**QUESTION 1: Do you have a clear and transparent process for making decisions on disability issues?**For example, how do you know/learn about disability issues and make decisions on the many policies that impact the one in five of Americans who have a disability? Have you studied the issues? Do you have a disability or a family member with a disability? Have you done meetings with disability leaders or citizens with disabilities? Do you have a disability advisor and/or advisory committee?

**ANSWER 1:**Florida has a significant number of citizens who learn and work with disabilities, and it is my fundamental belief that they should be given opportunities to do so with support, respect and dignity. During my eight years as governor, I worked to create policies and programs so that these citizens were no longer overlooked and that they could achieve greater independence and choice over the services they received.

**QUESTION 2: Do you have a proven record on improving or a plan to improve the lives of PwDs?**

**ANSWER 2:**Before I was governor, citizens with disabilities were handled by a hodgepodge of programs and sub-departments. Very little was coordinated, and there wasn’t accountability. So I supported and signed a law creating the state’s Agency for Persons with Disabilities. This agency has changed the way our citizens are treated and the quality of adult care and help with education, jobs and housing has increased dramatically.

I also pressed for the creation of the McKay Scholarship Program, which provides scholarships for students with disabilities so they can attend an eligible public or private school of their choice. Before this program, students with disabilities had to accept whatever was offered to them by their local public school districts – and, not surprisingly, many of these students and their families were treated poorly. The scholarship program changed that – and each one of these students is getting something that was their right: a quality education.

I helped make some other important changes that were fairly basic, such as increasing the property tax exemption for disabled veterans and eliminating the fee to get a disabled parking permit. But we also did some really transformative things. We invested in a waiver program so people with disabilities could use their Medicaid resources for support programs to stay in their communities, near their families, rather than at costly institutions. This way, the money went for what our disabled citizens wanted, not what they were forced to accept. The waiver program has enjoyed significant public support, from both Republicans and Democrats, and it’s a model for the rest of the nation.

What we achieved through this program wasn’t just better services for those with disabilities. We proved that we get the best outcomes when we give individuals the ability to make decisions for themselves and hold providers accountable for the care they give.

**QUESTION 3: Do you have a plan to enable PwDs to have jobs, careers and to start their own businesses?**

**ANSWER 3:**I have proposed pro-growth policies designed to achieve 4 percent growth, create 19 million new jobs and increase middle class incomes. I know these policies will work because I did it in Florida. We lowered taxes every year I was governor – totaling more than $19 billion. We reduced regulations and cut the state bureaucracy by over 10 percent. These pro-growth policies made Florida number one in small business creation, helped create 1.3 million new jobs and increased middle class incomes by $1,300. We can create similar job and income growth for the nation, including for people with disabilities. My plan replaces our broken tax code, overhauls our regulatory system and ends job-destroying programs like Obamacare. With these policies, we can produce a vibrant economy capable of creating millions of new high-paying jobs every year.

I think the great duty of our country is to make sure that everybody’s God-given talents are fully met—and America’s leaders have a responsibility to use the bully pulpit and federal programs to ensure that the employment opportunities necessary for this realization exist.

When I was governor of the state of Florida, we created a partnership with the Chamber of Commerce around the state. We got sponsors in every city, and we ended up creating a job fair in effect for people with intellectual and physical disabilities; it was extraordinarily successful.

In fact, I would say that Publix, the supermarket chain based in Florida, is probably one of the largest employers of people with disabilities. When employers are able to realize the productivity gains to be had from hiring the disabled—as opposed to viewing it simply as a charitable act—a more inclusive work climate can unfold. That, in turn, will encourage the positive psychological and institutional changes crucial to achieving an America of true equal opportunity.

**QUESTION 4: Do you have a plan/commitment to reduce the stigmas about PwDs that are barriers to employment, independence and equality?**

**ANSWER 4:**To me, one of the greatest needs in our current treatment of those living with disabilities is in the private sector – and it’s up to each of us to look for opportunities to hire, train, retain and promote people with disabilities. Adaptive technologies are making these opportunities more possible, and as more businesses see how much value is created by people with disabilities, the more we will achieve on behalf of all Americans through greater growth, earned success and shared prosperity.

