Candidate Name (as it appears on the ballot): Tony Teora
Office Seeking: California State Assembly District
District (Senate and Assembly): 71
Hometown: Julian, CA

Candidate Campaign Website and Contact Information (optional):
www.tonyteora.org

1. In which ways have you supported the disability community in the past, and how do you plan to continue your support in the future?

Answer: I have never been elected to public office but I have assisted with a local charity in San Diego to help the homeless, many of which have disabilities. (Aware Recycling http://www.awarerecycling.com/). I’ve spent countless hours and money and did a short stint as a board of director of this non-profit that helps folks in the local community. Unfortunately, the charity is out of funds and has temporarily closed the recycling center that helped the homeless.

2. Do you support the right of a person with a disability to live independently in the community? If so, what would your approach be to ensure people can transition from nursing homes to living on their own?

Answer: I believe in individual freedom and liberty. These aren't just words to me, they are healthy lifestyles. I vehemently support the right of a disabled person to live independently in a community as long as they are not living in such a way that would harm others. We should enact laws using proven best practices to help transition people from nursing homes to living on their own for those who choose that lifestyle. We should not imprison our parents and people in society that are capable of living free who want to live on their own. There are technologies available to make this easier. We should
encourage certain businesses with incentives to assist in this transition. Things like In Home Supportive Services would seem like good ideas to help with the transition.

3. How will you support students with disabilities to receive an equitable, quality education if you are elected?

Answer: Each disability may require different levels or kinds of support. I would sit down with professionals in the area of disabilities and listen to their suggestions. I am not a disability expert so I would need to learn from experts and would embrace such forums if elected. As a creative person, I would think that everyone should have equal access to classrooms, possibly special desks, ramps, translation materials, added teacher assistants with special training, etc. But this is all depends on the disability. Once again, I would listen to experts and work on what give the most impact quickly and make fiscal sense too.

4. How would you propose to build the capacity of the In Home Supportive Services program to sustain opportunities for seniors and people with disabilities to live independently in their communities.

Answer: I think having support services for the disabled is a key strategy in allowing folks independent living with a required support system. I would look at what is working and support it. As for areas that are not effective, I would work to evaluate them, change them or not support them. We need to work smart with limited state funds and I think we can come to a compromise that is truly a win-win. This is important to our disabled brothers and sisters.

5. What would you do to increase opportunities for people with disabilities to have access to affordable and accessible housing?
Answer: We have a major issue in my district and in California for affordable anything, and that includes housing. The federal government is spending our money on special interests, and this is putting stress on everyone’s pocket book. I would work to find smart solutions for affordable housing for everyone, including the disabled. I would work on tax incentives, legislation to change building codes to make it more disabled friendly. This will be a major challenge but is required.

6. What will you do to ensure that people with disabilities are part of the planning and oversight systems for upgrading public transportation systems in California?

Answer: I would consider legislation to add disabled groups onto the oversight committees if they are not already part of these types of reviews. I would look at legislation to ensure that the disabled get a vote on public transportation system upgrades.

7. What would you do to increase job training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities?

Answer: I would encourage job skills training for everyone in California. People need to upgrade their skills to compete. The job market changes for everyone, including the disabled. I would support legislation to help re-train Californians for new jobs and would of course include clauses for the disabled. I am a big supporter of education and have received the support of the California Faculty Association.

8. What would you do to protect the rights of people with disabilities to have access to elections and cast an independent and private vote?
Answer: I would support online voting from home. I would also support home voting with a special sealed courier so that mail in votes could be picked up from home by special couriers or USPS/FedEx. I am open to smart suggestions.

9. What will you do to ensure that upcoming changes in healthcare delivery for people with disabilities will maintain the integrity and consistency of care on which they have relied?

Answer: We need to trust but verify. We need checks and balances to ensure consistency and integrity is maintained. I would encourage a state disabled scorecard that tracks support along with consistency. This will not be easy and I would look forward to suggestions from organizations like the CFILC.

10. In your view, do you think CA is spending too much, too little or just the right amount of its resources to support people with disabilities? Please explain.

Answer: I really don’t know. I have not investigated this issue in detail. Although I am a fiscal conservative, that does not mean I would not increase funds for areas that need increasing. I like effective, efficient programs but that seems almost impossible with state and federal programs. I would work to try and support what works, and fix what needs help, and if that means we increase funds, I would support an increase. I am not a ‘never increase anything’ Republican. I am a moderate but do believe in spending our hard earned tax dollars wisely.

Thanks,
Sincerely
Tony Teora
www.tonyteora.org.