



2016 Presidential Candidate Questionnaire

Dear Presidential Candidate:

More than 15 million people with disabilities voted in the 2012 presidential election.¹

As people with disabilities, we want to live independent lives and contribute our talent and energy to the future success of our great nation. The 56 million Americans with disabilities make remarkable and valuable contributions to our communities. Despite these contributions and despite our numbers, Americans with disabilities continue to face discrimination in many arenas including employment, housing, transportation, health care, and education.

To benefit from the skills and abilities of people with disabilities, candidates for public office must address these disparities and set forth a vision to ensure the civil rights of people with disabilities and our full inclusion in society.

In an effort to inform the disability community of your disability policy positions, initiatives, and priorities, the [American Association of People with Disabilities](#) (AAPD), the [National Council on Independent Living](#) (NCIL), and the [REV UP America Campaign](#) have developed this presidential candidate questionnaire. We, believe the issues addressed in this questionnaire are vital to ensuring all individuals with disabilities have an opportunity to achieve the American Dream and therefore request your response.

We greatly appreciate your time and attention to our concerns. If you have any questions, please contact Helena Berger, President & CEO, AAPD, 202-521-4315, hberger@aapd.com or Kelly Buckland, Executive Director, NCIL, 202-207-0334, kelly@ncil.org.

We look forward to sharing your responses with the 35 million eligible voters of the disability community!

¹ "Disability, Voter Turnout, and Voting Difficulties in the 2012 Elections," report to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission and Research Alliance for Accessible Voting, by Lisa Schur, Meera Adya, and Douglas Kruse, June 2013.



2016 Presidential Candidate Questionnaire

1. LEADERSHIP

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recent publication, “High Risk Series” (2015), clearly points out the vast problems of administration and effectiveness of federal disability programs. These very same problems have been cited in previous reports spanning over twenty years. To address these issues, reform must begin within the Executive Branch. A recent report by the Romano Group, LCC proposed establishing a National Office of Disability Coordination (NODC) in the Executive Office of The President of the United States. This office would be responsible for developing coordinated federal disability policies and advise the President on necessary changes in the organization, management, budgeting, and personnel allocation of the federal agencies involved in all aspects of disability.

- Will you commit to creating a National Office of Disability Coordination to be headed by a cabinet level executive?
- What are you doing to make sure qualified people with disabilities will be a part of your political team and, if elected, as part of your administration?

2. REDUCING UNEMPLOYMENT AND ENSURING EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE

People with disabilities experience one of the highest rates of unemployment of any minority group. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2015 the unemployment rate for people with disabilities was at 12.1%, which is nearly three times higher than the 4.8% unemployment rate of people without disabilities.² The next administration must make employment for people with disabilities a top priority.

A. REHABILITATION ACT

Although legislation such as the Rehabilitation Act has served to advance and expand the opportunities of people with disabilities in the workforce, there are still many barriers that must be considered and overcome to increase employment for people with disabilities to comparable levels for people without disabilities.

- What will you do to strengthen Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act and ensure the Federal government is a model employer of people with disabilities?
- How will you ensure the provisions under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act will be fully enforced by the Department of Labor and that Federal contractors will meet their affirmative action obligations under the law?

² "Persons with a Disability: Labor Force Characteristics Summary." U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 21 June 2016. Web. 24 Aug. 2016. <<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/disabl.nr0.htm>>.



2016 Presidential Candidate Questionnaire

B. FAIR WAGES

Many people with disabilities are underemployed. Despite similar education, people with disabilities who are working earn less on average than workers without disabilities. The median earnings for workers with disabilities is less than two thirds the median wages for workers without disabilities (Disability Statistics & Demographics Rehabilitation Research and Training Center, 2011). Furthermore, the 1937 Section 14c provision of the Fair Labor Standards Act authorizes employers to pay sub-minimum wages to workers who have disabilities.

- Do you plan to phase out the 1937 Section 14c of the Fair Labor Standards Act?
- How will you expand supported employment services to people with disabilities?
- How do you plan to build an infrastructure to address the underemployment and wage gaps experienced by people with disabilities?

C. ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Opening doors for entrepreneurs and small business owners with disabilities is vital to addressing employment for people with disabilities. The next administration will need to create new opportunities for people with disabilities to start their own businesses and compete for government contracts.

- How do you plan to ensure that people with disabilities can open and sustain small businesses?
- How do you plan to include business-owners with disabilities in the competitions to obtain government contracts?

