

CANDIDATES SHARE VIEWS ON DIRECT CARE WORKERS (DCWS)

Iowa CareGivers has been involving direct care workers in advocacy and sharing the voices of those of us in direct care and family caregivers with elected officials and others for 30 years. We advocate with the Office of the Governor, those who serve in the United States Senate and House of Representatives, and those who represent you at the Iowa State Capitol. They **ALL** make decisions that affect you, your wages, quality of care and support, and job quality. Those decisions also have an impact on the lowans you serve, and your employers or persons served. We are grateful to the candidates who found time to respond to our questions.



Fran Mancl and Cindy Ramer, Career Direct Care Workers, Now Retired and Serving as Co-Chairs of Iowa CareGivers Advocacy Committee.

We will continue to work hard and advocate for:

- Enhanced wages for those in direct care
- Supports for family caregivers
- Quality training with credentials that follow you wherever you go
- Enhancements to the Iowa Direct Care Worker Registry, and
- Changes to federal laws that create hardship on you

On behalf of the Iowa CareGivers Advocacy Committee, we encourage you to get to know your elected officials at the local, state, and national levels if you haven't yet done so. We tell our stories and share our concerns and ideas for solutions to some of the challenges we face as direct care workers or family caregivers. Please read the candidates' comments and **VOTE**. Let us know if we can help. information@iowacaregivers.org

*Thanks,
Cindy and Fran*

VOTE ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2022

For more information about voting locations and requirements:

<https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterinformation/voterregistration.html>

or

<https://sos.iowa.gov/contactus.html>



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CANDIDATES FOR GOVERNOR OF IOWA

Candidates Appear in Alphabetical Order by Last Name Under the Elected Office

Deidre DeJear Democratic Candidate for Governor



QUESTION 1: Do you support and have a plan to raise wages for direct care workers in Iowa. If so, how would you pay for this?

ANSWER: Unfortunately, there is so much more work that needs to be done in the state of Iowa to ensure that all Iowans have access to affordable quality healthcare; and our communities with disabilities and those that require specialized care need additional attention. In order for us to address the lack of home and community based care options in Iowa, we must address the chronically low pay rate for direct care workers (hovering around \$11 - \$15 per hour) and bring it up to a living wage. Additionally, we must increase the reimbursement rates for providers and make sure they are paid on time—which is currently a major barrier preventing providers from being able to do business efficiently and provide care. It is imperative that we also increase the number of providers in the state and attract more talent to this needed profession. We additionally need to recognize that there is not a one-size-fits-all solution to providing care and we must expand funding streams for independent living as well as allowing for family members to be compensated for caring for a family member with a disability or illness; without asset or income restrictions.

QUESTION 2: Do you support Certified Nurse Aides (CNAs) and other direct care workers having portable credentials and continuing education standards?

ANSWER: Licensure for direct care professionals is one way to ensure quality mental health services and protect the public. Unfortunately, we know one of the greatest recruitment challenges of this industry is finding employees to work in rural communities, recruiting bilingual social workers, recruiting employees with backgrounds similar to clients in race and ethnicity. By expanding out our credentialing system to be more portable, we can begin to attract more talent to this field and address the issues with staffing shortages. Additionally, we must ensure that our direct care workers have a strong structure for continuing education. We know that science and healthcare are rapidly changing, and as our medical field learns more, we should ensure that our direct care professionals have the resources to gain that knowledge.

QUESTION 3: As a direct care worker, why would I vote for you in November?

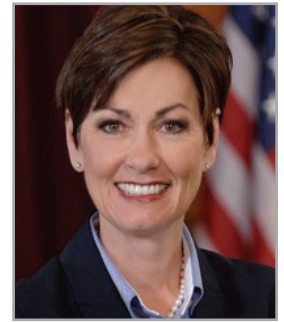
ANSWER: Not only do I recognize the incredible value that direct care professionals provide to Iowa's communities, I also want to ensure that their work is respected with dignified working conditions and equitable wages. Direct care professionals work diligently to give life sustaining care to countless Iowans and this contribution should be honored. There is still so much work we need to do in the state of Iowa to ensure everyone has access to quality affordable physical and mental healthcare, but I believe when we come together and work collectively we can create sustainable changes which will move Iowa forward.

