



ARRM

Section #1: About Yourself

Your Name: Shawn Olson

District you are running in: Senate District 8

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

Born and raised right here in the West Central Minnesota Lakes Area. Moorhead State University, Bachelors
in Anthropology, 1997. Field Archaeologist. Small Business owner (Shawn Olson Consulting), focusing
on creating Social Media strategies for a variety of clients, with much of my work done for free to help
good grassroots organizations. Firm believer that every American, whether they were born rich or poor,
black or white, gay or straight, man or woman, abled or disabled, has the right to achieve their full potential.

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?

Variety of priorities, as our nation has a variety of critical needs at the moment. Fixing these dangerous levels
of wealth inequality, protecting the environment, improving the quality of life, and ensuring justice and
equality for all are central themes.

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

Very little to be honest. I have had some friends that have worked with the disabled however.

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?

Direct incentives are a good start. Ensuring adequate funding, including public funding for care facilities

will help. But we also need to raise wages for everyone so people don't have to have two or three jobs to

make ends meet. That way folks will be able to be more focused on their main job and provide more

attention to the care they give, from Senior facilities to those that care for the disabled.

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. Technology utilization can improve the quality of lives for everyone. I am also a huge champion for

border to border broadband so that the high speed internet necessary for access to many of these new

technologies can be expanded to small towns and folks that live in the countryside.

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?

Anything I can do to help, I will do. While I am just an ordinary citizen, once I am in office you will have

my ear.

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?

Affordable public housing and expansion of subsidized housing is the key.

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?

That depends on the situation. An increase in the minimum wage is long, long overdue as poverty wages are now prevalent, and it is a bad business

model to rely on paying starvation wages. It is the role of government however to care for those that cannot

care for themselves, and we have a moral imperative to ensure the disabled have a decent quality of life.
