

Optional Short Answer Questions for Belinda Drake

Down Syndrome Indiana would like to thank each candidate who took time to answer the following questions:

Optional: What is your position on Medicaid block grants?

The block grants program proposed by the Trump administration is problematic in many ways. Not only would it reduce the ability to respond to those with the greatest need when and where they need Medicaid assistance, it opens the door for states to use these funds for other services.

Optional: What is your position on LTSS for people with disabilities and are they included in your health care plan?

I believe that Medicaid needs to be fully funded and that the Medicaid waitlist must be eliminated. Additionally, the State of Indiana needs to revise the current use of Medicaid funding so that it doesn't get diverted into buildings instead of healthcare services. The consolidation of support service providers in recent years across the state has led to a decreased quality of life for people with disabilities and has created additional and excessive burdens on families and in family relationships. The State of Indiana needs to reallocate funding in the budget to prioritize LTSS for people with disabilities.

Optional: What is your position on Direct Support Professionals (DSP) getting paid adequate wages for their work?

I believe that Direct Support Professionals deserve to be paid adequate wages for their work. Too often we see DSPs being underpaid for their education, experience, and responsibilities compared to peers in the private sector. If we are retain the best DSPs, we need to pay them a living and adequate wage for their work.

Optional Short Answer Questions Continued...

Optional: What is your position on paid family leave?

I support paid medical and family leave in addition to paid sick leave, regardless of the number of employees working with an employer.

Optional: What are you doing to protect the Americans with Disabilities Act? How will you make sure people with a disability get treated fairly?

I will work with Congressman Carson and my peers to close the gaps on the ADA and especially to address discriminatory attitudes and behaviors from employers and places of business. People with disabilities often live well below the poverty line and are often working in some of the lowest paying jobs available. Prioritizing policy that will improve the quality of life for people with disabilities must be prioritized in any future revisions, and this should be addressed through the lens of equity and justice.

Optional: Will you help make sure the government pays its fair share of the cost of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ?

I will work with Congressman Carson and my peers to pressure for a redistribution of budget funding towards IDEA. Additionally, I would work with state legislators to ensure that IDEA funding to schools is not redistributed to other programs that have nothing to do with providing FAPE to students with disabilities.

Optional: How would you make the Social Security program better for people with disabilities?

I will work with Congressman Carson to eliminate the marriage penalty that occurs when people with disabilities get married. Of course, the similar marriage penalty also needs eliminated from the income tax system.