

Jamie Keenan-deVargas: Olympia Indivisible Candidate Questionnaire

LD22 State Representative

I have proposed/explicitly identified that I will champion **15** pieces of legislation in this questionnaire, all of which are viable and all of which I am committed to. Please pay particular attention to question 1, question 5, and question 7, which provide the foundations on which many of my other answers are built. I have provided sources for claims where I thought they were relevant. I did not know what the expected length for my answers was, so I simply answered them to an “adequate” degree according to my own standards: standards I expect all elected representatives to be able to meet.

- 1. Please describe the qualifications, including education, elected offices, and life experiences and accomplishments that make you the best candidate for the office of LD22 Representative. And, for the incumbent: What have been your greatest accomplishments since taking office as our LD22 representative?*

I am a horticultural retail worker and renter in Olympia. It is *precisely* my non-establishment identity that qualifies me to fight for Legislative District 22. Unlike my opponent, who is a commercial landlord and lives in a \$1.5million dollar estate, I can identify with and relate to the overwhelming majority of the LD22 constituency: I am of the laboring class. I do not own property, and I am not likely to own a lien-free home in my own community in my lifetime due to corporate landlords and private equity firms consolidating and artificially inflating the value of real estate and suppressing those who fight for the financial freedom of laborers. My generation has been handed a world where anti-labor, anti-minority rhetoric (such as that of the “Red Scare”), cronyism, Reaganism, and the landmark Citizens United decision have created an environment where corporate greed and the influence of reactionary politics are destroying the planet and destroying our communities, and I will fight against these forces until we win or I die.

I exclusively travel by public transit, including a 2.5 – 5 hour commute multiple times a week up I-5 using Intercity/Sound Transit systems, a lived experience that cannot be bought or learned in a corporate boardroom or legislative committee. When the legislature debates

transit funding, pedestrian infrastructure, the severe lack of regional rail, the health and safety of cyclists, and the Vision Zero initiative that we are slowly slipping away from, I am not discussing them in the abstract. They are not just budgetary items to me, they are the literal material conditions of *my* survival (and of the survival of hundreds of thousands of Washingtonian laborers). The state legislature in Washington suffers immensely from their lack of working-class representation. This lack of representation has resulted in insane policy blind spots regarding labor rights and public infrastructure, which I will correct effectively, efficiently, and swiftly (see Carnes and Lupu, 2015).

I have been organizing climate marches since I was 14 years old, and where my opponent is exclusively trained in Veterinary Science, my education at the University of Washington's School of Urban Studies has been entirely dedicated to solution-oriented societal analysis and interstitial problem-solving. I am formally trained in fixing issues in ways that are communicative, engage the communities they benefit, and are self-sufficient/sustainable. For more information on my advocacy experience, see question 3. My campaign is volunteer-operated, populist, and we are fighting to make Washington livable.

Carnes, Nicholas, and Noam Lupu. "Working-Class Officeholding in the OECD." In *Unequal Democracies: Public Policy, Responsiveness, and Redistribution in an Era of Rising Economic Inequality*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.

2. *What are your positions on the two initiatives, IL26-001 Parental Rights and IL26-638 Trans Athletes, on the ballot in November and explain?*

Both the IL26-001 Parental Rights and the IL26-638 Trans Athletes initiatives are morally corrupt and reprehensible measures authored by malicious reactionaries. The former aims to repeal HB1296, a bill which protects the privacy of students aged 13 and older who seek mental health and medical care without parental permission. Repealing this bill would revert us to the standard passed via I-2081, which explicitly isolates and further marginalizes kids who may reside in already abusive or non-affirming households. The latter is even more specific in its targeting, as it isolates transgender girls and demands genital exams and testosterone tests before they can be allowed to participate in K-12 athletics. It's a violation of privacy, and a

violation of bodily autonomy. Legislating the persecution of minorities *into* law is disgusting, and I would vote against both initiatives.