When anybody – regardless of political affiliation or status – disparages people with disabilities, it makes my blood boil. One who truly believes, as I do, that life in all forms is a gift from God would never revert to insulting those who were born with disabilities. Disparaging other people is not a show of strength; it is, however, the clearest demonstration of deep-seeded insecurity and weakness.

**QUESTION 5: Many people who are born with disabilities, especially minorities with learning and mental health differences, are not diagnosed and/or their disability issues go unaddressed. This leads to school dropouts and a “school to prison pipeline.” Do you have a plan to enable students with disabilities to get the services they need to succeed in school and life?**

**ANSWER 5:**It’s time we promote continued progress for Americans living with disabilities. I believe that, as a society, we must work on behalf of those who are most vulnerable and serve those who cannot always help themselves.

In our schools, we need to work to create a safer and more inclusive culture for children with disabilities. Today, these children are subject to bullying, physical restraint and seclusion – often in violation of the law. Every child deserves the right to go to school and to learn without fearing pain or isolation. This is an outcome that every American – especially our school leaders – should take seriously.

The federal government cannot run or fix schools from Washington, but it can make it easier for families, educators, entrepreneurs, districts and states to reform education. As someone with a long record on the issue of education reform, I look forward to addressing these issues directly as president.

My education plan can be found here: <https://jeb2016.com/education-reform/?lang=en>.

**QUESTION 6: Do you have a plan to reform the benefits system (Medicare, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and SSDI) to enable PwDs to work to the best of their capacities?**

**ANSWER 6:**My fundamental belief is that every American has the God-given ability to achieve earned success and rise up the income ladder, as long as there is an environment that gives them the opportunity to do so. The problem is that for too long, a dysfunctional Washington has imposed rules and regulations that create additional barriers for people. Currently, the Social Security Disability Insurance program offers a binary classification system of either total disability—under which an individual is unable to work at all—or no disability. There is really no partial disability.

Too many of our safety net programs are based on the mistaken belief that simply writing bigger checks will increase opportunity and upward mobility. Some of these programs actively discourage working-age people from getting a job, and Obama’s policies have only made matters worse. This administration has not changed these policies, even though we are in the sixth year of a recovery. Workforce participation rates are still far too low, and there are too many people living in poverty and dependent upon government who are not working. Government assistance should be tied to workforce training so that people can access work; further, work should be required where possible, because it is a virtue. It is a benefit that gives life purpose and meaning, and people with disabilities should also have the opportunity to work. Ultimately, we must view work not as a burden but as a chance to rise above current circumstances.

To fix the system, I offered the most dramatic reform agenda of any campaign. Part of that means transforming the welfare system so that the dignity of work is given far greater value.

My Social Security plan can be found here: [https://jeb2016.com/summary-medicare- social-security/?lang=en.](https://jeb2016.com/summary-medicare-social-security/?lang=en)

**QUESTION 7: Do you have a healthcare plan for PwDs?**

**ANSWER 7:**The most responsive and effective care is best delivered locally. Patients, physicians, nurses, therapists and other health care providers live, practice, treat and collaborate in communities of care. Thus, for states to meet the needs of all its citizens, states must have responsibility to make their individual insurance markets more competitive, enhance access to care and enable community-based solutions for low-income and vulnerable Americans, including people with disabilities. Instead of Washington *standardization*, my plan emphasizes transparent outcome *standards*.

Instead of multiple federal funding streams and sets of rules, states would present a plan to receive comprehensive and capped federal allotments. This funding could be used to provide affordable care for individuals with pre-existing conditions, the vulnerable and low-income populations. In return for this streamlined federal funding, states would be responsible to meet transparent metrics.

My health care plan can be viewed here: [https://jeb2016.com/health-care-plan/?lang=en.](https://jeb2016.com/health-care-plan/?lang=en)

**QUESTION 8: According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, fully 32 percent of all inmates in federal prison and 40 percent of prisoners in our jails have disabilities. With 2.2 million people in America’s prisons and jails, many see that system as America’s mental health system. Do you have a plan to address the disability issues of people involved in the criminal justice system so that they will no longer harm others, society or themselves and can participate successfully in community life?**

**ANSWER 8:** Over-criminalization is a real issue that needs to be addressed. Long mandatory minimum prison terms for non-violent crimes leads to over-incarceration, burdening taxpayers and imposing real human costs on individuals, families, and communities, without materially benefiting public safety.