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Governor Kim Reynolds

Incumbent Republican Candidate for Governor



QUESTION 1: Do you support and have a plan to raise wages for direct care workers in Iowa. If so, how would you pay for this?

ANSWER: A primary goal of my administration has been to recognize the value and importance of home and community-based care for Iowans with disabilities and aging Iowans. The first step in improving access to home and community-based services is stabilizing and growing our direct care workforce. Direct care professionals are the backbone of home and community-based care, providing the daily services and support that Iowans with disabilities need to live independently and thrive in the community.

Medicaid Rates: During the 2022 legislative session, we approved an investment of \$14.6 million in Medicaid funding - approximately \$39 million with the federal match - to increase payment rates for HCBS services provided by direct care professionals, a 4.25% increase. This is an important first step in stabilizing this critical workforce.

Additionally, we are investing in a multi-faceted approach our plan has received approval from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services:

Recruitment/Retention Assistance: This year Iowa Medicaid awarded \$114 million in grants to HCBS providers for costs related to recruitment and retention incentive payments to direct care staff.

Education & Training: We will invest \$8 million to develop a state-wide HCBS training platform to support consistent, innovative, and efficient training for staff across HCBS-related disciplines. This training platform will allow HCBS providers to offer more specialized care and services to individuals with complex needs.

The state will offer \$6 million in HCBS employee training and scholarship grants in FYs23 and 24. The grants will serve the purpose of assisting qualified HCBS providers to fund employee training and scholarships for education and training in nursing, behavioral health and other healthcare fields.

Grant funds must be used to cover costs related to training that will enhance the quality of direct services provided and/or cover the costs related to a course of study that is expected to lead to career advancement with the provider or in the HCBS field. Potential uses of scholarship funding include:

- ISTART certification
- Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS) certification
- Certified Brain Injury Specialist (CBIS) certification
- Crisis Response certification
- Behavioral Health Technician certification
- Employment Support Specialist certification
- Medication Aide certification
- Community College or University Courses in Related Fields

QUESTION 2: Do you support Certified Nurse Aides (CNAs) and other direct care workers having portable credentials and continuing education standards?

ANSWER: It is critical that our direct care workforce receive high quality education and training in preparation to provide safe, effective, quality care to the increasing number of Iowans who rely on their services. A critical aspect of any health care professional's career is continuing education, and this should apply to direct support professionals as well. A well-trained, professionalized direct care workforce can have a tremendously positive impact on health outcomes and the bottom line.

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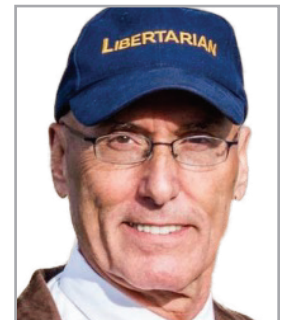


QUESTION 3: As a direct care worker, why would I vote for you in November?

ANSWER: As we transition away from a reliance on institutionalized care and toward growing home-based care options, we must also invest in growing our direct care workforce. For this reason, in 2022 we invested \$2.45 million to establish the Health Careers Registered Apprenticeship program to introduce high school students to direct care. Eight school districts will support an estimated 450 apprentices, who by graduation will have earned their CNA and spent time working in a direct care role. We also increased our investment in Medicaid rates for HCBS services by 4.25% to stabilize the direct care workforce.

As Governor, I have witnessed the critical role of our direct care professionals in caring for some of our most vulnerable Iowans. As a daughter, I have experienced the relief and security of knowing my loved one is being cared for at home by a kind, compassionate, direct care professional who is helping to keep her healthy and safe. I am personally grateful for your commitment to caring for our fellow Iowans with disabilities and the elderly who rely on your help to remain in their homes, and I commit to continue the work to stabilize and grow this vital component of our health care delivery system.