3. *What is your position on the current activities by ICE and CBP in Washington?*

I have founded two organizations dedicated to the protection of immigrant populations in Washington: The *Immigrant Defense Coalition* in Tacoma, which is establishing and building Rapid-Response Networks, particularly for students who feel unsafe in the face of campus administrations that refuse to condemn or in any way resist ICE, and *Resist Overreach* here in Olympia, which aims to pass viable local-level legislation that neutralizes ICE's ability to operate. I abhor the policies and practices of ICE and CBP, and would like to see both 1) the incarceration of immigration crimes completely abolished, and 2) those responsible for ICE's civil and criminal infractions against the populace (including ICE agents themselves, where relevant) punished. ICE can absolutely be legislated out of the lives of Washingtonians, though there are very few mechanisms by which to do so without violating the supremacy clause of the U.S. constitution. That doesn't mean it's impossible, though. Go to legislateice.carrd.co for the project charter of Resist Overreach, which contains within it concrete examples of viable anti-ICE legislation, written by myself. Sanctuary cities are completely inadequate. We MUST do more at a legislative level to combat ICE and CBP, and I have already done the work of documenting the solutions that would work.

[U.S. Constitution, art. 6, cl. 2.](#)

4. *What programs do you support to help people experiencing homelessness and to address root causes of homelessness?*

Homelessness and the unaffordable housing crisis is largely the result of housing being seen as a speculative asset rather than a human right; both crises are entirely manufactured by those who aim to profit off of them, such as *Washington Association of Realtors (RPAC)* and *MHCW*, both of whom just happen to contribute the maximum allowable amount to my opponent. Washington's reliance on Low-Income Housing Tax Credits has entirely failed to produce permanently affordable housing to low-income households. A state-operated social housing

development entity is THE solution, ideally modeled after myriad successful social housing systems nationally and internationally wherein the market-rate units built within the same development as the affordable units are used to subsidize the costs inherent to affordable housing. I would expand upon these structures by converting their ownership to a Community Land Trust (CLT) model for perpetual stability (a recently tested tried-and-true solution, as shown by Grounded Solutions Network in 2025).

We must also implement and pre-empt **Housing First** policies state-wide. It is an evidence-based fact that providing people with immediate stable housing (without idiotic sobriety or employment prerequisites) is the only way we will solve chronic homelessness. Housing First homeless policies are also astronomically less cost-burdening than the lack thereof: Police, medical, and other infrastructural expenditures on unhoused individuals are drastically reduced when those individuals are simply given a place to live; it is far CHEAPER just to house them. “Treatment First” models are literally worse than useless and exacerbate learned helplessness when they inevitably fail. Supporters of the “treatment first” model are 1) usually conservative think tanks, but more importantly 2) usually fall back on the model because Housing First hasn’t actually produced good results in some regions: As always, the topic of societal issues is multi-faceted. The reason Housing First has “failed” in some places is because homelessness is a symptom of a greater housing crisis, which we are all living in, and which can only be corrected via the removal of corporate parasitism and capital-recirculation via taxes on hoarded wealth. On that topic, regarding the expanded state-operated social housing development, I would fight for a Real Estate Excise Tax targeting a select few parasitic housing practices such as short-term vacation rentals. I would also fight for an expansion to the Right to Counsel program, which has produced drastically diminished eviction rates and a reduction in homelessness rates.

Grounded Solutions Network. "2025 Housing Conference: Policy. Practice. Power." Washington D.C., May 27-29, 2025.

5. *Washington has one of the most regressive state and local tax systems in the country. How should this be addressed? What is your position on the recently enacted*

“Millionaires Tax?” What is your response to criticism that this is just the beginning, that the income threshold will be reduced in the future?

