

2018 Montana Disability Voices Candidate Survey

Purpose of Survey

We appreciate your desire to serve the great state of Montana! The goal of this survey is twofold: (1) to help you understand key disability policy and program funding issues in Montana; and, (2) as a potential state legislator, we are interested in your views/ perspectives on these issues. Your responses will be published, along with your name and the legislative district you are running in, on the website of the Montana Disability Voices coalition (www.mtdisabilityvoices.org). The various organizations that comprise the MDV coalition will link to your responses also. The responses will likely be shared at community and candidate forums between now and Election Day in November 2018.

Your completion and submission of survey responses indicate your consent to participate in the 2018 Montana Disability Voices Candidate Survey.

RELEASE

<p>I understand that my responses to the following questions will be reported publicly. I have read and fully understand the Purpose of Survey statement. I agree to the terms of this release.</p>	<p>Check one:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I agree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, I DO NOT agree**</p>
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If you do **NOT AGREE to share your response publicly, we cannot ask the survey items. You will be listed as a "No Response" in the survey summary. We wish you the very best in your campaign efforts!

IF YOU AGREE TO TERMS OF THE RELEASE, PLEASE COMPLETE THE SURVEY.

Candidate Name

(first and last as it will appear on the ballot):

Senate District #:

House District #:

<p>1. Will you support legislation to annually adjust the spend-down threshold for the Medically Needy Program to the SSI (<u>S</u>upplemental <u>S</u>ecurity <u>I</u>ncome) level, which is \$735 per month for 2018?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I Don't Know</p>
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EXPLANATION: The current Medically Needy Program income limit does **not** change yearly and has not been adjusted since 2007. Montanans with disabilities and older adults who qualify for Medicaid under this program must "spend down" their income to \$645 each month. The Medicaid Medically Needy Program enables a person with significant medical need to pay the difference between their countable income and the Medically Needy Income Limit ("threshold"). This payment is made to the State and is counted towards medical bills or related obligations in order to qualify for Medicaid.

Additional Comment (50 words max)

<p>2. Will you support funding to ensure that Montanans with disabilities are able to live and thrive in their home</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
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communities?	<input type="checkbox"/> I Don't Know
EXPLANATION: Community-based Medicaid services enable Montanans with disabilities and older adults to live, work, and participate in their communities. Community-based services are less expensive, on average, than providing services in institutional settings such as MDC (M ontana D evelopmental C enter), the Montana State Hospital (Warm Springs), and nursing homes.	

Additional Comment (50 words max)

3. Will you support providing state funds to enable Montanans to live in their own homes and eliminate or substantially reduce the number of people on a waiting list for services?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I Don't Know
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EXPLANATION: Medicaid Home and Community-Based Waiver programs work alongside state plan Medicaid services. Waiver programs¹ provide a less expensive alternative to institutional settings. Waiver programs provide options that state plan programs do not. However, Waiver programs have a substantial waiting list. Currently, there are 2019+ Montanans waiting for Waiver services (301 for the Big Sky Bonanza Waiver—physical disabilities, 103 for the Severe Disabling Mental Illness, or SDMI Waiver, 1615 for the Developmental Disability Waiver—0208 Waiver²). Seventy percent (70%) of those waiting for 0208 Waiver services are children.

Additional Comment (50 words max)

4. Will you support state tax credits for the construction of additional affordable and accessible housing units in Montana?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I Don't Know
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EXPLANATION: In Montana, there is a lack of affordable, accessible, and visitable housing for Montanans with disabilities and their families. This means that many Montanans with disabilities are unable to find housing that adequately meets their needs. This could be addressed through the provision of state tax credits for people who build affordable and accessible properties. “**Accessible**” refers to a home design (layout) that enables a person to use all areas of their home regardless of physical ability or use of a wheelchair. “**Visitable**” refers to a home with a no-step entry, wide entry door, and a bathroom on the main level that can be accessed without stairs, that has a wide doorway, and that is big enough to allow a wheelchair to be maneuvered in the bathroom with the door shut.

Additional Comment (50 words max)

5. Will you support legislation re-approving the Housing Bridge Program for the next biennium?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I Don't Know
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¹ See: <https://dphhs.mt.gov/dsd/developmentaldisabilities/ddpmedicaidwaivers>

² As of August 2017. Number provided as part of agenda item 13.a HJR 17 Study Background Information.

EXPLANATION: The 2013 Legislature funded the Housing Bridge Program (HBP), a short-term rental assistance program. HBP assists Montanans transitioning from institutional settings into the community.

Additional Comment (50 words max)

6. Will you support Autism Spectrum Disorder screening, diagnosis and treatment services for Montana’s children, youth and adults?

- Yes
- No
- I Don’t Know

EXPLANATION: The number Montanans (children, youth and adults) diagnosed with Autism continues to increase. Research clearly indicates that early diagnosis and lifelong treatment result in positive outcomes for those with Autism and their families³.

Additional Comment (50 words max)

7. Will you support the restoration of services to Montanans with disabilities and their families by restoring the state general funds eliminated in the 2018-2019 biennium?

- Yes
- No
- I Don’t Know

EXPLANATION: The state general fund allocation to Montana’s Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) programs has been cut by approximately \$100 million in the current biennium. These cuts have primarily been to community services, not to institutional services administered by DPHHS. The result forces people with disabilities to obtain critical services in more restrictive, expensive settings (i.e., institutional care). The majority of state general fund money is “matched” with Federal funds. The loss of combined state and federal funds to Montanans in need is \$200 million, a deficit that will take years from which to recover⁴.

Additional Comment (50 words max)

³ See: <http://autism.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/>

⁴ See: <http://montanabudget.org/report/budget-cuts-devastate-health-and-human-services>

8. Will you vote against the reopening or increased capacity of the <u>M</u> ontana <u>D</u> evelopmental <u>C</u> enter (MDC)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I Don't Know
EXPLANATION: MDC is a state institution for people who have developmental disabilities. It is located in Boulder, MT. After decades of reported low employee morale, rapes, abuse and neglect, the 2017 State Legislature voted to close the MDC. The Senate passed the bill with a vote of 44-6. The House passed it with a vote of 60-40. Governor Bullock signed the closure bill into law.	

Additional Comment (50 words max)

9. Will you support extending the graduation age from 18 to 21 for students with disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I Don't Know
EXPLANATION: The Federal education law for students with disabilities (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA) mandates that children with disabilities receive education services to age 21. <u>Montana is one of only two states that graduates these students at 18.</u> The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) has indicated to the U.S. Department of Education that Montana schools will serve children to age 21 by the year 2020, but this requires state legislative action.	

Additional Comment (50 words max)

10. Will you support allowing the state Medicaid program to provide services to children with disabilities while they are waiting for Waiver services?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> I Don't Know
EXPLANATION: Montana families are quitting their jobs while they wait for their children to receive Medicaid Waiver services such as the Developmental Disabilities (0208) Waiver and Physical Disabilities (Big Sky Bonanza) Waiver. Often, this wait is measured in years. Twenty two (22) states currently allow children with disabilities to receive Medicaid services while waiting for a Waiver program opening.	

Additional Comment (50 words max)

11. What ideas do you have to fund services and/or programs to support the independence and inclusion of people with disabilities in the community?

150 words max (attach separate sheet, if necessary):