Rick Stewart Libertarian Candidate for Governor



QUESTION 1: Do you support and have a plan to raise wages for direct care workers in Iowa. If so, how would you pay for this?

ANSWER: My plan for raising wages for direct care workers in Iowa is to let the free market perform its miracles. Competition in the marketplace, for workers, has already shown us how effective the free market is. Wages in Iowa have skyrocketed, because competition among employers has forced them to offer higher and higher wages.

The alternative is government interference. We have seen how this does not work today, and it will not work tomorrow. The proposal by some people – a \$15 per hour minimum wage – now seems laughable. You can already earn more than that working at an Iowa fast food restaurant. This is the problem with government intervention, it is always a day late and a dollar (or two or three) late.

The wonderful thing about the free market setting wages is – it costs the government nothing. This is good for all of us, because we will not have to pay extra taxes. If the government interferes in the market, and the government has to pay for it, all of us will end up getting paid less, because we will have to pay higher taxes.

Of course if the government allows and even promotes inflation (so they can pay interest on the national debt with cheaper dollars) all Iowa workers will suffer, but the Governor of Iowa can not stop Congress from printing money.

QUESTION 2: Do you support Certified Nurse Aides (CNAs) and other direct care workers having portable credentials and continuing education standards?

ANSWER: Let's think about the alternative – an end to occupational licensing in Iowa. This is a better, and far less expensive, system. We can simply say any worker who is licensed to work in their profession in any of the other 49 states can use that license to work in Iowa. And anyone who is trained in that profession in Iowa, is allowed to work in Iowa, no license necessary. The entire licensing system in Iowa can be abolished, and a lot of taxpayer money can be saved. It is education that counts, not government permission from their bureaucracy.

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QUESTION 3: As a direct care worker, why would I vote for you in November?

ANSWER: Direct care workers in Iowa will live in a healthier Iowa, a less expensive Iowa, a better educated Iowa, and a happier Iowa when I am Governor. Your taxes will be lower and your freedoms will be greater. You will be able to perform your jobs in the best interests of the people you care for, rather than for the pleasure of pesky government bureaucrats.

CANDIDATES FOR UNITED STATES SENATE SERVING IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Admiral Michael Franken Democratic Candidate for U.S. Senate



QUESTION 1: If elected, what will you do to address issues, such as low wages, lack of benefits, and short staffing faced by Iowa's direct care workers?

ANSWER: Direct care workers are essential to the health, safety and quality of life of millions of older Americans and Americans with disabilities. For far too long, they have not been given the respect, training, pay or benefits they deserve. If elected, I will work to change this. Not to study it, not to convene more committees, not to request more reports, but to make change.

The Biden Administration has made a number of proposals that would address chronic problems in both facility-based and home-based care settings. These proposals would improve quality of care by ensuring that sufficient staff exists, that staff will be better trained, that compensation will be improved and that direct care jobs will be jobs that people can do for a rewarding and respected career.

I will work with the White House to see their proposals implemented, and will challenge them to do more -- to ensure that long-term care services are readily available to Iowans in both metropolitan and rural areas, and to ensure that services can be paid for without forcing Iowans into bankruptcy.

QUESTION 2: If elected, would you support amending a 35-year-old law (42 CFR 483.156), the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987 (OBRA '87) that creates hardship for Certified Nurse Aides, Home Care Aides, and other direct care workers, as well as the Iowans they serve such as older Iowans and people with disabilities, and health and long-term care employers?

ANSWER: Yes. This law makes no sense and should have been changed a long time ago. Senator Grassley has been in a position to lead the effort to make this change and hasn't done it. He's talked about it but hasn't acted. I will.

There are huge challenges in direct care occupations; there simply are not enough workers to meet the demand for their services. One way to help address that challenge is to make sure that workers have the flexibility they need to easily move from one work setting to another. The current system throws too many roadblocks in the way of that. Making it easier for employees to shift from home care to nursing home care or some other setting will be advantageous for workers and for their employers -- and for the people they serve.

