

# MNSCC Candidate Questionnaire



**Sondra Erickson**  
Running for MN  
House District 15A



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

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## Public Safety Issues

Do you feel safe in the communities where you live, work, and play? Why or why not?	YES. My citizens honor the work of law enforcement and others who protect us and those professionals do an amazing job keeping us safe.
What does the phrase “public safety” mean to you? What builds safety? What detracts from it?	The first responsibility of government is to keep us safe, so when governments fail at this, there is not the safety expected by the citizens.
What is your understanding of the diversity of opinions around public safety in your district?	I have heard no negatives about the public safety in my communities. As long as people feel safe because they see the police, sheriff, security guards and others, they know they will receive help when needed.

How do your constituents think about what builds safety and what detracts from it in your district?	
What changes do you think would help prevent violence and other undesirable behavior in your district? How will you go about making those changes?	I have no violence in my rural district because citizens receive the protection they expect.

**Police Issues**

What are your thoughts on the general culture of the police departments in your district?	My department officials are deeply respected by the public.
* What police reforms, if any, do you think would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.	My officers want more training to know who to react when they receive calls that relate to mental health issues.
* What changes to police budgets, if any, would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.	County and city budgets in District 15A are top of the list when government leaders set budget.
Are there any bills around policing that you would join or champion? What are they and why?	More training around special needs such as mental health issues and domestic abuse.

**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?	I have not heard of any inequities in the courts of District 7 or 10 or in the specific county courts of Mille Lacs, Sherburne or Kanabec.
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	Bail, services for crime survivors, fines and fees as well as sentencing and probation guidelines are handled fairly and according to the law in my district.

<p>criminal court practices that you 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 is supposed to deter behavior that breaks the law. When our jail ministry teams intervene, I think recovery begins and the perpetrator begins to try to reform</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>I think work is good for the mind, body and soul so want more work programs as an alternative. Also special counseling to help the person address his/her violent behavior.</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>The jail staff in Mille Lacs, Sherburne and Kanabec counties address all these issues in the best way possible.</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>Last residential address</p>
<p>Are there any bills around incarceration or probation that you would join or champion? Which ones and why?</p>	<p>My probation officers would help those who are incarcerated to confront the reasons for committing crimes. Making sure that our children attend school and graduate is one way to help those inclined to turn to crime as their source of satisfaction in life. I want children to grow up knowing they have opportunities for great futures if they are educated and find ways to support themselves.</p>

## 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?

Our attitude toward those who have been incarcerated has to be one of hope for a better life. Certainly every community needs to work at helping with recovery and success for these individuals and I know my jail ministry tried very hard to follow through with these persons.

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?

Again, I would support the involvement of our churches in addressing the needs of those re-entering society following incarceration.

## Public Health Issues

What are your thoughts about how the Department of Corrections has responded to the coronavirus pandemic?

DOC faced the same problems we have in the general society. If you are exposed, you probably will get the COVID, so quarantine is important and some kind of isolation during treatment.

\* 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?

I have never received a complaint about the way jails and prisons in my area address the health needs of those in the system. Public health systems in our area are committed to help to find resources.

## 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 am most concerned about fathers who are imprisoned connecting with their families and prepared to face the separation with confidence and support so they can be fathers to their children and husbands to their wives or partners. Family connections during and after incarceration is most important to me.

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

My citizens know that I place faith in Almighty God as the most important source to help all of us, regardless of what happens in our lives.