

# Candidate Questionnaire on Housing Issues

# 2022



## Laurel Stinson

**City/Town:** Lake City

**Legislative District:** HD 20A

**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?**

*Government has a role to play in regulating housing markets, streamlining permitting processes, evaluating and updating zoning codes, and creating building codes that ensure new construction doesn't sacrifice energy efficiency and long term affordability for the sake of cost cutting and short term affordability. We need housing that doesn't burden the people least able to afford it with higher energy bills and higher healthcare costs.*

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?**

*Evidence shows that homelessness has a high cost for taxpayers. Housing first is the fiscally responsible policy that allows people to have the shelter and stability they need to address their healthcare needs, nutrition needs, education needs, etc. I will support policies that incentivize and fund housing first efforts in rural districts like mine.*

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 will support local organizations that are doing this work and listen to their perspectives.*

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?**

*I am interested in the idea of Land Trust housing that would allow people to purchase a house, without purchasing the land underneath it which would remain in the trust. I think there would be a way for these type of developments to prioritize people experiencing these racial disparities. I would also support other creative solutions.*

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?**

*I will support more funding for housing.*

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?**

*I will support funding for these efforts for cities through their Housing and Redevelopment Authorities.*

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?**

*I will support funding for these efforts for cities through their Housing and Redevelopment Authorities.*

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?**

*I am fortunate that there are organizations in my district already doing this work and engaging with the people most effected, such as Goodhue County Habitat for Humanity, Red Wing HRA, and Three Rivers Community Action. I will rely on their guidance as much as possible when evaluating housing policy.*