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I will work with the White House, with CMS and with my legislative colleagues to ensure that making this change becomes a much greater priority.

QUESTION 3: If elected, what federal policies do you think would improve care for those served and enhance the recruitment and retention of the direct care workforce?

ANSWER: The quality of care can be improved by improving the quality of jobs of those providing the care. If jobs provide better pay, benefits, training and career opportunities, more people will enter and stay in the profession. If that happens, turnover in the profession will be less, as will the reliance on temporary workers. Better jobs will produce better care.

The challenges in improving care and improving jobs has existed for decades. The Iowa CareGivers has been a leading voice in urging action on these challenges. When I am in office, I will work to see that the voices and ideas of front-line workers and organizations that support them will be better heard, valued and turned into action.

QUESTION 4: As a direct care worker, why would I vote for you in November?

ANSWER: I want direct care workers to know that I care about them and will work to address their needs and the needs of their profession. The work done by direct care workers, whether it is done in a home-based setting, an assisted living facility, nursing home, residential care or other setting, is crucial to the quality of life of hundreds of thousands of Iowans. Direct care workers were called “heroes” during the pandemic. Sadly, that term did not translate into action that would both recognize and reward them for their heroic efforts.

Direct care workers deserve to have a Senator from Iowa that listens to them and acts on their concerns. On my campaign website, there is a section titled The Franken Agenda to Enhance the Lives of Older Iowans. In it, I say this: “Senator Ted Kennedy taught me to dream big but to be pragmatic. We can’t talk about things forever; we have to take action and get results. I did that as an Admiral in the Navy, and I’ll do that for older -- and all -- Iowans as their Senator.”

I meant what I said. Direct care workers can count on me to listen and lead.

Chuck Grassley

Incumbent Republican Candidate for U.S. Senate

QUESTION 1: If elected, what will you do to address issues, such as low wages, lack of benefits, and short staffing faced by Iowa’s direct care workers?

ANSWER: I’m a longtime supporter of improving the lives of people with disabilities including children with disabilities and their families. I believe people with disabilities should have more choices and flexibility in how they receive care, especially with greater home- and community-based care options. This work includes increased federal investments in our health care workforce, including direct care workers.



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QUESTION 2: If elected, would you support amending a 35-year-old law (42 CFR 483.156), the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987 (OBRA '87) that creates hardship for Certified Nurse Aides, Home Care Aides, and other direct care workers, as well as the lowans they serve such as older lowans and people with disabilities, and health and long-term care employers?

ANSWER: I'm a longtime supporter of removing red tape and unnecessary barriers to work that are not proven to ensure safety and high-quality care. I've cosponsored legislation in the Senate to expand Medicare's access to qualified and trained health care professionals to practice at the top of their license or registration under a state's laws.

QUESTION 3: If elected, what federal policies do you think would improve care for those served and enhance the recruitment and retention of the direct care workforce?

ANSWER: As Finance Committee chairman, I helped reauthorize the Money Follows the Person (MFP) program in Medicaid, which helps states provide transition services to people moving from nursing facilities to home- or community-based settings. I have also conducted extensive oversight of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to ensure seniors and people with disabilities on Medicaid are receiving improved access to high-quality services. I've also worked with Sen. Michael Bennet (D-Colo.) to pass the Advancing Care for Exceptional (ACE) Kids Act, which enables children with medically complex conditions to choose to enroll in a health home. This will improve our health care infrastructure, ensure provider-to-provider coordination, and support our health care workforce. Our most vulnerable kids and their families deserve a health care system that coordinates care and produces healthier outcomes. Kids with complex medical conditions face myriad challenges including an uncoordinated and burdensome health care system. I'm working to ensure CMS implements this program timely and follows congressional intent. I'm also working with Senator Bennet to advance the Accelerating Kids' Access to Care Act, which provides states the ability to streamline the screening and enrollment process for out-of-state pediatric care providers who serve kids with complex medical conditions.

QUESTION 4: As a direct care worker, why would I vote for you in November?