The platform on which I am running is heavily reliant on tax restructuring. There can be no affordable single-payer healthcare provider and single-payer childcare provider if the single payer in question (Washington State) is funded by the poor rather than the rich. Sales tax is highly regressive, and though I agree that we have made progress, I would argue that progress has been pitiful thus far. The new “Millionaires Tax” is, in my opinion, a performative bill, as it is incredibly likely to die in court before its implementation in 2028. It does not have the same grounds on which to stand as its older cousin, the 2021 Capital Gains Tax bill. I would not only support but personally champion many tax initiatives, including a 2% Financial Intangibles Tax on asset portfolios exceeding \$100 million, which would be framed as an excise tax on the “franchise privilege” of insane wealth accumulation within the state borders (a legal defense similarly reliant on *Quinn v. State (2023)* which the aforementioned 2021 bill relied on). I would eventually champion a Land Value Tax and a Graduated Aggregate Property Surcharge, though neither are as immediately viable as the Intangibles Tax - they’d likely require a constitutional amendment. And to the argument that the Millionaires Tax is “just the beginning,” I would educate that the ultimate goal of this tax is to prevent the massive destructive potential (which is currently being realized!) that surplus wealth has on democratic societies. The existence of ultra-millionaires is an affront to the very concept of freedom and democracy: surplus wealth *must*, for the survival of the nation, be reduced and re-used to meet currently unmet societal needs. To that end, there is no way that the tax would ever infringe on the lives of those who do not qualify as surplus wealth-holders. Doing so would defeat the very purpose of the tax. Regardless, a millionaires tax in the form of income is a highly ineffective solution to wealth hoarding: Elon Musk is rather famously salaried at \$0 (zero dollars) per year. Income tax wouldn’t touch him, nor would it really touch Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos, or any ultra-millionaire or billionaire. They simply do not derive their wealth from income. Well-implemented income taxes generally target only the 80th-99th percentile of earners, but they can’t touch that elusive 1% (who own most of everything), because they are simply the wrong mechanism to do so.

Quinn v. State of Washington, 200 Wash.2d 426, 518 P.3d 604 (2023).

6. *Should there be any modifications to the current vote by mail system, including citizenship verification? What is your position on using AI and facial recognition to ensure the safety of election workers and volunteers?*

Washington State's universal vote-by-mail is one of the best-implemented voting systems in the nation. The push to modify our vote-by-mail systems, especially by integrating AI facial recognition, is spearheaded by the corporate establishment and conservative xenophobic organizations which are essentially trying to implement modern poll taxes to disenfranchise the marginalized (people of color, people of low-income, or those without homes). AI surveillance technologies are literally up to 10,000% (ten thousand percent!) more likely to inaccurately identify people of color (especially women), and the deployment of these technologies will inevitably lead to false flags and severe violations of civil liberties. Voting is one of the few freedoms afforded to the working class in the modern day, and the state should strive to perpetually increase access to voting, not take it away.

Despite AI facial data indexing being a terrible solution, election workers and volunteers should still be protected, and to a greater degree than ever before. The proliferation of reactionary and radical viewpoints has caused a degree of harassment, intimidation, and violence towards election moderators perhaps unseen in our lifetimes. To protect these workers and volunteers, we should simply expand physical safety protocols, chain-of-custody protocols that protect against rogue police officers, and increased funding for the legal defense of county auditors. Election workers and voting rights must be protected above all else, as is instrumental to the survival of democracy.

7. *What are your top 3 priorities for the 2027 legislative session?*

My priorities serve to sequentially dismantle the power that corporations and oligarchs abuse to crush the laboring people of Washington. As such, they are to:

