

2020 Senate District 66 DFL Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: John Marty

Position Candidate Is Seeking the Endorsement For: State Senator

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Please respond to the following questions, limit 5 pages for the entire questionnaire.

1. Education What should the state do to address the educational needs of our children, the working conditions of our teachers, and educational opportunities for adults?

To close the opportunity gap and help all children prepare for school there is a need for a dramatic increase support for the Sliding Fee Childcare, so that all children have access to quality childcare programs, and childcare professionals don't live in poverty (see Senate File 625). It is time for the state to also provide universal pre-K.

Likewise, we need more state funding for K-12 schools, so education is funded with progressive state income taxes instead of regressive property taxes. This will enable us to address the needs of the whole child and family. Children who are homeless, children who go to school hungry, children who go home to dysfunctional households are not able to thrive in school. That means we need more mental health and other support services (including breakfast and lunch) in the schools, which teachers are, appropriately, pushing for.

Adult basic education programs are among the most valuable services available for helping immigrants get into the workforce, yet they are seriously underfunded.

For higher education, affordability is lacking when students are encumbered with massive debt. Despite Minnesota's commitment to providing 2/3rds of the funding for public higher education, we are currently paying far less than half. Minnesota invested in education even during the great depression, and the entire nation did so after World War II, with the GI bill. Education is expensive, but it is our best investment in the future. Minnesota can do better.

2. Youth Services What would you do to better support our youth population?

In addition to strengthening support for education, I support focusing more attention on young people who are homeless or at risk. I have authored legislation to ban "conversion therapy" which is abusive to young LGBTQ+ people.

3. Senior Services As the size of the aging population grows, how would you address the increasing needs of seniors?

Start by providing comprehensive, universal healthcare that includes long-term care. Work with non-profit groups and families to provide more services to help people stay in their homes as long as they want. Improve transit services so those who don't drive can get around.

4. Environment 4a) In your view, what should be the state's role in mitigating and preventing climate change impacts? 4b) On a state level, do you oppose the construction of Enbridge Line Three?

Minnesota can and must be a leader in preventing climate change. We must plan for an aggressive transition to a fossil-fuel free economy (see Senate File 425). Gov. Walz's clean car initiative is very important as is carbon-pricing, higher renewable energy standards, more energy efficient building standards, etc. I have been a consistent leader in pushing for far more aggressive action.

Yes, I oppose the construction of Line 3, testifying before the PUC three times, and pushing the last two administrations to stop this unneeded line that facilitates the extraction of the dirtiest, most carbon-intensive oil. This is a litmus test for whether we are serious about climate change.

5. Mining 5a) What is your stance on copper-nickel mining in the state of Minnesota? 5b) What alternative proposals do you suggest to bring needed jobs to the area?

PolyMet claims their mine would meet "industry best practices" but they have fought for the weakest possible standards, and the permits granted by the state agencies fail to hold them accountable. I have been using my voice in the Senate to lead the charge against the flawed permits and to block the project from moving forward under the current permits, which would endanger the health and safety of Minnesotans and our waters.

Northern Minnesota (like most of greater Minnesota) will not gain the good living wage jobs it needs by continuing to focus on just a few large industrial projects. We need to build up infrastructure in greater Minnesota – especially high-speed broadband access across the state to enable more tech and internet-based businesses to start up and grow in rural communities where there is a lower cost of living.

We also need to invest in sustainable business opportunities, exploring whether we could create jobs in northern Minnesota through industries such as "mining" copper and other metals from our nation's e-waste stream, as well as job opportunities by creating a "remanufacturing" economy for cell phones and other electronics by passing legislation such as "fair repair" legislation (Senate File 64). These sustainable industries protect the environment while creating high-skilled, high-tech jobs.

Finally, we need to recognize that the fastest growing sector, and already the biggest number of jobs, in much of greater Minnesota are in the healthcare sector, and we need to make sure these jobs are economically sustainable, rather than leaving many healthcare workers without adequate income or even adequate healthcare for their own families.

6. Immigration 6a) What concrete steps will you take to ensure immigrant Minnesotan's rights are protected/to protect these communities from unreasonable fear of deportation? 6b) Do you support the abolition of ICE on a federal level and noncooperation with ICE on the state level?