As part of my strategy on drug control, I will broaden access to drug courts, an alternative punishment system to traditional courts. This will ensure that nonviolent drug offenders are screened for risk and then given the option to obtain treatment and recover under close court monitoring and supervision for at least a year. Drug abuse and addiction prevention efforts must start in childhood, with dedicated parents, strong communities and local education. I will also conduct a rigorous evaluation of existing prevention, treatment and recovery programs to ensure that funding supports evidence-based programs and to consistently monitor results. In addition, I will overhaul current efforts across the federal government to reduce duplication of efforts and maximize impact.

I also think we should strive to give people a second chance. I believe in restorative justice – allowing felons the restoration of their civil rights once they have paid their debt to society. There is more that we need to do so that people are not marginalized from society with limits placed on them to live productive lives.

**QUESTION 9: PwDs are twice as likely to be victims of crime as those without disabilities. PwDs are also far more likely to suffer from police violence as their actions can be misunderstood by others. Do you have a plan to address these issues?**

**ANSWER 9:**I am a “bottom-up,” not “top-down” guy, and law enforcement issues are local issues. The state should support local law enforcement with technology, and the federal government should focus on criminal justice issues actually under its jurisdiction instead of attempting to usurp the power of local communities. Still, while I do think we need a humbler Justice Department, when a community is targeted for a disability, that is clearly violation of federal law and should be punished as such. Federal law enforcement agencies must work to tackle systemic challenges but should do so in a targeted, issue- specific way rather than by taking a blanket approach.

**QUESTION 10: Do you support legalizing medical cannabis, which is key for people with Epilepsy and others?**

**ANSWER 10:**My health care plan can be viewed here: [https://jeb2016.com/health-care-plan/?lang=en.](https://jeb2016.com/health-care-plan/?lang=en)

**QUESTION 11: Is your campaign open to PwDs? (For example, are your website and documents accessible for people who are blind and use screen readers? Do your videos have captions for the 37.5 million American adults who are deaf or hard of hearing? Are your events ADA accessible, including parking, entrances and bathrooms? Do you have ASL interpreters, captioning, CART services and materials in alternative formats to print at your events? Do you have a dedicated person on staff to address these issues?)**

**ANSWER 11:**It is important to be open and make sure that every vote counts. Every message is important, and I want to make sure that people with disabilities have a chance to access my message. We have done common-sense things like including captions on web-based campaign ads.

I shared my vision for participation in the accountability system during an interview with a coalition of disability groups, including RespectAbility, Paralyzed Veterans of America and the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities.

I have had the great privilege of learning more deeply about challenges in the disabled community through a great friend of mine, Berthy Aponte de la Rosa. I met her in 1998 while campaigning; after seeing my genuine passion about these issues, she became my teacher and, later on, one of my best friends. I strongly believe that every life is a gift from God and that everybody has the chance to make a contribution to our society; because of this conviction, I am passionate about developing programs that allow us to tap into our full human capacity. And being a student, as it were, to Berthy in this field of learning catalyzed my sensitivity in a way no brief could ever substitute.

Just as I began my governorship in Florida, a federal judge was slated to assume jurisdiction over programs for the developmentally disabled. My first week in office, I was summoned to the federal courtroom, where threats against the programs were being hurled. This gave me an immediate chance to act upon my longstanding beliefs and serve as an advocate for some of the most vulnerable citizens I swore to represent. In working together, Berthy and I were able to transform Florida from one of the worst states for the disabled to a model for other states to emulate.

In addition to my work in Florida, I released a video titled “Empowering Individuals with Disabilities”, which featured Emily Gonzalez-Abreu and her daughter, Angie, who has spina bifida.

