



2016 Minnesota State House and Senate Candidate Questionnaire

ARRM

Section #1: About Yourself

Your Name: Paul Thissen
District you are running in: 61B

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

I've served in legislature 14 years including
HHS Chair + Speaker + DFL leader. Lawyer of
practice in health care + LTC. Married to
Karen w/ 3 kids.

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?

Fighting for ordinary Minnesotans + those
without a voice.

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

Have HHS Chair + lots of work on
public policy issues as well as private law
practice experience.

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?

Increase state investment in programs

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?

Yes

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?

Keeping tabs on it but also making
sure people get correct assistance which
is not always in imminent

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?

More bonding investment; continue to
reform BRH & make it pay.

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?

We should help cover costs