

# Candidate Questionnaire on Housing Issues

# 2022



## Tama Theis

**City/Town:** St. Cloud

**Legislative District:** SD 14

**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?**

*We need to make sure that every decision that affects Housing meets a criteria that prevents additional costs. Codes need to reflect costs, appraisals need to reflect all code changes and that cost. The Government needs to stay out of the way of housing and make it an option for those that want to be homeowners. That includes making sure that rentals are affordable as well.*

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?**

*Continue to fight for reforms, no mandates, finding ways for Housing Providers and Tenants to have a working relationship and not fight each other.*

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?**

*Rep Abaje and I co-authored a bill to start a program that will help provide mediation services and in that way, I feel, that we find ways to help each other out.*

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?**

*To educate both tenants and housing providers on how they can work together to build that relationship. There are so many misconceptions on both sides. Keeping costs down are crucial as well not only to keep housing affordable but keeping the current housing in place.*

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 believe we need to start at looking at out of boxes solutions, ideas that help folks build some equity. There are communities that use smaller homes so people can enjoy a home and that is going to be affordable now. Then after building some equity, the next step is to move to a bigger space.*

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 always made sure that the first thing we did when acquiring a home for rental was making sure the house was as efficient as we could make it. That could involve programs for housing providers for insulation, windows, doors, efficient furnaces, etc. I have not heard of any program that helps making sure housing providers have a means to make that happen.*

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?**

*That is such a hard questions now. Housing prices are still astronomical. I can't say enough how the mandates and regulations increase housing costs. I would like to see perhaps a discussion regarding a Rent to Own program where the housing provider has the mortgage paid off to 60% or so. It is hard to have those discussions now. It is simply not allowed.*

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 believe education is the best way; that could include more listening sessions from both renters and housing providers. We need to be united in this crisis and not fighting so hard against each other.*