

Candidate Questionnaire on Housing Issues

2022



Chris Brazelton

City/Town: Delano

Legislative District: SD 29

Party: DFL

Candidate responses in italics.

1. In July 2021, [a national poll](#) found that 68% of the public believes that elected officials are not paying enough attention to the rising cost of housing and ensuring everyone can afford a place to live. **What do you believe is the role of government in ensuring everyone has a place to call home?**

If government's role is to facilitate civil society, to protect and preserve a space where all its citizens have the opportunity for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, then government does have a role in mediating among competing interests and setting policies that ensure a place for its most vulnerable citizens. I have visited countries that do not, and they struggle to manage squatters camps, unhoused people in public spaces, panhandling and everything that goes with those who are missing the basic elements of safety and security in our communities. Ultimately this creates challenges for tourism, public health and public safety for those who would turn away and do nothing. Everyone has an interest, directly or indirectly, in addressing these concerns.

2. Nearly all counties in Minnesota (92%) are not able to provide sufficient shelter or temporary housing to those who are homeless. **What will you do to end homelessness?**

I love what Habitat for Humanity has been doing, using a unique model to help the unhoused help themselves with the assistance of others. I also support what MACV has done to convert unused spaces into housing for veterans. I support many efforts that have been successful in rental assistance to help keep people from losing their homes in the first place, along with homebuyers programs to subsidize down payments and provide workshops on personal finance, home ownership, home repair, etc. to help people remain stable in their own homes. I support housing that has additional mental and chemical health services for those who would become homeless without them. I am open to other ideas that provide housing with dignity.

3. Emergency rental assistance keeps people stably housed, as we saw with federal pandemic-related funding. Historically, nonpayment of rent is the most common reason landlords evict their tenants. During times of financial crisis, families without access to financial resources may be displaced, evicted, or even become homeless. **What will you do to prevent evictions?**

I support these programs. There are many who won't support these programs because they have strong opposition to other people getting something for nothing. For those who are able, an opportunity to contribute their labor or services in exchange for rental assistance might make this more palatable for those critics.

4. Minnesota's housing crisis disproportionately harms families of color, especially Black and Indigenous households. Minnesota is one of the worst states in the nation for racial disparities in homeownership. Additionally, 58 percent of Black renters are paying more than they can afford on housing costs. **What meaningful steps will you take to eliminate racial disparities in housing?**

Habitat for Humanity is a wonderful solution. It helps improve the housing stock in stressed communities (and where ever housing and land is available at an affordable price) as provides high quality housing for residents. It answers the questions those have about giving people something for nothing by including sweat equity as the new homeowner's contribution while providing others with an opportunity to voluntarily help others in their communities.

5. There are approximately 170,000 renter households in the state that earn less than \$31,200 per year. But rental assistance is only available to one out of every four income-qualifying households. Even though more than 100,000 lowest income households need homes, the state only supports the production of 100 homes each year for these families. **What will you do to support the housing needs of those at the lowest income level in Minnesota?**

First, minimum wage has not kept pace with inflation, and should be tied to the consumer price index, especially for larger employers. Raising the income levels is a first step. Building more affordable housing and increasing the funding for subsidies in market rate housing is important also.

6. Energy efficiency improvements in multifamily buildings and weatherizing single family homes improve indoor air quality, eliminate drafts, and protect residents from extreme cold and heat—delivering health benefits and lower health care costs. **What strategies do you support to improve housing conditions and reduce utility costs?**

See answers to # 2 above. For those who would benefit, I like the idea of communal living spaces, shared cooking and community gathering areas with more private attached sleeping quarters. Some family or close friendship groups would do well in such housing. I am open to any other ideas I may not already be aware of.

7. Minnesota's home values are increasing rapidly, constraining low- and middle-income families from achieving affordable homeownership, including more than 64,000 households of color. **What steps will you take to increase opportunities for renters to purchase homes, condos, or cooperative ownership models?**

See answers to # 2 above. For those who would benefit, I like the idea of communal living spaces, shared cooking and community gathering areas with more private attached sleeping quarters. Some family or close friendship groups would do well in such housing. I am open to any other ideas I may not already be aware of.

8. Including the recommendations of the community when developing policies and programs is a best practice for effective and lasting solutions. **How will you include those most impacted by housing needs in developing and implementing housing solutions?**

Community housing councils and other large interest groups serving specific populations should have a seat at the larger table when solutions are being proposed. Those working with the unhoused have perspectives that others might not. Their voices are key to the discussions.