

## Lorna Phillipson – Candidate for Congress NJ4

1. What can you cite from your previous professional, personal or legislative experience that highlights how you would support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) if elected to office in November? If you do not have previous experience with the population we represent, what steps will you take in the future to support people with I/DD?

Unfortunately, I have not had the opportunity to work with intellectually or developmentally disabled people in business. The career path in my area of banking, finance, tech, and strategy are unlikely vocations. That said, I can think of several office jobs which would be fulfilling for those with I/DD. It is important to encourage companies to hire people with these disabilities. I have worked alongside people with ADD/ADHD and functional autistic people work with me on my campaign. They require a bit more instruction and more follow-through, but their dedication and enthusiasm prove that they are a wonderful addition to the team. I believe that people with I/DD should have every opportunity to find an interesting and successful career path. We can make that happen with proper education and guidance for skills needed to enter the workforce. For more serious disabilities, integration into a welcoming community is essential. Educating people about disabilities and acceptance for individual differences will be helpful. I have attended movie performances where they adjust for sensory stimulation. I understood why this was offered to I/DD people, but too many people were unaware of the reason why the lights were on and sound was lower, plus a less quiet audience. Their intolerance of the autistic and other viewers was rude and so disappointing.

2. Individuals with I/DD and their families depend on Direct Support Professionals (DSP) who deliver one-on-one services. However, while these staff members assist with critical tasks of daily living and are integral to successful community integration for those we represent, the starting salary for a DSP is only \$10.50 an hour. This low wage has created a significant hiring and retention crisis and diminished the size of this important workforce. If elected in November, what will you do to address wages for Direct Support Professionals?

I believe that everyone in the US should be paid a Living Wage. In NJ, that is over \$20/hr. Considering the range of tasks and skills required, the salary paid to caregivers and DSPs is absolutely too low. I will “fight for \$15” nationwide and press on each state to move their minimum wage to a Living Wage. Greater consideration for the skills, longevity in the career, and compassionate caring should create a higher wage above a living wage.

3. Medicaid and Social Security serve as the lifeline for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. These federal programs provide the necessary funding and support to keep people with I/DD living integrated lives the community. If elected or re-elected in November, what will you do protect Medicaid and Social Security programs from any potential cuts?

We need to strengthen and expand Medicaid and Social Security, especially for the most vulnerable among us. I am so disappointed that our Congress has spent more time and money on corporations than on the needs of humans in America. I agree that Integrated Living provides the best world for most people with I/DD. I do not want to see any cuts to these programs or funding. We should be more supportive, not less.

My campaign website is [www.phillipsonforcongress.com](http://www.phillipsonforcongress.com)

Also on Facebook: Lorna Phillipson for Congress and personal page - Lorna Phillipson