

State Office: Assembly District: 88

Candidate name: Jim Soletski

Address: 496 Menlo Park Rd., Green Bay, Wisconsin

Phone number: 920-468-5921 Web: jim4assembly.com

Questionnaire

1. As a legislator, what are the three issues you will prioritize in the next legislative session?

Health Care Accessibility, energy infrastructure planning and Campaign ethics/finance.

2. Studies indicate that one in four Wisconsinites have diagnosable mental illness and would benefit from effective treatment. In addition, mental illness is the leading cause of disability for working age adults in the United States. People often can not access effective treatment, frequently citing affordability as a barrier. What will you do as a legislator to increase access to effective treatment and community services?

Along with Health Care accessibility, Mental Health Parity is a main component of the fix for health care in Wisconsin. Limits for mental health care are artificially low and ranks Wisconsin in the lower half of all states in the union. Increased costs are often cited as the reason to not adjust these requirements, but this disability left untreated creates a huge burden on society as well as subjecting our citizens and family members to stress, depression and debilitating family costs which often translates into increased costs for our society as a whole. Treatment is the better route rather than dealing with the results of inaction.

3. Poverty is a reality for many people with disabilities in Wisconsin. Consider these facts, from the American Association of People with Disabilities.

- 27.5% of people with disabilities aged 18-64 live below the poverty line.
- The unemployment rate for people with disabilities is three times higher than for people without disabilities.
- The SSI supplement for Wisconsinites with disabilities has not increased in over ten years.

As a legislator, what will you do to address poverty for people with disabilities?

I have in the past co-sponsored legislation requiring mental health parity in coverage in Wisconsin and will again this year. These statistics prove the points I made in answer two.

4. One of your constituents contacts you. She is a 68 year old woman whose 70 year old husband has just had a stroke and is now in a nursing home. They have a 46 year old daughter with cerebral palsy who has always lived at home.

Up until now, the family has been providing their daughter's personal care as well as help with mobility and transfers, for example in and out of the bathtub. Now with dad in the nursing home, mom cannot care for their daughter alone. The family is covered by Medicare and the daughter is Medicaid eligible.

All the family's available resources have been expended through caring for their daughter and dad's nursing home costs. Your constituent needs help to provide the assistance her daughter needs and she does not know where to turn. Please describe how you would handle this situation as a legislator and what specific steps you would take to assist this constituent.

Dept of Health services to determine which programs are avail for income and disabilities

Would have them work with local county programs.

5. Do you support expansion of Family Care statewide? Why or why not? If you support other initiatives to increase options for people with disabilities to live in the community, which ones and why do you support them?

Yes I support the expansion of Family Care statewide. Currently available in 19 counties, this program has been very helpful in concentrating the available, cost effective long term care which fosters consumers independence and quality of life. This program should be available to all of our citizens.

6. A constituent in your district who is attending high school plans to attend college in the near future. Her high school offers college prep courses and other extra-curricular activities after school. Counselors often recommend that students participate in these activities to make their college applications stronger and to inform them about options and resources they have when it comes to making a decision to attend college.

Your constituent has a physical disability and uses a wheelchair. She is not able to drive or take public transportation. Her high school does not offer accessible transportation for these after-school programs.

This constituent would like her college application to be competitive with students who can participate in these programs. How would you respond if she called to request your assistance?

We would put them in contact with the local aging and disability resource center and also ensure that they have pursued all possibilities with the local school system.

7. The 2000 census showed that approximately one in every 6¹/₂ Wisconsin residents has a disability. As a legislator, what specific steps will you take in order to reach out to the disability community and ensure you are proactively meeting the needs of this constituency?

I currently attend meetings of the Wisconsin Council of Physical Disabilities when invited.