ANSWER: Beginning in the 1980s, I worked on Katie Beckett waivers that expanded treatment at home for children with disabilities while still allowing them to be covered by Medicaid. In the early 2000s, I worked with Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) to pass the bipartisan Family Opportunity Act. The law encourages parents

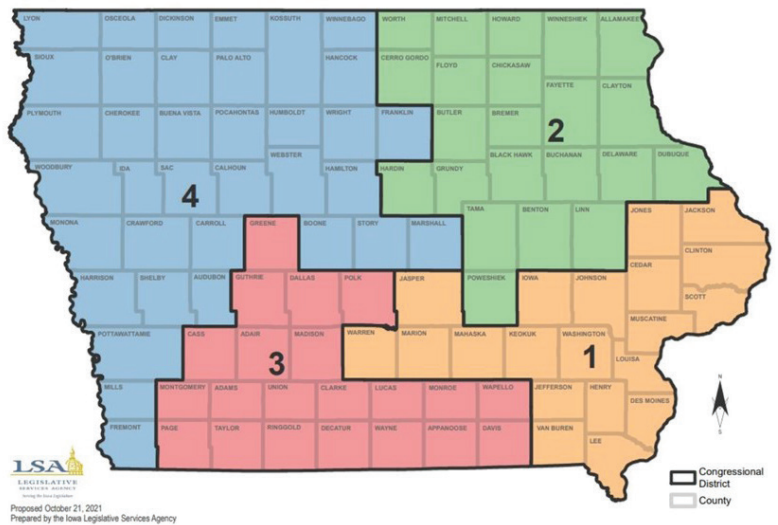
to work and get ahead without sacrificing health coverage for their children with special needs. It also allows parents to buy Medicaid coverage without impoverishing their families, and it established Family-to-Family Health Information Centers (F2F) that provide first-hand knowledge for families with children who have complex medical conditions. Living in rural Iowa, I understand the importance of accessing health care services close to home and stopping one-size-fits-all Washington solutions. As Finance Committee chairman, I worked across the aisle to pass five bipartisan COVID-19 relief packages that provided over \$320 billion in direct relief and support to our health care system including support for our health care workforce. I'm committed to improving the lives of people with disabilities by expanding home- and community-based care options. This includes increased investments in our health care workforce.

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CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (CONGRESS)

PROPOSED PLAN 2: IOWA CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS
To Be Effective Beginning with the Elections in 2022 for the 118th General Assembly



Map of Congressional Districts
<https://bit.ly/3EoV8PY>

Candidates for United States House of Representatives – District 1

Christina Bohannon Candidate for US House of Representatives – District 1



QUESTION 1: If elected, what will you do to address issues, such as low wages lack of benefits, and short staffing faced by Iowa’s direct care workers?

ANSWER: I have always been a strong advocate for working Iowans. Through my work in the Iowa State Legislature, I have fought for higher wages, good benefits, safe working conditions and strong unions. I also supported legislation that would specifically benefit direct care workers, and I’ll continue to prioritize worker’s rights as a Member of Congress. I support a substantial increase in the federal minimum wage. Iowa’s current \$7.25 minimum wage is unacceptably low and hasn’t been increased for more than a decade, despite the rising cost of living. Every worker should be able to support a family on full time work. Similarly, I will fight to pass legislation such as the PRO Act that will strengthen unions so they can fight for better benefits and work conditions for direct care workers. Strong unions are vital to having a strong and protected workforce.

QUESTION 2: If elected, would you support amending a 35-year-old law (42 CFR 483.156), the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987 (OBRA ’87) that creates hardship for Certified Nurse Aides, Home Care Aides, and other direct care workers, as well as the Iowans they serve such as older Iowans and people with disabilities, and health and long-term care employers?

ANSWER: OBRA ’87 was an important law at the time it was passed – it improved the quality and safety of nursing homes and caregiving for seniors. However, there are pitfalls that unfairly burden those doing this important work. In Congress I would like to meet with direct care workers as well as Iowa seniors to determine areas of the Act that should be bolstered, changed or removed. We must have a caregiving system that functions well for all parties involved.

