



TEXAS

## CANDIDATE FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL SURVEY

1. **Legacy:** What legacy and/or contribution do you hope the disability community remembers you for?

**I want to be remembered as an Attorney General who acted on behalf of ALL Texans. This very much includes the disability community. Unfortunately, the disability community is taken advantage of far too often. Equal rights are for everyone, and the law knows no political party. I want to be remembered as an Attorney General who will fight for all Texans and will fight for justice for all.**

2. **Counsel:** When making decisions regarding services, programs and laws that could impact people with disabilities, who do you turn to for advice and counsel?

**I will always be open minded and actively seek out concerns and advice from advocacy groups for people with disabilities. It is common sense to listen to the folks who will be most directly impacted by a certain policy decision. It is unhealthy and wrong for any office, including the Office of the Attorney General, to become an echo chamber or a mouthpiece of one specific organization or special interest. The Texas Attorney General is the lawyer for all Texans, and should listen and seek advice from all Texans.**

3. **ADA:** The U.S. Supreme Court suggests that to be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) integration mandate, a state must demonstrate that it has a comprehensive, effectively working plan for placing qualified persons with disabilities in less restrictive settings, and that a waiting list for community services moves at a reasonable pace. Currently, there are approximately 130,000 unduplicated individuals waiting for services in their communities, some as long as a decade. What steps would you take to ensure that Texas is in compliance with its obligations under the ADA?

**As Attorney General, my job is to ensure that the laws of the United States and the State of Texas are being properly and adequately enforced. I would review the process by which the state of Texas reviews these requests to ensure we are in full compliance with federal and state law.**

4. **Prosecutorial Misconduct:** As Attorney General, what steps can and will you take to remedy prosecutorial misconduct and biases against people with disabilities who become involved in the criminal justice system?

**I am committed to committing the Office of the Attorney General to ensure that the criminal justice system is one that works fairly for all Texans.**



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**5. Barriers to Justice:** People with disabilities who are suspects, witnesses or victims of a crime face substantial hurdles and barriers when they become involved in the criminal justice system. For example, a recent survey found that only 5 percent of serious crimes against people with disabilities were prosecuted compared to 70 percent of similar crimes against people without disabilities. What can and will you do as Attorney General to ensure that Texans with disabilities are supported to seek and obtain fair treatment and justice?

**Texans with disabilities have the right to the same justice as Texans without disabilities. Crimes committed against Texans with disabilities deserve to be treated with the same thoroughness and dedication as crimes committed against Texans who aren't disabled.**

**6. Housing:** What can and will you do as Attorney General to rigorously enforce the *Olmstead* decision and ensure that housing regulations in Texas do not discriminate against Texans with disabilities so that they can have affordable, accessible and integrated housing?

**My job as Texas Attorney General is to make sure the law is followed. That very much includes working with state agencies to ensure that Texas complies with the ADA and with *Olmstead*.**

**7. Special Education:** According to findings from the U.S. Department of Education, Texas implemented a limit on the number of children receiving special education services, which led to tens of thousands of children with disabilities not receiving the services for which they were eligible. What will you do to enforce the federal education laws and the rights of students with disabilities?

**Article 7 of the Texas Constitution is explicit in outlining why public schools are necessary to the maintenance of a healthy state and that having free and readily available access to quality public education is a right granted to the people of Texas. This includes Texan children who require access to special education. While I feel like it is improper to promise or comment on future potential future litigation, I will work with all interested parties to make sure that Texas complies with state and federal law.**



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**8. Sexual Assault:** It is

estimated that people with intellectual disabilities—women and men—are the victims of sexual assaults at a rate more than seven times the rate among those without disabilities. If elected what can and will you do as Attorney General to eliminate this disparity and improve the safety of those with intellectual disabilities?

**Sadly, our responsiveness to all cases of sexual assault is unacceptably poor in Texas. This affects individuals with intellectual disabilities disproportionately more, since they are victims of these kinds of crimes at a higher rate. We need to recognize that people with disabilities suffer disproportionately and work with the affected communities to prevent it. And every Texan who is a victim of sexual assault deserves justice.**

**9. Conflict of Interest:** The Attorney General's office has two important, and sometimes conflicting, roles, representing state agencies that are sued, and protecting the civil rights of Texan, including Texans with disabilities. As Attorney General, what would you do to balance these two roles and ensure that your office doesn't take legal positions that harm individuals with disabilities?

**My most important obligations as Texas Attorney General will be to the Constitution of Texas and the United States Constitution. My role as Attorney General is to protect the people of Texas, not just the state agencies of Texas. I will give the best guidance under the law to make sure that all agencies within Texas follow the law and the Constitution.**

**10. Sovereign Immunity:** If elected, would you support the state of Texas waiving sovereign immunity in cases involving violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?

**In order for sovereign immunity to be waived in cases involving ADA violations, the Texas Legislature would have to pass a law. My role as Texas Attorney General is to enforce the law. I believe that the ADA should be treated consistently with other civil rights laws.**

**11. Cannabis:** Would you support or oppose expanding the legal use of medical cannabis in Texas to cover more medical conditions?



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### The Attorney General

does not introduce or pass legislation, however if the Legislature passed a law expanding the use of medical cannabis in Texas I would enforce that law. I personally believe that Texas should move towards allowing use of medical cannabis to treat pain.

**12. Engagement:** A key slogan of the disability community is “nothing about us without us.”

What do you think the disability community can do to more effectively engage elected officials and participate in the policy decisions made that affect their lives?

**Initiatives like Rev Up Texas are exactly how the disability community can make their voice permeate into the political dialogue. Hosting forums, organizing volunteers, and engaging voters are the most effective way to bring about change. Championing causes and candidates that will be allies once in office will turn advocacy into legislation, which the disability community so rightly deserves.**

**13. Consumer Protection:** If elected, what will you do to ensure that consumers with disabilities are served and protected with legal measures under the Deceptive Trade Practices Act and other consumer protection statutes?

**Consumer protection has been a cornerstone of my campaign since I first announced I was running. I will be an Attorney General who will serve ALL Texans, not special interests. I am committed to making sure that Texan consumers are treated fairly and that we enforce the strong consumer protection laws in this state. This is exactly what the Texas Attorney General should be doing—protecting all Texans from fraud and deception.**

