

DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER - NH

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Disability Unscripted 2020: Samuel Habib Interviews Steve Negron, Republican candidate for Congressional District 2

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Samuel Habib: Hi Mr. Negron, thank you for taking some time for this interview.

Steve Negron: You're welcome Samuel, thank you for the invite.

SH: I'm Samuel Habib, I am 20 years old and I live in Concord. I'd like to ask you about six issues that are important to people in the disability community, the budget, healthcare, special education, employment, housing, and voting.

SN: Okay.

SH: Given projected shortfalls of state revenues, many states may be forced to make cuts to programs that support the health, safety, and independence of People with disabilities. What kind of solutions would you propose to ensure that People with disabilities are not disproportionately impacted by these budgetary deficits?

SN: Well, the first thing Samuel I would do is I would work closely with the governor and his organizations that deal with individuals with disabilities. One of the things I think that I bring to the table is having been in the state legislature, I have an opportunity to work with those folks that would then be able to give us and work with people like yourself, understanding exactly what the issues are and how I can help out in Washington. I think part of the reason that some things don't happen is because there's a lack of communication. I would be an open door to be able to talk governor and his organizations that deal with the situation and figure out what it is that I could do to help and get the information back or get funding back. But I would be an absolute proponent of being able to help the governor and his agencies to provide those kinds of necessary resources.

SH: COVID-19 has threatened to overwhelm the resources of medical providers to a point where doctors may be forced to choose which patients receive treatment and which do not. No one

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wants to limit medical care for COVID-19 patients, but plans need to be developed in case rationing becomes necessary. Currently, an advisory committee is developing guidance for hospitals. What would you want to see included in this guidance?

SN: Sure, Well certainly what I would like to see is get us back to a point that we were at prior to COVID-19 and just from a business perspective, is getting the economy going so we can start getting back to somewhat normal. I think everything is important especially these kinds of recommendations coming out of this study committee as to how we're able to manage it. It's a two point Samuel, it's gonna be a balancing act. I believe that everybody's gonna wanna be able to have an opportunity to have a say, to be able to get some of those scarce resources that are out there. But to me and I talked is I was talking to the New Hampshire Police Association yesterday, and it's about listening, it's about understanding what those things are. I would take that information and then figure out how I can work with you and the agencies to figure out how best I can support going forward.

SH: I have been included in regular classes since elementary school, and that helped prepare me for college. What will you do to help kids with disabilities be included in regular education and college?

SN: Well absolutely, well first of all, at the state level we have somebody, Mr. Frank Edelblut, who I think is a phenomenal individual that setting up our educational efforts here in the state. And again I have and I know individuals like yourselves that have been able to be productive because they've had the same opportunities and the education both at the state level and going on to do the college level. I believe that there are opportunities out there and funding that I would fight for to bring back to our state to make sure that you and everybody else in your situation has the same opportunities that everybody else has, 'cause I think that you can by evidence of this meeting here be productive and I think I do everything to make sure that those opportunities were there.

SH: Do you think that the ADA and IDEA are being properly enforced in New Hampshire and nationally? And if not, what will you do to make sure that these laws are actually followed and enforced?

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SN: Well the first thing is to have knowledge of sometimes where it's not being enforced and the American Disabilities Act, certainly how is that being applied here in our state. Again, once again, working with governor, if there are some things that aren't being done, that's a state issue, but if there are opportunities out there that we can modify laws that have come out of Congress to be able to have a better way of implementing the ADA or things that are short and not being done accordingly, that I would bring that information back and work with the governor and make sure that we're able to apply the ADA laws always intended to be applied. The second one, I gotta be honest with you Samuel, I haven't heard of, but if it is legislation that's out there, my approach would be the same way. It was there and intended to be helpful, not to be a hindrance. And if there are some things that aren't being done that I certainly would be a proponent of making sure we fix it.

SH: One in five Americans, including 19% of likely voters experience a disability. What will you do to help more people with disabilities get jobs?

SN: Well sure, certainly there are things that I think that we should look at in a broader perspective. I think a lot of people unfortunately are afraid of hiring people with disabilities because of a lack of knowledge of what they actually bring to the table. I would look at those industries that would be able to help People With Disabilities. I would look at legislation or support legislation that gives industries and companies, an ability or a benefit if they do hire folks with disabilities. I think that's something that they can absolutely be done. I don't know if there's anything that's out there right now that incentivizes companies or businesses to do that. But I would look at doing something that incentivized so that you and everybody else that's out there that has disabilities have a right to be able to get a great job, make a good living, become a self-sufficient as possible. But to be able to do that, we have to understand what the landscape is that's before us. And there are some ways that we can then make sure that those barriers to entry are reduced or broken or removed altogether. Then I'd certainly be in favor of that kind of legislation.

SH: What efforts are you making to reach out and employ people with disabilities in your campaign and your staff?

SN: Sure, So we reach out and we go out to a bunch of colleges and that's primarily who we reached out to, to have the kind of staff that we have. Nobody yet has volunteered for us. We

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make it open to all, to help on the campaign. Nobody yet with a disability has approached us, but I certainly am the one that they have an ability to provide help in this campaign, regardless of your personal situation. My campaign is an open-door campaign and we would certainly bring those people on board, but to date Samuel, nobody with a disability has asked to come on board.

SH: What steps would you take to increase the availability of accessible housing for people with disabilities?

SN: Well, clearly, I would actually work with those builders that I know even within a state of New Hampshire, there's the same issue we had with veterans housing. We can take the same approach and look at how we could put up really quick modular homes, good energy, efficient homes that comply with ADA that allow people to be more self-sufficient. I would look at is there federal money that's out there that allows and helps builders to do that. We have to be a concerted effort, joint effort with the disability groups and exactly where in the state we could put those, where's the demand. I believe that there's are an opportunity to have a target that will do that kind of stuff. And I know personally some builders that would be absolutely competent to try and help and build some of those facilities so that they can be utilized with folks with disabilities.

SH: If accessible voting equipment was purchased with federal funding, it cannot be used in local or municipal elections. What steps would you take so that accessible voting equipment is available in every New Hampshire election, including local elections?

SN: Sure, that's news to me, I did not know that this kind of equipment can only be used at the federal level. I would look at certainly how do we modify that so that it use at the state and local level, um lacking that, are there grants or some sort of block grant money that we could get for the state to be able to buy the same type of equipment. If we can't change the law to allow that to be used at the state local level. And I've worked with Governor Sununu and his staff to figure out if there was a way to be able to help the state get some resources, to provide those same type of equipment so that people could vote at the state and local level.

SH: Those are all the questions I have for you. Thank you so much for taking time to do this interview.

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SN: Thank you very much, Samuel. It's been a pleasure and best of luck and don't forget to vote on November 3rd.

SH: Thanks