I have vocally and consistently advocated for ensuring that immigrants have full access to healthcare, drivers' licenses, education, and other services. I support efforts to stop local law enforcement from cooperating with ICE or taking any steps that make immigrants more vulnerable to federal efforts to deport them.

Fundamentally, the biggest changes we need are at the federal level. Getting rid of the discrimination, hate, and fearmongering coming from the White House is the most important single step, but getting rid of Trump is not enough. President Obama deported a record number of immigrants, significantly more than President Bush. We need leaders and policies, *including in our own party*, that give immigrants a path to citizenship rather than continuing to raise fear in communities where people are trying to fit into their new country.

7. Labor A new wage theft law was passed last year, yet there has already been a hearing

to attack this legislation. Business owners and other employers feel that it is a burden and that there is too much confusion adhering to the law. In addition, employers are trying to get around this legislation by misclassifying workers as independent contractors (see legislation against this practice in HF4009/SF4018). What will you do to protect workers and this law?

I strongly support the wage theft law and believe that employer confusion will drop sharply as employers get to understand what the law means. The employers with the most confusion may well be the employers who were cheating the system in the past. I support SF 4018 and believe we must strengthen, not weaken, laws that leave workers out of worker protections through false claims that they are independent contractors, not employees. I have consistently supported legislation to crack down on anti-worker and unfair labor practices of employers. We need strong unions and the rights of collective bargaining to get a fair shake for workers at a time when employers have gained ever more wealth and power.

8. Transportation Public transportation often gets reduced in areas where it is most needed. In your view, what should the state do about public transit infrastructure while addressing concerns about access and affordability?

First, we should significantly reduce or eliminate fares (see SF 163, for my bill reducing fares to \$.25), to sharply increase ridership. That legislation would improve both access and affordability and lead to expanded transit service to handle the increased ridership. Second, we need to expand our existing transit systems, with more exclusive busways, etc. This requires significant funding increases. Even so, this is cheaper than further expansion of roadways, and it addresses economic inequality, helping more people get to work and participate in the economy.

9. Housing We are in the midst of a housing affordability crisis. What would you do to advocate for our district and the state in solving this crisis?

“Housing first!” is an appropriate slogan for what should be state policy. We cannot adequately address mental health or other problems when people are not properly housed. I have strongly supported the *Homes for All* coalition and Rep. Hausman’s push for sharp increases in affordable housing. They are finally succeeding in changing attitudes at the capitol to understand the urgency of the housing crisis.

10. Food Security Would you support the State of MN funding breakfast, lunch and snacks for all Pre K thru 12 school children in public schools with no fees?

Yes. As I mention in question 1, we need to make sure students have good nutrition, if we expect them to learn. Obviously, this requires additional funding.

11. Healthcare 11a) In your view, is healthcare a human right? 11b) Do you support passing single payer healthcare for Minnesota, and what would the transition look like? If not, what is your proposal to provide affordable healthcare for all Minnesotans?

Yes.
Yes, I am pushing the Minnesota Health Plan (SF 1125) which would provide comprehensive healthcare to every Minnesotan, with no exceptions. It would cover all needed care, including mental health, prescriptions, dental, vision and hearing, long term care, chemical dependency treatment, etc. Equally important, it would reduce the need for costly medical care through public health, education, prevention and early intervention. Patients would choose their doctors and providers, and medical decisions would be made by patients and

their providers, not by insurance companies, government, or employers. The MHP would be funded by premiums based on ability to pay and a tax on employers, so everyone would help pay for it, but it would be affordable to all. There would be no copays or deductibles that put barriers to care. Perhaps counter-intuitively, the MHP would cost less than we are currently paying for our dysfunctional healthcare system, and we would be delivering better quality care.

The transition would be easy for individuals – even easier than the switch to Medicare when turning 65 – patients can use the same providers (or any other ones), and they can go in for care whenever they need it. Likewise, for providers the transition would be simple, with a significant reduction in billing and paperwork and an end to fighting with insurance companies over whether a treatment was covered or not. There would be significant changes for the insurance and billing businesses, so the legislation requires the MHP to provide financial help and dislocated worker benefits to those doing all the paperwork that would no longer be necessary.

