Personal values, beliefs, and ideals are largely developed from personal experiences and social environment. I grew up in a middle-class family, and both of my parents strongly encouraged the value of hard work and education. They were both raised in very poor families and worked hard to get to where they are. Thus, I do believe strongly in having strong work ethics and working hard to achieve what you need/want. It is my personal belief that everyone should be able to participate in society in some way (ie. working) for the benefit of the community and for the individuals themselves. I do believe there are certain issues that make it harder for individuals to participate in society. Some of these issues are mental health issues, substance abuse issues, or developmental issues.

I have experienced depression firsthand, and I know how debilitating it can be. But I also know that while depression drives individuals to isolation, that isolation also drives them into deeper depression. My personal struggles with mental health have sparked my interest in helping others with mental health issues. I interned at a developmental center, which solidified even more in my mind the needs of this vulnerable group of people. It really inspired me that the individuals at the developmental center really wanted to participate in society and worked hard to learn and practice their individualized learning plans to be able to function in society. I have also worked at a pain management office for 3 years, and I have seen the effects of substance abuse on multiple patients. One of the leading factors and commonalities in most of our patients with chronic pain or substance abuse is underlying mental health issues. I believe that addressing mental health would help multiple issues. The policy topics I am mostly interested in are mental health initiatives that work towards allowing individuals with mental health/developmental issues to have more resources in communities.

Because of my personal emphasis on mental health and hard work, I feel a political pull towards more community involvement and less government involvement. I am a Christian, and I believe God calls everyone individually to help those in need. I believe the Bible lays out guidelines to work towards an ideal community, if everyone is willing to participate. I believe that the more the government gets involved, the less personalized it is, and the lower the quality of care is. The world needs more community action to help those in need. I see the government as the regulation of laws, but the community as the ones who are helping the needy.