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QUESTION 3: If elected, what federal policies do you think would improve care for those served and enhance the recruitment and retention of the direct care workforce?

ANSWER: The best way to improve care and strengthen the direct care workforce is to make sure these jobs are fairly paid and have good benefits. When we create jobs that have good pay, safe conditions, and access to benefits, we are better able to meet our staffing needs. We must expand training and job programs in this industry so that we can ensure that lowans have the skills to meet this workforce demand. Incentives for direct care workers to work in rural areas would help to meet the ever growing direct care demand in rural parts of the state.

QUESTION 4: As a direct care worker, why would I vote for you in November?

ANSWER: I understand the essential role that direct care workers play in supporting our families and have depended on them in my own family for vital care of loved ones. Direct care workers are an essential part of Iowa's workforce, and they can count on me for support in Congress. They can rest assured that I will always fight for good wages and benefits including high quality healthcare, workers' rights and safety, collective bargaining rights, and a better quality of life for the important work they do.

Mariannette Miller-Meeks
Incumbent Republican Candidate for
U.S. House of Representatives — District 1
Candidate did not respond.



Candidates for U.S. Representative – District 2

Ashley Hinson
Incumbent Republican Candidate for
U.S. House of Representatives — District 2
Candidate did not respond.



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Liz Mathis

Democratic Candidate for U.S. House of Representatives — District 2



QUESTION 1: If elected, what will you do to address issues, such as low wages, lack of benefits, and short staffing faced by Iowa's direct care workers?

ANSWER: I have always been a watchdog for Iowa workers – fighting for higher wages, better benefits and workplace conditions, and strong unions throughout my time in the Legislature. I'll continue that focus in Congress. First, I'll support raising the minimum wage to a living wage. Iowa's current \$7.25 minimum wage is unacceptably low and hasn't been increased for more than a decade, despite the rising cost of living. Every direct care worker must be able to support a family on full time work. Similarly, I will work to ensure care workers have opportunities to join a union and bargain collectively for better wages and benefits.

QUESTION 2: If elected, would you support amending a 35-year-old law (42 CFR 483.156), the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987 (OBRA '87) that creates hardship for Certified Nurse Aides, Home Care Aides, and other direct care workers, as well as the Iowans they serve such as older Iowans and people with disabilities, and health and long-term care employers?

ANSWER: OBRA '87 was an important law that spurred vital improvement in the quality and safety of nursing homes and caregiving for seniors. But we absolutely need to build on the areas that have worked well and reform the areas that haven't. In Congress, as in the Legislature, I will meet and work closely with direct care workers as well as Iowa seniors to determine the best path forward and make sure our caregiving system is functioning effectively for all parties.

QUESTION 3: If elected, what federal policies do you think would improve care for those served and enhance the recruitment and retention of the direct care workforce?

ANSWER: The most important goal is raising wages. If we have a direct care workforce that is paid fairly on wages that can support a family, we'll have the high-quality staffing Iowa needs. Similarly, we must expand nursing and job training programs and ensure those programs are affordable so that Iowans who wish to enter this high-growth field have access to obtain the skills needed to do so. The best way to improve care for Iowans is to have a high-quality, well trained, and fairly paid direct care workforce.

QUESTION 4: As a direct care worker, why would I vote for you in November?

ANSWER: I have always fought for Iowa's workers and for Iowa's healthcare system, and I'll continue that focus in Congress. In the Legislature, I fought for to raise wages, strengthen our Medicaid system, and boost rural healthcare. I will continue to pursue each of those goals in Congress, and will always ensure that direct care workers have a voice and an ally in Washington.

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Candidates for United States House of Representatives – District 3

Cindy Axne

Incumbent Democratic Candidate for U.S. House of Representatives – District 3



QUESTION 1: If elected, what will you do to address issues, such as low wages, lack of benefits, and short staffing faced by Iowa’s direct care workers?

