



2016 Minnesota State House and Senate Candidate Questionnaire

ARRM

Section #1: About Yourself

Your Name: Charles "Chuck" Wiger

District you are running in: 43

Question #1: Please provide a short background about yourself.

Life-long resident of district; five children and five grandchildren; active in numerous volunteer activities such as coaching

church, parks and trail. Graduate of North High and Hamline University (JD, BA); attorney. State Senator (elected 1996);

chair Senate Education Committee; member, Finance Committee and Transportation/Transit Committee. Previous board

chair-- District 622 No. St. Paul- Maplewood- Oakdale school board, and Ramsey sould and Water Conservation District

Question #2: What do you hope to accomplish by running for office? What will your main priorities be at the Capitol if you are elected?

Positive, constructive improvements in public policy. Priorities include education, jobs, housing, transportation/transit,

independence for individuals with disabilities, property tax reduction. It's very important to be inclusive in developing

policy priorities, to follow-up and to walk to the talk.

Question #3: What experience or connections, if any, do you have to the disability community?

I have consistently been supportive of initiatives; I am very appreciative of the leadership provided by Senators

Hoffman and Eken on key legislations and have always provided support. I have visited with many families impacted in

my district, and beyond, and they hve shared their personal challenges, suggestions and advocacy. I openly display

pictures of people that I have visited in person as a reminder and inspiration.

Section #2: Our Workforce Crisis

Question #1: Our industry is facing a workforce crisis. There are simply not enough people to provide the direct care needed for people with disabilities to lead independent lives. Given that the overwhelming majority of funding for disability services comes from the government, and low wages are a driving force behind high rates of staff turnover, what ideas would you offer for helping to create a livable wage for our direct support professionals and caregivers?

As a matter of fundamental fairness, it is important that care providers are paid a living wage so they may adequately

pursue their career. We need to prioritize this goal- it is a moral imperative.

Question #2: As technology continues to become a bigger part of everyone's lives, there are numerous products that can be used by individuals with disabilities which offer them increased independence, including things as simple as apps on cell phones and tablets. Some technology can supplement staff while others can substitute for staff. Would you support the use of public dollars to increase the availability and use of technology?

Absolutely-- technology can improve our lives when used appropriately. I look forward to learning more about

needed technology opportunities.

Section #3: The Sustainability of our System

Question #1: Minnesota's Olmstead Plan includes a broad series of key activities our state must accomplish to ensure people with disabilities are living, learning, working and enjoying life in the most integrated setting appropriate for their needs. In 2015, a set of very ambitious goals and benchmarks were finalized and approved by the Minnesota courts to help ensure that the intent of the Olmstead Plan is realized. What is your role as a legislator to oversee and ensure that those goals are met?

Legislature has a legal and moral obligation to provide resources as required. I strongly support implementation

of the Olmstead Plan.

Question #2: Affordable housing is an issue for many people in Minnesota. A cornerstone of Minnesota's Olmstead Plan is the opportunity for individuals with disabilities to live as independently as they choose. As a legislator how would you strategically expand availability of affordable housing with accessibility features for Minnesotans with disabilities?

Programs like HUD Section 811 PRA, and the Bridges program, are examples or needed programs which I support.

I will continue to advocate for needed housing opportunities to help maximize the opportunity for independence.

Question #3: Our industry has seen an influx of "unfunded mandates" - items that cost providers additional money without subsequent compensation, such as the increase in minimum wage, the Affordable Care Act, increased regulatory fees and the new Department of Labor Overtime Rule to name a few. When the government adds a new mandate what is its responsibility in supporting government funded businesses to pay for those mandates?

The legislature should always seek input from people before it acts by being inclusive. If a law passes, lawmakers

need to provide the resources and tools needed to make the change work effectively.
