

William Dehnel: Olympia Indivisible Candidate Questionnaire

Washington State Legislative District 2 Representative, Position 1

Please note that the responses to the questionnaire will be available for the public to view on the Olympia Indivisible web site.

1. For the legislative session that ended March 12, 2026, which bills that successfully became law are you most excited about? What would likely be your top 3 priorities for the next legislative session?

My top 3 priorities for the next legislative session would be to fully fund schools, improve rural healthcare access, and improve funding for infrastructure maintenance and improvement.

2. Washington State experienced serious budget balancing challenges during the last legislative session. What did they get right and how would you prioritize spending differently?

I would put a greater emphasis on preserving and improving education funding. The legislature managed to move money out of some aging accounts that was better placed into the general funds.

3. What actions would you take or support to improve healthcare costs and expand availability? What is your position on state funded universal healthcare and why?

In order to improve healthcare costs I would seek to improve insurance oversight and increase access to high quality insurance. I support state funded universal healthcare for several reasons. State funded healthcare guarantees access to healthcare regardless of insurance, it prevents price gouging by insurance agencies improving costs, and universal healthcare costs less overall due to both cost management and better overall health of the population.

4. Would you support local communities having binding veto power over data center construction in their area, and what conditions would have to be met before you'd approve new data center construction in Washington state?

I support binding veto power for local communities. It is important that local communities are able to determine what industries are present in their areas. To approve new data center construction in Washington I would need to see that they are employing prevailing wage language in contracts as well as comprehensive plans on how they are going to responsibly use water and manage pollution and carbon footprint.

5. Homelessness is often framed as a personal failure, a policy failure, or a systemic failure — which do you believe is most responsible and why? What approach(es) would you champion at the legislative level to address that failure?

Homelessness is complicated and occurs for many reasons. The one I think is most responsible is systemic failure rather than policy or personal. I would seek to improve access and standards at which people can seek assistance when their families are struggling. I would also seek to improve access to sustainable housing for lower income individuals. Many people are working full time and are living in their vehicles.

6. What legislative actions would you introduce or support which would strengthen women's access to contraception and abortion in Washington State and help to protect those rights from potential federal interference?

I would like to pass legislation that will promote the production of contraception within the state itself. This would help prevent federal interference by blocking interstate trade taxation and loss of access in the event that another state changes its positions. I would also like to see the state recognize that access to abortion is a fundamental healthcare right that cannot be legislated away.

7. What are your positions on the two November ballot initiatives IL26-001 Parental Rights and IL26-638 Trans Athletes, and why?

I am categorically against both initiatives. I am a parent of a trans adult. 001 specifically places youth in difficult housing situations. That particular initiative will increase domestic abuse of children. IL26-638 requires genital examinations of girls. This is a ridiculous standard that targets a person solely on gender and violates the rights of young women.

8. Cooperatives, land trusts, public banks, and worker-owned businesses keep wealth circulating in our local communities rather than it being extracted. What obstacles, if any, do you see at the state level for supporting this kind of economic infrastructure, and what changes would you champion to strengthen it?

The primary obstacles I see to this is largely financial in nature. Major institutions like JP Morgan Chase are able to invest significant amounts of money in advertising, legislating, and building infrastructure to out compete these types of businesses. Changes we could do at the state level to strengthen these types of businesses are tax advantages, improved permitting, and passing laws that remove access to political spending by corporations.

9. The Washington state school funding formula defines 'basic education' so narrowly that arts, athletics, mental health support, and special education go underfunded or not funded at all — and districts with lower property wealth bear the worst of it. What, if anything, would you change about the formula itself? And how would you approach the problem of school district inequity?

I would change the formula by broadening the definition of basic education.

As for school district inequity I would champion increasing the legislative minimums of state funding to schools while switching from a district levy system to a state wide taxation system for schools that funds schools on a more equitable basis. That basis

would need to account for student per classroom, infrastructure needs of the local community, and mandatory programs including access to trade education.

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

I am not taking money from large corporations and PACS

11. Some legislators treat environmental protection and economic growth as competing priorities to be balanced. Do you agree, or is this a false choice that signals we need better solutions? What does your answer look like in practice?

It is a false choice. Not accounting for environmental protections only looks good in short term analysis. In the long term every environmental shortcut results in greater expenses and losses of revenue in the future. Examples of how allowing industry to operate without environmental consideration is the ASARCO Super Fund cleanup that was required in Tacoma. That cleanup took billions of dollars and is still on going in Tacoma 2 decades later. What a solution to that would like in practice is improving the regulatory and permitting processes for companies that engage in responsible climate and environmental prcatices while growing their companies. There is significant opportunities to promote green industries.

12. Local communities often lack enforceable power to push back against development projects that harm the environment and quality of life. What do you see as the most significant contributing gap in current state law, and what specific tools would you champion to give residents real authority — not just a seat at the table — to block or shape development projects that threaten them?

The most significant gap I see in this area is a lack of ability for communities to prevent unwanted development. We should enact legislation that creates community development associations that are operated by the local residents. These associations should have the ability to act when projects threaten local environment or quality of life.

13. Washington's affordable housing crisis hasn't been solved by developer-driven approaches. What specific state-level tools would you champion to make alternatives such as community land trusts, cooperative housing, and community village models genuinely viable solutions that keep profits and ownership local? What's currently standing in the way?

Developers and Real Estate associations actively lobbying and supporting politicians that work to keep the current building models in effect. We need to improve the profitability of these models of housing to encourage more to be developed. We also need to increase the expense of building more expensive housing. A

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