

ELECTION SEASON: THINGS TO THINK ABOUT AND QUESTIONS TO ASK

A guide for evaluating candidates and lawmakers on issues affecting people with disabilities and families



Evaluating Current Lawmakers Running for Re-Election

Have they introduced or co-sponsored any bills that:

- Guarantee people who need Home and Community Based Services can get it, so that people are not forced into nursing homes

- Make it easier for people with disabilities to work, earn, save more without losing supports and services
- Make it easier for people to get or stay in programs that help them
- Make it easier for non-drivers to get where they need to go on their schedules
- Support family caregivers
- Make sure people don't lose their rights to make decisions or vote

Look up your state legislators: [District Finder - Washington State Legislature](#)

Think about these questions:

- Have they introduced/co-sponsored bills that would make the lives of people with disabilities or caregivers harder?
- How do they believe federal funding cuts will impact Washington?
- What do they think the state should do to respond if federal funding is less?
- What do they think about special education, Medicaid, and other budget items that impact people with disabilities?
- What have they said publicly (social media, newsletters, press releases/articles, speeches) about disability issues?
- What have they said publicly about federal cuts to programs that impact people with disabilities (Medicaid, SNAP, disability organizations, federal special education staff)?
- If they have not said anything this year about disability/caregiver issues, why not?
- Are disability issues a priority for them?
- What do they do to make sure people with disabilities have their needed supports?

- What will they do if constituents contact them for help if they have lost supports or are not able to get the help they need?

Evaluating Candidates Running for Office for the First Time

- Candidates generally have a campaign website that has positions or policies they support
- Candidates generally have a social media presence.
 - Follow them on socials and YouTube.
- Are they hosting or attending events in your area?
 - You can gather a group together and go a meet them or ask questions
- What policies do they highlight on their public pages?
 - What is missing? What do they say or not say about disability issues?
- What social media posts and videos have they made? What are they about?
- You can e-mail the campaign to ask for a meeting, invite them to a local event, or ask questions of them
 - Did they respond?
 - How did they respond?

Disability Questions You Can Ask Any Candidate

- How will you make sure that I [or my loved one] can continue to receive care at home, so I am not [or they are not] forced to live in a Medicaid funded nursing home or institution that costs more?

- What will you do to make sure the state guarantees that people with disabilities and older adults have the right to have the help they need to live at home?
- What will you do to make sure public schools receive enough state funding to cover the costs of educating students with disabilities?
- Do you believe private schools that receive taxpayer funds to teach students with disabilities should have to follow the same rules as public schools? Why or why not?
- How will you make sure people with disabilities are driving the decision making when policies concerning us are discussed and decided?

Source note: Some content and questions in this article were adapted from the Wisconsin Board of People with Developmental Disabilities' *Federal Funding Fallout 2026* presentation from Aug. 14, 2026, and modified for a Washington state audience. ([August 14, 2026, Slides](#))