

5. What would your policies do to increase the availability of affordable, accessible and safe housing for Ohioans with disabilities?

During my tenure as Lt. Governor of Ohio, our administration headed initiatives to increase the availability of affordable and safe housing for Ohioans with disabilities, including the creation of the Homestead Exemption for permanently disabled Ohioans to exempt \$25,000 of home value from property taxation. This resulted in an average savings to homeowners of \$400 a year. As U.S. Senator, I will continue to support initiatives that will increase the availability of appropriate housing for people with disabilities in Ohio.

6. What policies do you support to facilitate Ohioans with disabilities to live in their own homes and communities versus in institutions, nursing homes, developmental centers and ICF/MRs?

I believe that it is very important that Ohioans with disabilities have choices in the living arrangements. As Lt. Governor, I supported the Home First provision in Ohio law, which provided over 1,200 residents of nursing facilities immediate access to PASSPORT, Assisted Living, PACE and the Residential State Supplement Program. Additionally, our administration eliminated the 1,800 participant limit for the Assisted Living Waiver in Ohio law.

7. What would you do to eliminate waiting lists for waivers?

I have supported older Ohioans and people with disabilities who prefer to live independently in their homes throughout my career and as Ohio's Lt. Governor. The Strickland/Fisher Administration eliminated the waiting list for the PASSPORT program for FY2010, as well as the Assisted Living and PACE programs at the Ohio Department of Aging, as of the end of March 2010.

8. What steps would you take to improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities in Ohio?

As Lt. Governor and Director of the Ohio Department of Development, I have focused on the development of Ohio's workforce. The Strickland/Fisher Administration established a work group in 2008 to examine additional opportunities to improve employment services for people with disabilities. Additionally, the Medicaid Buy-In program our administration established in April 2008 has allowed 4,600 working Ohioans with disabilities to gain access to health care, even when they work outside the home. As U.S. Senator, I will continue to support efforts to increase the opportunities for employment for Ohioans with disabilities.

Ohio Disability Vote Coalition Candidate Questionnaire 2010
Lt. Governor of Ohio Lee Fisher
Candidate for the United States Senate

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1. Will you include people with disabilities as part of your political team and as advisors on relevant issues?

Yes. The composition of my current political team and my future Senate team does and will reflect all of the people that make up this great state.

2. Do you believe that people with disabilities should be the primary decision makers in their own lives?

Yes

3. Would you support Visitability legislation (single-family, new construction with one no-step entrance, accessible bathroom on first floor level, 32” doorways and aisles maneuverable by a person in a wheelchair)?

As a United States Senator, I would support efforts of Congress, the appropriate housing authorities, the home building community and visitability experts to move toward increased visitability.

4. What would you do to ensure equal access to the voting process by people with disabilities?

I believe the right to vote is fundamental to our democracy, and though we have come a great distance, voting discrimination still exists in America. In the U.S. Senate, I will support efforts to strengthen voter protections for people with disabilities and ensure every vote is counted.

9. How will you ensure that these laws are enforced in Ohio and that students with disabilities are educated in the regular education environment with the regular education curriculum?

The Strickland/Fisher Administration implemented significant education reform, and in fact, we have changed the operating standards for Ohio's schools to require student-centered education for all children to focus on the whole child and meeting individual students' needs. Our administration also implemented a program called Medicaid in the Schools. As part of this program, nearly 300 schools are submitting and receiving Medicaid reimbursement for services delivered to over 26,000 children.

10. What would you do to expand access to affordable transportation for people with disabilities, especially in rural areas?

The Strickland/Fisher Administration directed federal stimulus dollars for rural transportation. This will allow 18 counties and local governments to purchase ADA-accessible mini-vans and full-size vans. As U.S. Senator, I will continue to be supportive of expanding access to transportation that is reliable and affordable for Ohioans with disabilities.