ANSWER: Direct care workers, such as personal care aides, home health aides, and nursing assistants, make it possible for millions of older adults and people with disabilities to live independently in their homes and communities. Such care significantly enhances the quality of life for aging and disabled Americans. It is a vital service, and yet the direct care workforce faces serious challenges including low wages, limited benefits, and short staffing.

As I have throughout this Congress, if re-elected, I will fight for pay increases for direct care workers. In 2021, I voted for the American Rescue Plan, which was signed into law and boosted funding for states to invest in home and community-based services, including the direct care workers that provide these services. Later that year, I also voted for the Build Back Better Act, which would have allocated additional funding to home and community-based services while also expanding and increasing pay for the direct-care workforce. Although these Build Back Better provisions ultimately did not pass, they do lay the blueprint for my future efforts to support direct care workers. I will make supporting a well-paid and well-trained direct care workforce one of my top priorities.

QUESTION 2: If elected, would you support amending a 35-year-old law (42 CFR 483.156), the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987 (OBRA '87) that creates hardship for Certified Nurse Aides, Home Care Aides, and other direct care workers, as well as the Iowans they serve such as older Iowans and people with disabilities, and health and long-term care employers?

ANSWER: The pandemic brought to light the many challenges that affect the direct care workforce, including some that predated the pandemic. For this reason, I applaud the long-standing, stakeholder-led efforts to modernize Iowa’s Direct Care Worker registry and create greater community inclusion via the creation of a voluntary public portal. I look forward to seeing how these efforts advance and commit to focusing on direct care workforce initiatives at the federal level.

QUESTION 3: If elected, what federal policies do you think would improve care for those served and enhance the retention of the direct care workforce?

ANSWER: Ensuring the best care for the elderly and people with disabilities has been and will continue to be one of my top priorities. As such, it is crucial that our nation continue to invest in the direct care force, specifically, support the recruitment and retention of these essential workers.

I hope to address direct care recruitment challenges by supporting initiatives that expand access and entry into the direct care workforce. For example, in the 117th Congress, I cosponsored and voted for H.R.7309, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2022. This bill will reauthorize the primary federal program that provides training and career services to adults, dislocated workers, and youth to help participants complete training and join

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the workforce, including the direct care workforce via nursing assistant training. This bill passed the House in May of 2022, and if re-elected, I look forward to continuing to support similar workforce training expansion efforts for those interested in providing direct care.

Lastly, I hope to support those already providing direct care to individuals navigating complex diseases by expanding their access to training and support services. That's why I cosponsored H.R.1474, the Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Act, which creates a new grant program for the expansion of training and support services for families and caregivers of individuals living with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia.

Zach Nunn

Republican Candidate for U.S. House of Representatives – District 3

Candidate did not respond.



Candidates for United States House of Representatives – District 4

Randy Feenstra

Incumbent Republican Candidate for U.S. House of Representatives — District 4

QUESTION 1: If elected, what will you do to address issues, such as low wages, lack of benefits, and short staffing faced by Iowa's direct care workers?

ANSWER: Among many legislative priorities, I am committed to supporting direct support professionals and the critical services they provide. Considering the workforce shortage in our rural communities, we need to increase wages for direct care workers to help healthcare organizations recruit and retain quality employees and fund evidence-based training for direct care workers. I also fully support tax cuts at the state level and lower interest rates on educational loans for direct care workers.



QUESTION 2: If elected, would you support amending a 35-year-old law (42 CFR 483.156), the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987 (OBRA '87) that creates hardship for Certified Nurse Aides, Home Care Aides, and other direct care workers, as well as the Iowans they serve such as older Iowans and people with disabilities, and health and long-term care employers?

ANSWER: Due to many factors causing stress on our healthcare system, I will be actively working with my colleagues to reduce costs for patients and support a vibrant, well-paid healthcare workforce. I also believe that states must have the power to establish their own continuing education requirements so that direct care workers can maintain their

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healthcare credentials and eligibility to serve our most vulnerable populations. Less red tape, while still providing the best level of care, enhances healthcare outcomes for patients and ensures a robust direct care workforce.

