

MNSCC Candidate Questionnaire



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Running for MN
Senate District 48

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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. I believe that our public safety officers and community work hard to foster an environment of inclusion and safety that benefits all and helps ensure security and safety.

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

Public safety to me means that each individual can feel safe in their home and their community. I believe this foundation is built on trust between an individual, public safety officers and other members of the community. When this trust is broken and suspicion and danger creeps into one of these relationships, public safety can be compromised.

<p>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?</p>	<p>I believe the vast majority of my constituents feel safe in our community. There are some who feel unsafe at times, but generally the climate of safety prevails. My constituents think that the strong community bonds are essential for building safety. They are connected to their neighbors and feel part of a local community which is essential for feeling safe.</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>	<p>I believe changes that would cause my district to be more inclusive would help reduce crime and violence in my district. I have tried to foster these changes by reaching out to minority communities and bringing their leaders into the process and trying to champion local leaders and giving them a platform to advocate for their communities.</p>

Police Issues

<p>What are your thoughts on the general culture of the police departments in your district?</p>	<p>I believe the police departments in my district are staffed with men and women who are committed to ensuring all residents feel safe. The culture is one of openness and a willingness to change and adapt to fit the needs of the communities they serve.</p>
<p>* What police reforms, if any, do you think would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.</p>	<p>I believe the reforms we passed at the legislature are an important first step, but we have more work to do. I would like to address qualified immunity so that there is more ability to get rid of bad cops and addressing the culture of violence that permeates some police departments through eliminating "warrior training" and other tools of escalation.</p>
<p>* What changes to police budgets, if any, would help your district or the state? Please elaborate.</p>	<p>I think that we need to support the police and make sure they have the resources necessary to effectively do their jobs. At the same time, we need to evaluate whether a armed officers is the correct response to every 911 call and see if we can build tools to address issues that may not be best handled by a police officer and funding these programs.</p>
<p>Are there any bills around policing that you would join or champion? What are they and why?</p>	<p>I was a strong proponent for the police reforms championed by the DFL and the BIPOC caucus. I support steps to look at qualified immunity and other policies that make addressing police misdeeds difficult.</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</p>	<p>I believe the courts in my district are largely equitable. However, this is not the case in some areas in Minnesota and we need to ensure that everyone has adequate legal representation to navigate the legal system. This means supporting our public</p>
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<p>can we count on you to respond to any inequities?</p>	<p>defenders and making sure they have the resources to adequately do their jobs.</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>I think we need to take a look at the court fees and fines and cash bail. Many of these policies are discriminatory and disproportionately affect communities of color. I want to study these issues further and determine how best we can make the system more equitable.</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>The purpose of incarceration is to allow someone to pay their debt to society and then rejoin it as productive member. I believe our current system focuses too much on punishment and not as much on preparing people to reenter as productive members of society.</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 know there are alternatives like community support programs where the focus is not punitive. Many people in prison also suffer from mental health issues and I support helping these people get the support they need through treatment.</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 believe that these things help maintain a certain quality of life while incarcerated. These people are still human and deserve the right to see and write to their families and can also learn valuable skills through education and other programming that will help them when they are ready to re-enter society.</p>
<p>* For purposes of drawing legislative districts, should incarcerated persons be counted as part of the district where they are incarcerated, or should</p>	<p>I believe that counting incarcerated people as part of the area they are incarcerated in is discriminatory since these people are unable to vote and yet count as population for legislative purposes. There should be a path to regaining the right to vote for these people once they have paid their debt to society.</p>

<p>incarcerated persons be counted as part of the district where they had their last residential address? Or something else? Why?</p>	
<p>Are there any bills around incarceration or probation that 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>Giving previously incarcerated people support as they make their transition back into society is crucial so they can find stable housing and employment and become productive members.</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>I believe there has been an inadequate response. Prisons are natural places for the pandemic to spread due to the close proximity of the inmates and the fact they do not have a sufficient amount of influence. We need to make sure we are keeping people safe.</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>Personal Connections</p>	

<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>How can your constituents support you in accomplishing any changes you've outlined here?</p>	<p>They can tell me about their issues and make their voices heard so that we can accomplish things at the legislature and make changes in public opinion which is crucial for long lasting change around these issues.</p>