



DELAWARE VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES COALITION



The Centers for Disease Control estimates that 24% of Delawareans of voting age have a disability. The Delaware Voters with Disabilities Coalition wants to ensure that these voters – one in four – are informed on the issues and prepared to elect candidates that best serve their interests. Our mission is to educate Delawareans with disabilities about the power of their vote and how to best use it.

Today, we are reaching out with a few questions to give you the opportunity to address the concerns of our community. The Delaware Voters with Disabilities Coalition will post your responses online. Receiving your responses by October 28, 2022 will offer voters time to consider your responses prior to voting.

Paul Baumbach for House District 23 Survey Response

- **A key slogan of the disability community is “nothing about us without us.” How will you engage the disability community, if elected, in the policy decisions that affect our lives?**

I regularly scan material from the SCPD, and reach out to John McNeal or Kyle Hodges when a disabilities issue arises with a constituent. I have attended several of the LIFE conferences. I have several contacts in the greater Newark area who have disabilities with whom I can also tap for their take on issues in this area.

- **What legislation have you/will you sponsor regarding accessibility problems?**

I cosponsored HB 448 this year which would enhance provisions to reduce instances in which an accessible parking space is used by someone who is ineligible.

- **Additional services are needed in Delaware for the disabled community – adult supports as well as support for parents of special needs children/young adults. How will you bring additional services that offer the disabled population consumer choice, and control of their care?**

<see last comment>

- **People with disabilities have a higher rate of employment in Delaware than the national average. However, that rate remains far below the average employment rate for people without disabilities. What will you do to help improve employment rates for people with disabilities and address discrimination in employment?**

<see last comment>

- **What does full inclusion for people living with disabilities look like to you? What steps do you plan to take to ensure access to full inclusion for your constituents?**

<see last comment>

- **Funding for home- and community-based services is currently heavily weighted toward long-term care facilities as opposed to home- and community-based services. How will you work to (at a minimum) provide equity in access to these services and address work force and wage issues for individuals living in the community, particularly those living in their own homes?**

I would be very interested in learning your suggestions – perhaps some other states have successful approaches which we can consider.

- **How will you address other systemic challenges to adequate in-home supports and services, such as long waiting lists, placement into group home being limited to crisis-only situations, and staff shortages that lead to uncovered hours?**

I have regularly worked with Medicaid for a constituent (who subsequently passed away) who faced these exact issues. I found that the Medicaid director and his deputy were very responsive, however, as you point out, there are systemic challenges.

I believe that we need to prioritize this, as we did with the McNesby Act.

I also believe that we need to advance the policy of permitting family members to receive state payment for providing the same services (in-home supports/services) which the state pays for contracted staff, as long as the support/services are within the family member's capabilities.

- **How does your campaign prioritize accessibility within your digital and in-person engagement? If elected, how will you ensure that your communications, from websites to press conferences and more, will be accessible to people with disabilities?**

My monthly constituent coffees are a public venues, with accessible features. Currently we hold it at the Deer Park Tavern which has an elevator (the meeting is on the second floor). I have not explored improvements that I can make to my campaign website to make it more accessible. I do not hold press conferences. During the worst of the pandemic, I held regular (sometimes twice a week) Facebook live sessions to discuss current issues, often focusing on the pandemic and the current status/data.

- **On Friday, October 7, 2022 the Delaware Supreme Court struck down a law that would have allowed for same day registration and mail-in voting for all registered voters. The Court ruled that an amendment to the State Constitution was required, which would require a 2/3 vote in both chambers. Same day registration and mail-in voting provides greater opportunities for participation of people with disabilities in the electoral process. If the legislature chooses to pursue a constitutional amendment to allow citizens of Delaware to vote by mail and/or have same-day registration, would you support these measures? If not, please explain your reason.**

I supported this in 2019 and in 2022, while several of my colleagues flip-flopped and refused to vote for it in 2022, to add it to the constitution. I find their flip-flop to be unconscionable on multiple levels, including the impact on those with disabilities.

- **Is there anything else that you would like to share with the Delaware voters?**

I apologize for not answering each question. I am not as well-versed as you are. I believe in partnering with individuals and organizations who are subject matter experts in all legislative matters.

Thank you.

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If you have any questions please call 302-739-3621