1) Eradicate Corporate Money from Washington Politics

The elimination of corporate money from politics in Washington is the prerequisite to all progressive action and progressive legislation in the state. We cannot pass substantive housing

reform, environmental protections, labor rights, or re-circulatory tax policies while the legislators voting on them are financially reliant on the industries they are supposed to regulate, as **my opponent** is. She **has received maximum contributions from Genentech and CVS (pharmaceutical giants); Regence, Premera, and United Health (health insurance giants); DaVita Inc. and WSMA (health service providers); and associations of corporate landlords and private equity under a slew of nonprofit PAC identities.** Many of these are extensions of Fortune 500 companies, or are Fortune 500 companies themselves, as DaVita and United are. The influence of these companies cannot be understated. Myriad studies and pieces of literature (e.g. Gilens and Page, 2014) have shown how financial ties to businesses like this give them oppressive control over the legislature, but for a more concrete example, one could again just look at my opponent, Lisa Parshley: Lisa was the primary sponsor of the “Whole Washington” health plan in the most recent legislative session. She followed in the footsteps of many single-payer healthcare bill sponsors before her in that she also sits on the Committee for Health Care & Wellness and on the Universal Health Care Commission, where single-payer health care bills go to die. Every time they are introduced to the legislature, they are sponsored by the very members who then take them to committee and kill them to prevent an actual vote from occurring. It happens like clockwork, and it’s become not only predictable, but blatant. Every single member of the Health Care and Wellness Committee is supported by between \$3,600 and \$26,400 of corporate health PAC money. The progressive smoke-and-mirrors strategy is as reprehensible as it is effective: some *still* believe Lisa when she claims to have always wanted single-payer health in Washington.

2) Passing Viable Anti-ICE Legislation

See question 3.

3) Passing Uncompromised (and Stringent) Rent-Cap Legislation

See question 4. Also: The recent rent-stabilization bill (HB 1217) is a landlord-protection bill disguised as a piece of progressive legislation. It ensures that landlords can raise rent between 9-10% year over year (9.67% this year), whilst encouraging the demolition of affordable units *and* encouraging anti-tenant behavior to disincentivize long-term tenancy. I will introduce

legislation that caps rent increases based on inflation or at 3%, whichever is lower in a given year, with zero exemptions. Housing is a human right, not a speculative asset. We must make Washington livable for the working class, or see democracy erode, as we have been seeing.

Gilens, Martin, and Benjamin I. Page. "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens." *Perspectives on Politics* 12, no. 3 (2014): 564–81.

Washington State Legislature. House Bill 1217. 69th Legislature, 2025 Regular Session.

8. *Do you believe that women have a right to control their personal healthcare needs, including contraception and abortion?*

Absolutely and unequivocally. *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization (2022)* was a disaster. We cannot leave fundamental human rights (like a woman's right to her own body) to the whims of privatized profit-driven healthcare systems or unstable federal rulings. Part of my platform's single-payer health proposal includes the integration of all reproductive healthcare, abortions, contraception, and gender-affirming care. However, single-payer health plans are not immediately viable (due to the conditions described in question 7). I will immediately propose legislation to heavily subsidize abortion funds and mandate that all private insurers cover these services with zero out-of-pocket costs/deductibles or increases to insurance cost. I will also propose legislation to prosecute all data-brokers, tech companies, or health companies that attempt to share the location or medical records of out-of-state patients that seek reproductive sanctuary in-state. I will *also* propose legislation that guarantees access to free over-the-counter emergency contraception and requires all universities and state-funded institutions to provide free, easily accessible reproductive health care to all students.

Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization, 597 U.S. 215 (2022).

9. *Do you believe that laws should be passed to further regulate sales or ownership of firearms? Please explain your response.*

Indeed, we must pass evidence-based legislation to regulate firearms. Unfortunately, much of the legislation introduced on the matter in this state thus far has been punitive and carceral, which essentially means it's been racist and discriminatory, as all punitive and carceral systems

are (see Alexander, 2010). Single-payer health systems that fund (and in fact, *mandate*) mental health diagnoses would be a far more effective mechanism at reducing gun violence than any constitutionally viable gun ban. That being said, I support bans on any and all weapons that are primarily used to cause non-defensive violence, and I support mandatory waiting periods, Extreme Risk Protection Orders, and comprehensive universal background checks. Again, without a single-payer health system where people feel comfortable (or indeed, *obligated*) to see mental health physicians, background checks and many other legally viable control methods are highly ineffective. If someone had APD but was undiagnosed with no felony record, they would be cleared by a background check. The background check, in that instance, would be useless. This is extremely common for mass shooters, who are often only diagnosed *after* they commit their massacre.

Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press, 2010.

10. What actions, including changes to funding, do you believe Washington State should take to improve public education?

Washington has consistently failed to meet the funding requirements as outlined in the *McCleary (2012)* decision. Schools have thus been forced to rely on local levy lid lifts. Wealthy districts benefit more from this imbalance, which is the thing we wanted to prevent with *McCleary*. We must fully decouple funding from local levies, champion tax increases on the rich to provide funding to schools (and especially to teachers) (see question 5).

I support a total moratorium on the expansion of charter schools and voucher programs, which siphon tax dollars into private institutions which refuse to serve special needs students, ESL students, and marginalized youth (see Network for Public Education, 2025).

Furthermore, I will fight to pass budgets that de-emphasize or remove outside vendor contracts from educational institutions and prioritize the hiring of fully unionized social workers, psychologists, and nurses in every school. I will also propose to remove all SROs from schools and redirect funds to restorative justice programs and mental health interventions that keep

children safe and do not funnel them into the infamous school-to-prison pipeline (which ends the lives of more youth than school shootings do, both in socioeconomic death and in literal metrics of suicide).

McCleary v. State of Washington, 173 Wash.2d 477, 269 P.3d 227 (2012).

Network for Public Education. *Public Schooling in America: Measuring Each State's Commitment to Democratically Governed Schools*. 2025.

11. How will you balance environmental protection with economic growth and affordability?

What can Washington do, besides litigation, to address the Trump administration's environmental and public health policies?

The idea that saving the planet is inherently bad for the economy is a lie propagated by fossil fuel companies and is addressed extensively in most 100-level economics, politics, urban studies, environmental studies, sustainable development, business, sociology, and even English and history classes in upper education. Climate action has the potential to be the single greatest engine for laboring-class prosperity in our lifetimes. However, the premise of such a claim can only be valid in a world where the cost of transitioning is borne by those with money, not by the poor. Carbon taxes and utility rate hikes penalize working families for existing and staying warm in the winter, which is not only regressive, but cruel. We must expand transit (see question 1), build CLT-owned and state-developed housing (see question 4), and do so under a zero-emission framework, paid for by the mechanisms described in question 5.

And to address the orange stain in the White House, Washington can and must do far more than simply file reactive lawsuits. If the EPA is to gut standards, the Washington State Department of Ecology must codify the abandoned standards as state law. The state actually possesses the authority to pass laws on vehicle emissions, industrial facility emissions, and commercial emissions, and should already have used its authority to pass stricter regulations than the federal government has.

12. What role should Washington play in regulating artificial intelligence versus leaving it to federal legislation?

Washington can and should regulate artificial intelligence. Donald Trump and huge swathes of the political right in this country are directly supported by and therefore under the control of technocratic oligarchs who want nothing more than to endlessly de-regulate AI, the largest venture capital market on the planet. Any politician under the control of a corporation cannot be trusted to regulate that corporation's industry (for more information, I implore you to see question 7, section 1). Washington is a geographic epicenter for the entire global tech industry. This cannot be understated. Our AI regulation can, and likely will set the gold standard for the entire nation. I will sponsor legislation to ban the use of AI-driven pricing software, especially as used in the residential housing market, where it is used to allow otherwise disconnected corporate landlords to collude on rent hikes (see ProPublica 2024). I will also fight for strict mandates on AI usage in hiring, firing, and worker surveillance. AI surveillance should generally be fully outlawed, as it presents a massive threat to privacy and individual security, especially where ICE is concerned (see question 6).

Vogell, Heather. "Rent Going Up? One Company's Algorithm Could Be Why." *ProPublica*, October 15, 2022. (Updated 2024).

