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Respondent

12 Anonymous

01:35

Time to complete

1. Your name *

Teresa Mosqueda

2. Position you are running for *

King County Council District 8

3. Your zip code *

98126

4. Do you have direct experience with disability? *

 Yes No

5. If yes, please explain

6. How do you define inclusion? *

Inclusion is the action and process of making our communities equitable and equally accessible and accommodating for everyone, regardless of age, race, religion, sexuality, gender, disability, economic status, zip code, or any other social or societal factor.

7. **FAMILIES:** How would you expand access to child care for children with disabilities?

Context: Quality, reliable child care is good for kids and families. But parents of children with disabilities are three times more likely to experience job disruptions because of problems with child care.

We need to create a region that works and functions for everyone, including those with the additional responsibilities and challenges of raising children with disabilities. Improving access to and quality of available and accessible childcare is a pillar of my campaign and one of my top priorities.

On Seattle City Council, I have sponsored funding for providing childcare at City Hall, a study the mayor objected to and continues to stymie efforts to put childcare in City Hall after it's been tried three times now. I voted to amend the Mandatory Housing Affordability requirements (MHA) to incentivize the creation of more childcare facilities on new buildings that are being created under MHA incentives. I included \$6 million in the budget for childcare provider pay and more for capital expansions during the pandemic. I have approached large businesses with retail space downtown and across the City to include childcare on site — as many of them have doggy daycare and no childcare. I worked with SEIU 925 on a career training facility — childcare HUB for innovation to recruit more childcare providers. I prioritized funding during COVID to allocate the American Rescue Plan funding to offer childcare pay appreciation allotments in 2020 and funding for capital expansion projects to both help stabilize the workforce and build out additional childcare space.

I plan to bring these efforts and this priority to office at King County Council to ensure all residents have access to affordable child care — especially those who are faced with the most difficulties during and surrounding the childcare process. I believe we can invest in creating more accessible and affordable childcare if we invest in (1) childcare workers and create a career pipeline for new and talented workers; (2) increase subsidies for childcare to make it more affordable; and (3) build more child care throughout our region around the county. We can work to ensure that childcare providers have experience with children of all abilities and that resources are in place to aid and assist parents and/or caretakers in the application process.

8. HOUSING - How would you help individuals and families with disabilities find and stay housed?

CONTEXT: Most people people in King County's annual homeless count are disabled, but neither Seattle nor King County have specific strategies to address their unique housing challenges.

- People with disabilities face high under- and unemployment, leaving them chronically housing unstable
- Parents who reduce hours to care for disabled loved ones face a lifetime of reduced income
- Many people with significant developmental disabilities live on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) of just \$914 a month – making them too poor to afford even extremely low-income housing.
- Federal housing vouchers help, but the waiting list can be years long and people still struggle to find appropriate and accessible housing

The unique housing challenges facing individuals and families with disabilities needs to be addressed with greater protections and policy solutions that help support the stability of families and individuals. Beyond lobbying and vying for expanding SSI and making the federal housing vouchers more accessible, as a county councilor, I will ensure funds are directed to the construction of new housing which is affordable to all without exception.

On the Seattle City Council, I have chaired the Housing Committee and have passed bills and budget priorities to build more housing options and affordable homes throughout Seattle, and I am proud of the important progress we have made to improve affordability across Seattle, though there remains much more to do. Housing affordability is a problem that extends far beyond Seattle. Throughout our region more and more folks, particularly folks with disabilities, are finding it harder to maintain housing that's affordable and accessible.

I plan to continue on a similar path set by my JumpStart Progressive Payroll Tax and increase housing density, especially near transit hubs and public services. We must expand services for folks with disabilities and lessen the amount of renters with disabilities that are severely cost-burdened. No one should have to choose between their basic necessities and paying rent; we know that when households are severely cost-burdened, there's greater chance for housing instability, risk of eviction, and homelessness. I will always welcome hearing from those who are most impacted by these inequities on the most effective approaches for making housing affordable to individuals and families with disabilities.

9. SHELTER: How would you ensure people with developmental disabilities have a safe place to sleep and stay?

CONTEXT: Homelessness services are often not accessible to people with disabilities.

- They can be too loud and chaotic for Autistic people; they may lack outlets for power chairs, or refrigeration for medication.
- Caregivers can be refused, especially if they are of a different gender; and trans and queer youth report discrimination.
- At the same time, people who live on the street can lose their belongings in sweeps and must contend with "hostile architecture" - that is, benches and alcoves designed to discourage sitting or sleeping.

One of the first steps would be to eliminate sweeps and approach our homelessness crisis with a housing-first model. Shelter should be accessible for all and accommodations for disabled folk need to be made, which requires more funding towards homelessness services.

I've consistently prioritized housing and housing funding in my work and led the passage of JumpStart Seattle, a progressive payroll tax that allocates 2/3 of the funding toward housing and homelessness. While I'm proud of this groundbreaking policy, there is still not enough being done to address the lack of available and accessible homelessness services. These services still widely lack the funding that must be coupled with additional strategies to meet the housing, shelter, and health service goals for all residents of King County—nobody should be turned away from necessary services ever. As a county councilmember, I will work with colleagues and community to allocate additional funding for county services and ensure there is adequate funding to provide the diverse range of services necessary for all.

10. SUPPORTIVE HOUSING: How would you ensure people significantly impacted by their developmental disabilities are receiving case management and the support needed to escape homelessness?