D. TRANSITION FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

Youth with disabilities often find themselves distanced from the opportunities to learn job skills through work in their formative years leading to unemployment and underemployment throughout their lives.

- How do you plan to engage youth with disabilities in pre-employment opportunities that will lead to successful transitions from school to work and/or higher education?
- How would you reform the public workforce system to ensure people with disabilities, especially youth with disabilities, are fully integrated into the economic development of regional economies?

E. ENSURING APPROPRIATE FLEXIBILITY IN PUBLIC PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE WORKFORCE

Of the federal and state expenditures combined for working age people with disabilities, 41 percent is spent on income benefits (e.g., SSI and SSDI) and 55 percent on health care (Medicaid and Medicare). A paltry 1.2 percent of federal and state expenditures go to educating, training and employment programs for people with disabilities.



2016 Presidential Candidate Questionnaire

- With 4.6 million people with disabilities on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and 8.9 million people on Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), how would your administration reform these federal income support programs so people with disabilities can receive income supports without being required to preclude working so they can secure employment or return to employment sooner?
- Medicaid eligibility and programmatic requirements now create barriers for individuals with disabilities seeking to enter or return to the workplace because they cannot access needed supports such as personal care attendants, power wheelchairs, complex rehab technology, other rehabilitation devices and services, home and community based services, medical supplies and therapies. Do you support initiatives that would allow workers with disabilities to continue to work past age 65, maintain eligibility from state to state, and carry their Medicaid benefits into private employment settings? How would you work with the private sector to address the critical independent living supports that many private insurance programs do not cover for people with disabilities?

3. ADVANCING THE CIVIL AND CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT OF AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES TO BE INTEGRATED IN SOCIETY

The vast majority of Americans with disabilities and older Americans prefer home and community based services that allow them to live independently in their communities, however, states and insurance providers of Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS) still restrict access to community-based services which results in unwanted institutionalization, depriving institutionalized individuals of their fundamental freedoms and cutting short their lives. This reliance on institutional placement is also far more expensive than services in the community.

- If elected, will you support the Disability Integration Act (currently S.2427/HR.5689) – bipartisan civil rights legislation that establishes in statute the right of Americans with LTSS disabilities to receive services and supports in the community and be integrated in society – and sign this or similar civil rights legislation into law? What other investments will you make in expanding long term services and supports?

4. TRANSPORTATION

Access to affordable and reliable transportation allows people with disabilities important opportunities to go to school, work, take care of their health, live where they desire, and participate in all aspects of community life. Because our nation's investments in transportation infrastructure have disproportionately favored cars and highways, those who cannot afford cars or do not operate cars often lack viable transportation options.

A. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Access to public transportation is a key to independence and full community participation for people with disabilities.



2016 Presidential Candidate Questionnaire

- What would you do to expand access to affordable and accessible transportation for people with disabilities, especially in rural areas?

B. TRANSPORTATION NETWORKING COMPANIES

Transportation networking companies (TNCs) like Uber and Lyft have the potential to increase transportation options for people with disabilities. Unfortunately, TNCs have discriminated against people with disabilities by refusing rides to individuals with service animals and individuals using wheelchairs.

- What would your Administration do to ensure all people with disabilities have access to the services provided by TNC's?

C. AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES

As autonomous or self-driving vehicles move towards becoming a reality, they promise new mobility options and increased independence for people with disabilities who have missed out on the benefits of a century of automotive history.

- What will your Administration do to ensure people with disabilities are not left at the side of the road but realize the maximum benefits possible as self-driving technology continues to develop and advance and regulations get promulgated?

D. AIR TRAVEL

Air travel can be complicated for everyone, but people with disabilities encounter many additional barriers to air travel. From the time we enter the airport, we are faced with obstacles that not only result in frequent delays and missed flights, but they also put our dignity and safety at risk. People with disabilities frequently experience inaccessible facilities and equipment in airports, overly intrusive and discriminatory TSA security screenings, breakage of mobility and medical equipment, unsafe and harmful transport and transfers by airport staff, inaccessible aircraft facilities and amenities, and additional fees. Air travel can be extremely difficult for people with disabilities, including those who must travel for work, sometimes rendering it nearly impossible.

- As President, what would you do to address this issue?

5. TECHNOLOGY

Accessible mainstream communication and information technologies, as well as assistive and adaptive technologies, often allow people with disabilities to secure and maintain employment, participate in educational activities, and experience entertainment like everyone else.