12. Cannabis 12a) The current medical cannabis program is not affordable (\$250 for certification, \$200 to participate, and hundreds of dollars for the medication) Will you work to make this affordable and accessible to all? 12b) Do you support the legalization of cannabis for adult use in Minnesota? 12c) If cannabis for adult use were to be legalized in Minnesota, what measures will you take regarding Minnesotans currently incarcerated under cannabis-related non-violent drug charges?

As the author of medical cannabis legislation many years ago, I envisioned a much simpler program with much easier access for medical needs. The program does little good when people cannot afford to purchase it. I will continue working to make it affordable and accessible, which includes allowing use of the flower. Also, medications should be covered by our health plan, as they would be under MHP.

I am not a fan of prohibition, so I do support the legalization of cannabis in Minnesota. However, I believe we should have the strictest possible regulation banning promotion and marketing of recreational use, and strong regulation to address public safety concerns. Yes, we should not continue to lock up people for non-violent cannabis convictions.

13. Gun Control What is your position on gun control, and what specific legislation would you be willing to sponsor?

I strongly support comprehensive gun safety laws. I have sponsored numerous regulation laws in the past, including legislation that would treat guns the way we treat cars – requiring licensing of owners, registration of guns, training of owners, and insurance coverage, etc. I have pushed for lifetime bans on gun ownership for violent offenders, and bans on certain types of firearms, magazines, and ammunition. I will continue to push for better laws to promote public safety.

14. Women's Rights Do you support the ERA becoming a part of the Minnesota Constitution?

Yes, strongly. I have been a co-author of such legislation for many years.

15. Diversity The folks at the endorsing convention will not fully reflect the diversity of gender identities, racial and ethnic identities, and religious affiliations in our community; if elected/re-elected what do you see as your role in addressing the needs of folks

underrepresented?

Diversity is a huge benefit to society, and I have been working to promote inclusion, opportunity, anti-discrimination efforts throughout my life, both in public policy and personal practice. I believe that I have an extra burden in this regard because I have not faced the challenges others have. Consequently, I have provided leadership in inclusion, from pushing for LGBTQ+ rights beginning more than thirty years ago, to continuing to speak out against gender, racial, ethnic and religious discrimination and exclusion now. We have a long way to go, and we all have an obligation to address these issues that are fundamental matters of fairness.

16. Corporate Money in Politics 16a) Do you take campaign contributions from corporate PACs? 16b) What is the approximate average individual donation size currently to your campaign? 16c) What would you support at the state level to curb the role of corporate money in politics?

For three decades, I am the only member of the legislature who declines all contributions from *all* (not just corporate) PACs, from all lobbyists, who rejects all contributions over \$200 from anyone and fights against soft money and independent expenditures. My average contribution is probably about \$40. I support full public financing of elections, and to accomplish that have pushed for a constitutional amendment to overturn harmful supreme court rulings that have treated corporations as people and money as free speech.

17. Ranked Choice Voting 17a) Do you support ranked choice balloting, locally and the state-wide level? 17b) What do you see as positives and negatives of ranked choice voting?

Yes, and have been the author of legislation to implement it statewide and locally. RCV tends to reduce negative political attacks, it avoids the problem of “spoiled” votes, and better represents the public will. On the negative side, it can be set up and administered in a confusing, convoluted manner, and it is important that it be implemented in a simple, understandable manner.

18. Public Health/Emergency Preparedness 18a) If elected, what steps will you take to ensure that Minnesota is better prepared for the next pandemic? 18b) What steps should Minnesota be taking for emergency preparedness (such as COVID-19, grid collapse, etc.)?

This has been a key priority of mine: to make a more resilient society. This requires universal healthcare, better housing infrastructure to end homelessness, and a society that invests more in prevention and preparedness. I’d be happy to expand further.

19. Consensus Building What are your strengths for positive community outreach and consensus building?

As a legislator whose perspectives have been far outside of the political mainstream, I have always understood the need to work well with people who disagree. I have worked to educate those who differ (e.g., my work three decades ago on LGBTQ+ inclusion and equality) and to reach out, even to ideological or partisan opponents. Consequently, although I am politically outside of the mainstream, most colleagues from both parties would likely say they trust me and can work with me. I like bringing people together and finding solutions that work for all.