QUESTION 3: If elected, what federal policies do you think would improve care for those served and enhance the recruitment and retention of the direct care workforce?

ANSWER: Along with increasing wages for direct care workers and lowering interest rates for educational loans, I am also working to protect Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare for current beneficiaries and future generations. These programs are a solemn promise to our seniors, veterans, and the most vulnerable who have rightfully earned these benefits. In particular, Medicaid is vital for those living with developmental disabilities who have endured hardship and require these critical benefits to stay healthy and provide for their families.

I am also passionate about expanding mental health services for direct care workers and the patients they serve. For this reason, I voted for the Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well-Being Act of 2022, which strengthens federal programs and grants to support mental and behavioral wellbeing. Mental health should be treated just like physical health, and I will continue to work to expand mental health resources and infrastructure in our communities, particularly in rural Iowa.

QUESTION 4: As a direct care worker, why would I vote for you in November?

ANSWER: Protecting the most vulnerable members of our communities and supporting those who care for them is a top priority for me in Congress. I am committed to ensuring that Iowa's direct care workers - who serve our veterans to our seniors and all those who live with a disability - have the resources and support they need to provide excellent care and earn a salary commensurate with their hard work. As your voice in Congress, I will always be accessible to you and work to lend a hand anywhere I can.

Bryan Jack Holder

Liberty Caucus Candidate for U.S. House of Representatives – District 4

Candidate did not respond.

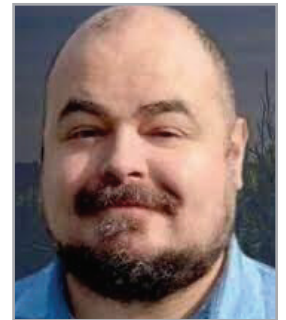


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Ryan Melton

Democratic Candidate for U.S. House of Representatives —
District 4



QUESTION 1: If elected, what will you do to address issues, such as low wages, lack of benefits, and short staffing faced by Iowa's direct care workers?

ANSWER 1: I had the chance recently to visit with the board of directors for Nishna Productions, a non-profit organization that's responsible for providing direct care support for the mentally and physically disabled in SW Iowa. It was clear from my asks there that direct care workers across the field face a lot of struggle at work, and don't seem to normally have EAP, short term disability and long term disability access. First, it seems to me that Medicaid, which funds 90+ percent of Nishna's operations, should have a mandate that all workers in the field get a mandatory bundle of these benefits, as the job is extremely difficult on worker's mental and physical health.

QUESTION 2: If elected, would you support amending a 35-year-old law (42 CFR 483.156), the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987 (OBRA '87) that creates hardship for Certified Nurse Aides, Home Care Aides, and other direct care workers, as well as the Iowans they serve such as older Iowans and people with disabilities, and health and long-term care employers?

ANSWER 2: Yes, we clearly are facing a direct care worker retention crisis, which impacts all of us, and bold action is needed to address it.

QUESTION 3: If elected, what federal policies do you think would improve care for those served and enhance the recruitment and retention of the direct care workforce?

ANSWER 3: First, let's get the federal minimum wage closer to a living wage. Second, we need to require that employees in high stress sectors like direct care have affordable access to EAP, and paid short term and long term disability programs. Third, if they are required to work overtime, their compensation rate should go up not just the base OT rate, but should go higher with higher OT hours hit.

QUESTION 4: As a direct care worker, why would I vote for you in November?

ANSWER 4: When I was at the Nishna Productions session I referred to earlier, most politicians there during the Q&A were interested in raising the minimum wage of staff workers a few bucks per hour. While that would be helpful, it's a bandaid as direct care workers often face painfully long work hours and abuse from clients. I was the only candidate or public official during the Q and A that was digging deeper as to the benefit and mental/physical health care needs of our direct care workers. I will seek to improve the needs of direct care workers holistically.

**VOTE ON TUESDAY,
NOVEMBER 8, 2022**



Iowa CareGivers

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