CONTEXT: People with developmental disabilities often lack access supportive housing options, which show the best results in reducing chronic homelessness.

- Supportive housing for adults is available to clients of the state's Aging and Long-Term Services Administration, but NOT the state Developmental Disabilities Administration.
- Adult family homes may be available, but most cater to aging residents. They also don't accommodate families.
- While there are community residential services through DDA that help individuals live independently, slots are capped and statewide only about 4,500 people are served.

The ongoing pandemic and its lingering impacts has only exacerbated the crisis of so many residents living unsheltered in our region. This is a crisis for our community members without a home and a crisis for our entire population that requires immediate and compassionate solutions. It makes no sense to sweep people from one location to another when what they need is shelter and housing. It makes no sense to have our firefighters and first responders serving as the primary care providers for the unsheltered in our streets. We know homelessness is a housing problem; it's also an affordability problem, a policy problem, and, most of all, a problem of inaction.

I will continue to advance policy solutions that recognize most folks who are living unsheltered need holistic health care and case management services, many have experienced trauma, and that too many of us are just one paycheck or health crisis away from being unsheltered ourselves. The combination of people working in insecure jobs, the lack of affordable housing options, and the unmet need for health related services all create barriers to having safe and secure housing and those faced with homelessness have grown dramatically since COVID.

As your King County Councilmember, I will work with social service providers and case managers to invest in housing first models that provide a safe place to live, a warm bed, a shower, a place to rest and recover—and then get those who need it in treatment and case management needed. This includes supporting permanent supportive housing and shelters for individuals, women, families, and seniors who may have co-occurring disorders. I pledge to work with my colleagues in the public health and human services to enact proven best practices so we can arrive at compassionate and health-based solutions for our homeless community that:

- Redirect funding to provide additional medical providers, case managers, mental health providers, and substance abuse counselors to help get individuals the care they need;
- Create warm handoff hotlines and a 24-hour nurse line for shelters and supportive housing locations to get the targeted assistance needed: open beds, housing options, prescription refills, appointments, aftercare, wound care, etc;
- Buy apartments, hotels, and other multi-family structures on the market to convert to housing and shelter options; stand up more tiny house encampments to get folks into sanctioned encampments with services;
- Scale up sanitation services, like accessible public restrooms, handwashing and more around our city.

11. **JUSTICE:** Would you support cross-training among professionals in the courtroom, police departments, victim assistance agencies and schools to prepare the justice community for situations involving people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities so they can receive equal justice?

CONTEXT: People with disabilities face fear, prejudice, and a lack of understanding when they become entangled in the criminal justice system.

- Research estimates 30 to 50 percent of people killed by law enforcement in the U.S. are disabled, and people with developmental disabilities are over-represented in juvenile facilities, jails and prisons.
- Nationally, youth of various disabilities make up 65 percent to 70 percent of people involved in the juvenile justice system.
- At the same time, people intellectual disabilities have a 4 to 10 times higher risk of becoming victims.

Yes

No

12. **JOBS:** What would you do to increase job prospects for people with developmental disabilities?

CONTEXT: Developmental disability isn't tracked in employment rates, but most people with developmental disabilities would qualify as having a cognitive, ambulatory, or independent living disability.

- Washington's employment rate for people with a cognitive disability is 31 percent;
- For an ambulatory disability it is 30 percent
- For an independent living disability it is just 21 percent.
- The employment rate for non-disabled people in Washington is 80 percent.

The first bill I passed on Seattle City Council was eliminating the subminimum wage that was still permitted for workers with disabilities. That policy was the direct result of advocacy from the Commission for people with disAbilities. That ableist language was still in statute, showing the deep permeation of anti-disability sentiment in our state and local laws. That policy idea was raised by members of the disability rights community and we moved quickly to make it law. There is no excuse for wage discrimination towards those with any kind of disability, developmental or otherwise. I know we need to do much more to accommodate those with disabilities in the workforce and I would greatly appreciate the chance to collaborate with those who have an intimate understanding of the issues folks face around the County since it is the only way we can determine the most effective policy approach.

13. **MOBILITY:** How will you ensure our streets, sidewalks and intersections are safe and accessible to everyone?

CONTEXT: People who use use wheelchairs or ambulatory devices struggle to move around safely.

- Sidewalk construction and maintenance and funding for curb ramps and accessible pedestrian signals is limited.
- Bike shares take up sidewalk space
- Autos often block intersections.

We absolutely need universally accessible streets and sidewalks, buildings and public transit, safe and accessible roadways, sidewalks, routes to schools, jobs, and greenways. Our transit must create accessible routes from all neighborhoods and communities to high access areas where we live, work, and play with wheelchair accessibility. Folks with disabilities must have the ability to move through this city and we must change our approach now. I will prioritize the safe movement of everyone with the same approach I used to change the sub-minimum wage statute.

14. Do you have other ideas on ways to make our community more accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities?

Housing affordability and accessibility is a nexus for so many different quality of life issues in King County that affect everyone, but especially disabled folks. Dense urban housing can eliminate many of the expensive barriers that prevent people from being able to access the entirety of the opportunities their communities can offer. Restoring walkability, reducing car dependence, and increasing affordability of homes in economic hubs can be the penultimate guarantor of accessibility for all, and it is one that I plan to pursue with my time in the King County Council.