

# MNSCC Candidate Questionnaire



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Running for MN  
House District 26B



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he/him/his | [www.randybrock.mn](http://www.randybrock.mn)

## Public Safety Issues

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

Yes. I am privileged to live in a community that is relatively safe.

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

Public safety strives to ensure our general welfare and the livability of our communities through the minimization of threats arising from crime and natural disasters.

Public safety works best when those appointed to protect our communities are representative of the people they are sworn to

	protect, when our public safety entities operate with transparency, and when the laws are enforced equitably.
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?	This is a discussion I look forward to having with my constituents. The opinions may have changed quite a bit in the last few months.
What changes do you think would help prevent violence and other undesirable behavior in your district? How will you go about making those changes?	As of 2018, our district has the largest problem with larceny, burglary, DUIs, and narcotic related crimes.  Extensive studies from all over the world have found that a person’s propensity to commit crimes is related to issues like socio-economic status and poverty rates, wage and income inequality, and social exclusion rather than a lack of policing or law enforcement presence. Taking a preventative approach by investing in services that address inequities in healthcare, education, environment, and housing will lead to safer communities and reduced crime, and I intend to work hard on these issues if elected to the State House.

**Police Issues**

What are your thoughts on the general culture of the police departments in your district?	The scope of policing has expanded over the years to address a broad range of issues such as homelessness, drug addiction, domestic disputes, and student discipline. Our police forces are overwhelmed and lack the resources/ training required to address all aspects of what is now considered public safety.  We need to reimagine the role of law enforcement officers to focus on what they’ve been designated to do: protect our communities from crime rather than operate as public health professionals or social workers, and ensure programs to increase public health and social work response have adequate funding.
* What police reforms, if any, do you think would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.	I am thankful that my district has a great, collaborative working relationship with social workers and mental health providers.  I would like to work to eliminate racial profiling and address disparities in the use of force through racial and implicit bias

	<p>training, conflict mediation, and community policing strategies. Additionally, through the collection, analysis, and publication of traffic and field stops, we can increase transparency and accountability, creating a dialogue with the community for feedback.</p>
<p>* What changes to police budgets, if any, would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.</p>	<p>I want to ensure that law enforcement has the funds necessary to address public safety issues, while also providing adequate funding for increasing the use of programs like the one in Olmsted County that partners a social worker with patrol deputies and community-based programs that improve quality of life for our residents. We've seen the impact of what investing in these areas can do for our communities, particularly in suburban neighborhoods.</p>
<p>Are there any bills around policing that you would join or champion? What are they and why?</p>	<p>I would join bills around policing that are centered around providing services, such as the social worker model in Olmsted County, to public safety agencies, and promote a safer community for all.</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>The criminal justice system is overwhelmed and law enforcement resources spread thin as a result of the criminalization of poverty, addiction, and mental health. This has touched every corner of the state, and it's time we reevaluate how resources are allocated to treat individuals in the criminal justice system. I am aware of the issue of inequities in the justice system on a broad scale, but would be interested in learning more about how this is impacting my district. I am especially concerned about inequities in our Courts with private counsel versus the public defenders' office outcomes. Public defenders are grossly underfunded resulting in extremely high caseloads, and we need to increase their resources to decrease their caseloads to a reasonable level to increase equity in the Court system.</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</p>	

<p>would join or champion? What are they and why?</p>	
<p><b>Incarceration Issues</b></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>Incarceration was intended for retribution, incapacitation, deterrence and rehabilitation to increase the quality of life within our communities. Oftentimes it is counterproductive and ineffective. I would like to increase funding for community dispute resolution programs to increase capacity to provide restorative justice services, pilot programs in Minnesota prisons modeling effective programs from around the world to reduce recidivism upon release, increase opportunities for court diversion when mental health or substance use disorders are the root cause of the crime, and provide funding for more rehabilitative programming within our jails and prisons.</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>Court diversion and community supervision are two programs I'm aware of that provide alternatives to incarceration. Both of these programs have their strengths and weaknesses, sometimes promoting good behavior, sometimes providing punitive consequences for bad behavior. However, what we've found in Minnesota, is that we have used extended probation sentences disproportionately against BIPOC communities. I support expanding court diversion, decriminalizing certain non-violent offenses, and providing alternatives to incarceration for those rehabilitable offenders.</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>These are key human rights issues for people who are incarcerated. Without providing the supports they need while incarcerated, we can't expect these folks to reintegrate into society upon release. I believe the barriers to health care, social interaction, education, and other programming increases recidivism, and it is important to ensure all Minnesotans are treated with dignity and respect, even when they're incarcerated.</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>I believe they should be counted at their last residential address, as upon release, we intend to return those individuals to the communities they lived in prior to incarceration.</p>

<p>Are there any bills around incarceration or probation that you would join or champion? Which ones and why?</p>	<p>I would like to work on legislation to reduce technical probation violations.</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>Individuals returning from incarceration often face difficulties accessing public assistance and are of disadvantaged economic, social, and educational means. This makes it difficult for them to support themselves and more likely to return to criminal activity.</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>We need to make an investment into prison education and re-entry programming to reduce recidivism.</p> <p>We need to focus on pre-release programs, to prepare individuals to re-enter our communities successfully. By equipping incarcerated individuals with the job and life skills they need to re-enter society such as education, mental healthcare and substance abuse treatment we can help them overcome some of the challenges they face. Research notes that inmates who participate in correctional education programs are 43 percent less likely to re-enter prison.</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>From a cursory review of the information the DOC has available, the process for conditional medical release, which is available to more inmates during COVID-19 appears to be a complicated, bureaucratic process. Minnesota would be better served to decrease population in prisons via automatic early release for any non-violent offenders nearing the end of their sentence, unless the release poses a threat to public safety. Staff within the correctional facilities should work to identify who those individuals are and process their release quickly to decrease the risk of congregate living spread in Minnesota's prisons.</p>
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<p>* What, if any, public health crises do you think have inequitable impacts on people</p>	<p>Racism itself is a public health crisis, so any public health crisis will have a disproportionate impact on people of color, who are disproportionately impacted by the criminal legal system.</p>
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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?

I do not feel personally connected to these issues, but do strongly believe we need to reform public safety.

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

I would love to talk with constituents about what they are most concerned about, what they have struggled with, where they see opportunities for improvement, and where they see inequities in the criminal justice system.