

Candidate Questionnaire on Housing Issues

2022



Ryan Wiskerchen

City/Town: Richfield

Legislative District: HD 51A

Party: R

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's role should be in expanding the opportunities and removing the barriers to citizens obtaining the means to form and support a family. Housing is a key aspect to ensuring positive outcomes for current Americans and for future generations. Government should work to make sure that the housing market does not primarily serve gamblers on Wall Street but the families and individuals who are this country's lifeblood.

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 look forward to working with Housing First and other organizations to see what barriers we can do to remove the current barriers to expanding options for homeownership in Minnesota, and to see what assistance we can give to match dwellings with the people who need them.

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 emergency rental assistance and protecting tenants from the shocks of a job loss, illness, or other crisis.

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?**

Housing is an issue which affects all Minnesotans, and I want to ensure that no Minnesotan is being denied housing or assistance based on race. We can solve the housing deficit by examining the patchwork of regulations and restrictions which are preventing home construction in the state and working to expand opportunities for housing for all Minnesotans.

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 the production of homes to protect Minnesotans from the ravages of homelessness. Reducing the barriers to home construction and encouraging the state to be more proactive in constructing new homes will assist these, and the increased competition will help reduce costs.

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?**

Minnesota's tax code should be reformed to offer credits for improvements made on homes by landlords and homeowners to make the houses healthier and more energy efficient, with the state government working with energy providers and other stakeholders to educate homeowners about these benefits.

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?**

Home prices are in large part being driven up by out-of-state speculators and those seeking to purchase homes as an investment rather than as a needed dwelling place. We should examine what we can do to penalize speculators from snapping up housing and punishing the least fortunate Minnesotans as a result.

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?

Home prices are in large part being driven up by out-of-state speculators and those seeking to purchase homes as an investment rather than as a needed dwelling place. We should examine what we can do to penalize speculators from snapping up housing and punishing the least fortunate Minnesotans as a result.