



2016 Minnesota State House and Senate Candidate Questionnaire

ARRM

Section #1: About Yourself

Your Name: Joe Schomucker
District you are running in: 22A

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

- Graduate of Laverne High School, SMSU-Marshall, (BA) + GWU (MPS)
- First elected in 2010, running for my fourth term.
- Run a small business in Laverne.
- Served as the Chairman of the Aging & LTC Committee

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?

I hope to continue our investment in Southwest Minnesota's
future. Continue closing the gap between rural and metro schools,
promote economic development, and create a stronger job
creating environment.

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

I have served on the Health and Human Services Committee
all six years in the legislature. I was the Chief Author of the
2012 Blueprint for Reform in the House.

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?

I would start by expanding the Home & Community Based Services
Scholarship so that more workers are able to keep going to school
while working. I will continue to support the 5% Campaign, but
also would like to see reforms to the payment model that
puts greater emphasis on supporting the workforce.

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?

I have authored bills that would allow for the expansion
in the past and would support continuing in that direction
next session.

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?

As a legislator, it is my role to meet with my local providers
to hear first hand how progress is being made and if goals
are being met.

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?

I would work with local Housing Authorities and Stakeholders to
determine to local need and local solutions. There should be a line item
for this within the Housing budget to then draw money from after
it's determined a plan is in place.

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?

I will be happy to work with ARRM to reach out to our
Federal delegation where most of these unfunded mandates come from.

It is also useful to keep the unfunded mandate concern at the
top of our minds so we don't push excessive costs on to strapped
providers.