13. Do you have personal guidelines or limits on the sources of your campaign revenue?

Yes. See question 7 and question 1: I am vehemently against all corporate PAC money in politics. I only accept individual donations and donations from progressive organizations.

14. The Timberland Regional Library (TRL) System was recently much in the news because of a large funding shortfall. There also are ongoing problems with funding related to state restrictions, as well as structural problems related to shifting demographics of the 5 counties in the system. All of these threaten the existence and quality of the TRL in its current form. What is your perspective on the role the state can or should play with respect to these issues?

The localized TRL funding failure is a symptom of a massive failure of State-level law. The cost of maintaining the TRL (and all libraries and businesses) is tightly bound to inflation. The problem with that is that under current state law, tax districts are prohibited from increasing their property tax revenues by more than 1% annually without direct voter referendums that are pretty hard to pass (because they ask for more taxes, which nobody likes). Inflation hovers between 2 and 4%: a 1% increase in funding every year means things will start to fail. Washington State simply must abolish this Tim Eyman-era restriction. I will fight aggressively to repeal the 1% property tax cap.

That being said, I must also admonish the TRL themselves. In the midst of a \$3.8 million budget shortfall, they approved a 2-year contract with annual 3% raises for their executive director and fired 38% of their public-facing branch staff who directly serve the community. That's some top-heavy austerity if I've ever seen it, which is completely reprehensible.

Furthermore, TRL spans five counties, but receives over half of its revenue from Thurston County, which only gets 41% of the pool. While true that urban centers *should* subsidize rural public goods, the state should *also* step in to subsidize the program to ensure that both urban and rural programs are kept afloat.

15. SB 5974 is intended to modernize laws regarding law enforcement agencies. Parts of it have received strong criticism, especially the removal of a sheriff, and are the subject of current litigation. If you support the bill, what is your response to the complaints? If you do not support the bill, explain your reasoning. If parts of it are overturned by the courts, should the legislature reconsider the matter in a subsequent session?

I support the intent and the professional standards established by SB 5974. As a populist who believes in the absolute sovereignty of the electorate and the people, I do also recognize that this bill exposes an unresolved issue:

1) It is entirely unacceptable that, prior to this legislation, an elected sheriff was held to a lower standard of professional certification than a deputy, public school teacher, or registered nurse. Demanding that enforcement officers who wield the state-sanctioned power of lethal force and incarceration maintain CJTC certification and avoid felony convictions SHOULD be the absolute

bare minimum required to protect the civil liberties of our communities.

2) That an unelected, centralized board of *appointed* bureaucrats in Olympia should have the unilateral administrative authority to depose an elected county official should warrant intense skepticism. The administrative state *frequently* utilizes unelected boards to separate power from the people, and we should be incredibly cautious when expanding on the means, even if we support the ends.

So, if the Thurston County courts overturn the decertification and direct removal provisions of SB 5974, the legislature must simply democratize the matter. If direct administrative removal is deemed unconstitutional under Article XI, Section 5, I will sponsor legislation to implement a "Decertification-Triggered Recall" model.

Currently, Washington's recall election process is a ridiculous, insurmountable financial and logistical nightmare; it is basically unworkable. Under my proposed hybrid model, if the CJTC revokes a sheriff's certification for severe misconduct, that ruling would automatically bypass the signature-gathering phase and instantly trigger an emergency recall *election* on the next available ballot. This model weaponizes state investigative resources on behalf of the public, forces the state to present its evidence of misconduct transparently, and returns the power of removal directly to the voters. We must enforce civil rights protections, but we must do so by empowering the electorate to fire their abusers, rather than relying solely on the administrative state to do it on their behalf.

[Washington State Constitution, art. 11, § 5.](#)

[Washington State Legislature. Senate Bill 5974. 69th Legislature, 2025-2026 Regular Session.](#)

Please return your completed questionnaire to endorsements.olympia.indivisible@gmail.com