**1. Learning during the COVID-19 pandemic has led to more issues and concerns for all students and their families, but this is especially true for students with disabilities. Additionally, the gap in graduation and drop-out rates between students with and without disabilities continues to undermine their futures. For example, in the class of 2018, only 66 percent of Black students with disabilities, 71 percent of Hispanic students with disabilities, 77 percent of white students with disabilities, and 79 percent of AsianAmerican students with disabilities completed high school. Furthermore, just seven percent of students born with a disability graduate from college. What is your plan for ensuring that all students with disabilities receive a quality and appropriate education to acquire the critical and marketable skills necessary to compete in a job-driven economy?**

Hickenlooper will work to close the achievement gap supporting the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), expanding literacy opportunities, promoting STEM learning, funding Head Start and full-day kindergarten, and so much more. As senator, Hickenlooper will work to ensure every student can benefit from the foundation for future success that education provides.

**2. In the economic expansion prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the national employment rate for working-age people with disabilities in America was 37.6 percent compared to 77.8 percent of people without disabilities. Further, there continues to be significant disparities in employment outcomes within the disability community, which varies from state to state. There are significant racial disparities in disability employment outcomes. 38.9 percent of working-age white people with disabilities have jobs compared to only 29.7 percent of working-age Black people with disabilities had jobs, 39.4 percent of working-age Hispanics with disabilities and 43.2 percent of working-age Asian-Americans with disabilities. The pandemic has ravaged the disability community and more than 1 million workers with disabilities have lost their jobs. If elected, what will you do to ensure that the government is removing barriers and promoting high quality, inclusive services built on evidence-based policies, practices and procedures leading to competitive, meaningful careers, which includes promoting entrepreneurial opportunities?**

Hickenlooper has worked to advance employment opportunities for everyone. As Governor, Hickenlooper signed legislation committing state resources to support a collaborative multi-agency approach to increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. As Senator, Hickenlooper will continue this work and fight to close employment gaps by providing diverse cohorts of students the on-the-job training they need to succeed in the economy of the future.

**3. The disability community fundamentally believes in the need to ensure “Nothing about us, without us” – real inclusion and places at decision making tables – because we know solutions that work and want to be a part of making our communities stronger. What specific measures have you taken to make your campaign accessible for, and inclusive of, people with disabilities, as every issue impacts our lives?**

Hickenlooper is committed to accessibility and inclusiveness in both his physical and virtual campaign.

**4. RespectAbility published Disability in Philanthropy & Nonprofits, based on our study on the levels of disability inclusion in the social sector across the country. This largescale study found significant data showing that nationwide, organizations overall want to be inclusive, but are unintentionally excluding the one-in-five people with disabilities. What will you do to promote policies and practices designed to support full community engagement, access and inclusion of people with disabilities?**

Hickenlooper has worked to improve the lives of people with disabilities in Colorado. As Governor, Hickenlooper signed legislation to provide disability training to employers, remove and replace derogatory terms in Colorado law, and added LGBTQ people and people with disabilities to the state’s existing hate-crime laws. In the Senate, Hickenlooper will expand on his work in Colorado at the national level and will work with RespectAbility and other advocates to implement policies that promote full community engagement, access and inclusion of people with disabilities.

**5. Elected officials have multiple opportunities to demonstrate a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion, full community participation and celebrating the contributions and accomplishments of people with disabilities through press releases, speeches, celebratory events including National Disability Employment Awareness Month. There are significant stigmas that create attitudinal barriers that limit options and perpetuates low expectations for people with disabilities. What measures will you take to combat these stigmas and promote opportunities for people with disabilities?**

Hickenlooper has advocated for people with disabilities throughout his career. As Governor, Hickenlooper declared October Disability Employment Awareness Month for the state of Colorado to promote the hiring of people with disabilities. In the Senate, Hickenlooper will continue to demonstrate his strong commitment to diversity and inclusion.

**6. In our nation’s public schools, there are 6.3 million students with disabilities. The changing demographics of America are reflected in these students, with 11.4 percent of students with disabilities nationwide, almost 720,000, also identified as English-language learners. Their accommodation needs are compounded by the fact that many come from households that do not speak English at home, adding an extra challenge for parental interaction. It can also be harder to diagnose disabilities in children when they are English language learners. Additionally, immigration issues and fears over the public charge rule impact students with disabilities, their families and the wider workforce. What policies would you advance to enable students and their families who are English language learners with disabilities to succeed in school and employment?**

As Senator, Hickenlooper would be strongly committed to ensuring the collaboration across disciplines and building of partnerships with families to support the diverse learning styles of English language learners with disabilities; and to ensuring proper identification and service delivery under the IDEA for ELL students who may have a disability.

**7. Housing, criminal justice, climate issues, transportation and every other area have significant impacts on people with disabilities. What additional policies and priorities, other than those already discussed above, do you plan to focus on to improve the lives of people with disabilities?**

Among Hickenlooper’s additional policies and priorities to improve the lives of people with disabilities would be a focus on solutions to the direct support workforce crisis. Hickenlooper recognizes this is critical to ensuring that people with disabilities can live, work and contribute to their communities. He would seek to continue using community colleges and job centers to develop and invest in career training and credentialing for Direct Support Professionals.