**QUESTION 12: Do you have a plan for veterans with disabilities?**

**ANSWER 12:**I recently rolled out my plan for keeping America’s promise to our veterans, something I believe must be a top priority for the next President of the United States. My full plan can be viewed [here.](https://jeb2016.com/honoring-us-veterans/?lang=en)

I believe in serving those who have served us. At the core of America’s military strength are the men and women who volunteer to serve in our Armed Forces. Veterans entered into a sacred covenant with the American people when they volunteered to wear the uniform. They agreed to serve, and we agreed to tend to the wounds and disabilities they incurred in service, help them with their education, and break down barriers to their post-service aspirations. We have no greater asset than our service members and no greater responsibility than to ensure that they are well provided for – both while they are in uniform and throughout their lives.

I have made reforming the Department of Veterans Affairs a top priority and have expressed my deep concern with that agency’s failure to provide timely care to America’s veterans. We trust our military members to protect us, and we should likewise trust them to choose their own doctors.

I also believe in rebuilding U.S. Armed Forces. I oppose the deep cuts to our military that have forced tens of thousands of service members out of uniform and into a broken economy. Veterans know that a strong military is the best means of preserving and protecting peace, and I agree.

While Governor of Florida, I passed laws that provide free undergraduate tuition at state colleges and universities to Florida recipients of the Purple Heart (and combat-related decorations ranked superior in precedence to the Purple Heart) and their children. I also increased property tax exemptions for disabled veterans (from $500 to $5,000) and eliminated the fee to get a disabled parking permit.

**QUESTION 13: Do you have a plan for affordable housing and to reduce homelessness for PwDs?**

**ANSWER 13:** My empowerment agenda for the 21st century will end wasteful programs, give power and money back to the states and empower recipients by focusing on work and My plan will create a safety net that protects hardworking Americans when they fall but no longer traps families in perpetual dependence. A safety net where work pays more than welfare, and power does not rest with Washington, D.C.

I will replace the current major means-tested welfare programs, including Section 8 and public housing programs, with Right to Rise grants to states. States will have the opportunity to develop programs and benefits that best meet the needs of their citizens. Additional flexibility will also allow states to better target assistance. Under my plan, states will partner with local government and community organizations to tailor programs that best meet the needs of their citizens, including people with disabilities.

**QUESTION 14: Do you have a plan to address the lack of transportation options for PwDs, including in places like rural Iowa?**

**ANSWER 14:**I have laid out ideas for things we need to do to [keep the promise of the Americans with Disabilities Act alive.](http://journal.ijreview.com/2015/07/245439-weekend-25th-anniversary-ada-lets-keep-empowering-individuals-disabilities/)We’ve seen 25 years of progress, but we can’t ignore all the things that still have to be done. I intend to do everything I can to continue empowering individuals with disabilities.

**QUESTION 15: Do you have a plan to advance innovations (i.e., assistive technologies, devices) that can help PwDs become more independent and successful?**

**ANSWER 15:** See response to question 4.

**QUESTION 16: In your foreign policy/national security plan, do you plan to continue America’s tradition of standing up for the rights of oppressed people, including PwDs, around the world?**

**ANSWER 16:**We are the leader of the free world. But for the United States, who will defend Christians, Iranian dissidents, religious minorities, and other persecuted peoples in the Middle East and across the world? The fate of millions, the security of our own people, and the cause of human freedom itself all depend on the decisions we make in these coming years. Bad things – and sometimes very bad things—happen when America steps away from hard challenges. It is time for American leadership again, and that leadership requires a change in course.

**Original Version**

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Too many of our safety net programs are based on the mistaken belief that simply writing bigger checks will increase opportunity and upward mobility. Some of these programs actively discourage working-age people from getting a job, and Obama’s policies have only made matters worse.

To fix it, I offered the most dramatic reform agenda of any campaign.  Part of that means transforming the welfare system so that the dignity of work is given far greater value.

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**ANSWER 9:**NO ANSWER GIVEN BUT [HE ADDRESSED THIS QUESTION](https://youtu.be/YhwTCwdZxG4?list=PL7lfR31A58RZZ7RVh3YIkDr6Hdf8HJZt5) IN GRINNELL IOWA ON JANUARY 12, 2016.

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I also believe in rebuilding U.S. Armed Forces. I oppose the deep cuts to our military that have forced tens of thousands of service members out of uniform and into a broken economy. Veterans know that a strong military is the best means of preserving and protecting peace, and I agree.

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