

Candidate Questionnaire on Housing Issues

2022



TJ Hawthorne

City/Town: North St. Paul

Legislative District: HD 44B

Party: LIB

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?**

I believe government has taken too much of a role, trying to ensure everyone has a place to call home. By regulating industries like construction and banking, the market for housing has gotten out of control. The federal government has most/all of the blame for the banking & money mess but state regulations on building, whether it's environmental or safety related, disincentivize builders from making new homes. That's only one faction of this debacle...

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?**

Best I could do is try to free up the market economy so EVERYONE has a fighting chance to build their own wealth. The government needs to stop acting like it can be anyone's savior. Get out of the way and let the free market thrive. Talented people without opportunity are finding themselves with no direction because you have to hire a lawyer before enter into the business economy nowadays.

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?**

For starters, I'd prevent the economy from shutting down. The state had no business telling businesses to shut their doors or even limit their customers. Covid didn't cause the shutdowns, the government did!

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?**

Stop treating citizens differently according to the color of their skin. That's a start. It doesn't matter what background you come from, you're still a member of the community. I won't play race politics.

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?**

There are so many charities READY to build these homes! The state regulations are stopping these good people from doing good things! Again, stop acting like the state is going to be anyone's savior.

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?**

Whatever the property owner wants to do to improve their home is not the state's business. This question is really odd.

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?**

Again, bringing race up when it's not a factor in the problem. I fully support rent to own or any voluntary agreement(s) between two (or more) consenting adults.

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?**

Give them purpose and stop treating them like they can't do anything for themselves! The state is not going to be anyone's savior. History and current world events have shown this to be true. The most impacted need to want it better for themselves so, while the state tells them they can't, why would they?