

Candidate Questionnaire on Housing Issues

2022



Michael Heidelberger

City/Town: Brewster

Legislative District: HD21B

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?**

The governments role is to provide for its people. The rising housing prices are something that need to be dealt with in one way or another. We should put a stop to private investment firms buying up homes and turning them into rental property at the expense of the American dream.

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?**

We need to invest in public health for everyone and public housing for those who need it. We need to provide counseling services. We need to improve and expand upon the Section 8 housing choice voucher program.

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?**

We need to have a more robust system to provide for those that need rental assistance. As one of the richest countries in the world, we should not have people on the streets. I will work with the local county commissioners offices, and with city councils to identify the needs of our communities. With this information we can form a plan to keep people inside in a safe and comfortable environment.

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?**

We have to be sure that race plays no role in how much one has to pay for housing. We also need to be sure that race plays no role in selling a property. We need to encourage higher wages in the workforce and expand the Local Government Aid program to help keep property taxes lower for renters.

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?**

We need to expand that number to fill the need. People living on the streets need a place to live now and not, 'maybe next year.'

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?**

We need more programs to incentivize people to upgrade their homes. As the climate continues to change this will become more and more important to keep people safe and healthy.

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?**

We need to give people the ability to own and take pride of the places they are living in. Anxiety kicks in when people do not feel like they have a say in their basic human needs. Teamwork makes the dream work, facilitating an environment where renters and those who rent, can come together as equals and empower each other creates a profitable environment for both.

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?**

Those who are the most impacted need to have a direct say in how and where they want to live. We should listen to those who need it most when trying to figure out the best solution for everyone.