abuse, etc with accessing needed services. Without these needed resources we are setting people up to fail upon re-entry to society.</p>
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Public Health Issues

<p>What are your thoughts about how the Department of Corrections has responded to the coronavirus pandemic?</p>	<p>I think we can do better. I am concerned that the privileged were released (due to COVID) yet many others were not.</p>
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<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>Housing and lack of affordable healthcare are two of the biggest. I support a single payer healthcare system that allows everyone access to needed services regardless of income or employment. I also support housing programs for those most in need of support, especially people with a legal background, mental health challenges, homelessness, and low income.</p>
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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?

As a mental health professional many of my clients have faced significant challenges as a result of their legal difficulties. I seek to advocate on their behalf.

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

We are always seeking donations and volunteers! I look forward to hearing from constituents on how I can be a strong voice for them in St. Paul.