2016 Presidential Candidate Questionnaire

A. SECTION 508 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT

The U.S. Congress enacted section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act in 1973, a statute that requires the federal government to purchase information technology that is accessible to and usable by employees with disabilities in the federal government and by customers with disabilities accessing federal government services online. Despite this longstanding requirement, many federal websites and online government services remain inaccessible to users who are blind, people with low vision, people with intellectual disabilities and other disabilities.

- Would you make it a priority to ensure federal agencies make their websites and all other information technology accessible? How will you implement this?

B. THE INTERNET OF THINGS

The Internet of Things, including smart homes and other connected devices, has the potential to increase the independence and community integration of people with disabilities. Connected devices are being developed and released for sale at breakneck speed with new devices coming to market every day often without any accessibility or usability requirements. Universal design and accessibility features must be included in these devices in order for the Internet of Things to realize the potential it has to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities. Under Title II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, people with disabilities have access to modifications, accommodations, and auxiliary aides or services to participate in the activities and services of both local and state government and places of public accommodations, a protection that currently does not exist on the Internet of Things.

- What will you do to ensure that people with disabilities have the same access to the Internet of Things as provided to nondisabled individuals?

6. EDUCATION

Due to the enactment and implementation of a key civil rights law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, or the “special education” law), high school graduation rates for people with disabilities have increased 45 percent since 1995, with an associated decrease in dropout rates for students with disabilities. Similarly, enrollment in college has doubled for students with disabilities. Nevertheless, local school districts struggle to serve students with disabilities and students with disabilities seeking a higher education continue to face enormous barriers to success.

A. IDEA FUNDING

When IDEA was passed in 1975, Congress pledged to fund 40% of the differential cost of serving students with disabilities. The closest the federal government has come to meeting that pledge is 19% in 2010. Higher levels of funding will ensure more students with disabilities receive the supports they need in K-12, are able to



2016 Presidential Candidate Questionnaire

complete high school, and have the opportunity to go on to postsecondary education and postsecondary employment.

- Do you support funding IDEA at higher levels?

B. CURRICULUM AND TRANSITION

In some localities, students with disabilities are not taught the challenging curriculum available to students without disabilities.

- How would you ensure that students with disabilities have the same access to ambitious educational opportunities that other students have?
- How would you increase the number of high school graduates with disabilities and what would you do to ensure more college graduates with disabilities secure employment and are hired by the private sector?

C. ELIMINATING BULLYING AND THE USE OF RESTRAINTS AND SECLUSION

Bullying of students with disabilities is a long-standing problem. So is the use of restraints and seclusion, especially for students with disabilities.

- Do you support amending the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to protect young students with disabilities from bullying and the use of restraints and seclusion, and to require state educational agencies and local school districts systems to report incidents of bullying and the use of restraints and seclusion, and to provide interventions to reduce bullying and the use of restraints and seclusion?

D. Educational Inclusion of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities frequently lack access to the general education classroom.

- What steps will you take to expand access to the general education classroom and broader inclusion for students with disabilities?

7. VOTING

Americans with disabilities face many obstacles and barriers to voting, including inaccessible polling places and voting equipment, difficulty getting to the polling place, and poorly informed election officials and poll workers about access issues.

- What will you do to ensure people with disabilities have equal access to the fundamental right to vote?
- Do you support providing funding to states so they can purchase new accessible voting systems to replace the first generation accessible voting systems that have outlived their useful life?

8. AFFORDABLE, INTEGRATED and ACCESSIBLE HOUSING



2016 Presidential Candidate Questionnaire

The lack of affordable, accessible housing has taken an egregious toll on the lives of people with disabilities who continue to be warehoused in nursing homes and other institutional settings.

- As President, what will you do to address the need for affordable, integrated accessible housing for people with disabilities?

9. HEALTH CARE

People with disabilities rely on both public (Medicaid) and private insurance options to obtain coverage to meet their health care needs. Access to affordable comprehensive health care coverage is essential for people with disabilities to live independently and maximize the quality of their lives. Unfortunately, many people with disabilities continue to lack access to the services and supports they need. In addition, despite existing legal protections, people with disabilities are subject to discrimination in both the financing and provision of health care services.

- What will you do to address discrimination in the financing and provision of health care services to people with disabilities? Will you make enforcement of existing health care nondiscrimination protections for people with disabilities a priority?
- How will you work to expand access to affordable, comprehensive health care coverage for people with disabilities?
- How will you work to improve the Medicaid program, including ensuring access to home and community based services and the elimination of the bias toward institutional services in the Medicaid program?