WIlliam Dehnel: Olympia Indivisible Candidate Profile

Thurston County Legislative District 02 (Position 1): The elected representative for Thurston County Legislative District 02 represents their constituents by voting on proposed laws, shaping the budget, and advocating for local priorities. They work across committees to address issues like education, healthcare, and transportation. They are expected to communicate with and stay connected to the communities they serve during and after legislative sessions.

Background and Qualifications:
William Dehnel already has a seat at the table in Olympia. As Vice President of the ATU Legislative Council of Washington — the statewide coordinating body for transit union locals — he has spent four years navigating state-level labor politics, building relationships with legislators, and fighting for working people long before he decided to run for office.

Since 2016 he has worked at Pierce Transit, starting as a Transit Operator and advancing to Supervisor and Dispatcher. He served as Recording Secretary of ATU Local 758 and is a delegate to both the Pierce County Labor Council and the Washington State Labor Council.

At the bargaining table he has represented coworkers who needed someone who wouldn't flinch — and he didn't. When he walks into the Capitol as a representative of LD-02, he won't be learning the ropes. He'll be picking up where he left off.

Campaign Viability, Funding, and Endorsements:
- Funding: $1,345.02
- Spending: $1,,000.00

Campaign Funding Sources as of 5/06/26
Contribution Category Contributed Value

Individual	850.02
Other	395.00
Self	100.00
Business	

Endorsements: Washington State Labor Council

Activities and statements on key OI values:
Education: Closing Washington's $1 billion special education funding gap is Dehnel’s central commitment. Currently this gap is backfilled by local levies that shift the state's constitutional obligation onto families.

He wants a full overhaul of the school funding formula, which hasn't kept pace with actual costs and hits small rural districts hardest.

Other specific commitments: competitive teacher pay, fully funded substitute costs, restored childcare subsidies cut in 2026, expanded Career and Technical Education programs, mental

health counselors in every school building, and closing the broadband gap so rural students can do schoolwork online.

Taxes: Dehnel fully supports the millionaires tax — a 9.9% levy on income above $1 million which was signed into law this year — and pledges to defend it against legal and ballot challenges.

He wants to expand the Working Families Tax Credit, reduce the B&O tax burden on small businesses that get taxed on gross revenue regardless of profit, and expand property tax exemptions for seniors and veterans being priced out of homes they've owned for decades.

Healthcare: Dehnel frames LD-02's healthcare crisis as a geography problem first, cost second. His specific proposals include expanded state investment in rural health clinics and Community Health Centers, increased funding and pay for rural EMS and first responders to address dangerously long ambulance response times, and protecting and expanding telehealth programs for mental health crisis response. He says these are already working in areas without in-person services.

He wants to protect Apple Health (Medicaid) from any cuts, lower prescription drug costs through state negotiating power. He also calls for better wages and working conditions for nurses and home health aides, framing it as a patient safety issue, not just a labor one.

LGBTQ+ Rights: Dehnel co-founded the Transit Togetherness Pride Caucus within Local 758, making the case that fighting for workers means fighting for all workers, no exceptions

He is against ballot initiatives IL26-638 (requiring all females participating in school sports to get medical sex verifications) and IL26-001 (repealing codified rights for parents of public school children and stripping anti harassment protections).

Dehnel pledges to protect gender-affirming care under state law, defend workplace and housing anti-discrimination protections, fund rural LGBTQ+ youth mental health resources, and oppose any state collaboration with federal anti-LGBTQ+ efforts.

Infrastructure:
Dehnel wants LD-02 to have its fair share of the $1.5 billion statewide transportation maintenance budget and specifically calls out improvements along Yelm's 2nd Street and the Yelm Ave & SR 507 corridor as already-identified projects ready to move.

On broadband, he points to existing fiber work connecting 3,500 homes along the 702 and 7 highway corridors as a model to extend district-wide. He also supports sustained transit funding, flood resilience investment following the 2025 regional flooding, and positioning the district for future commuter or light rail expansion.

Website: https://electwilliamdehnel.org/