



# 2018 Legislative candidate survey

Candidate name:     Matt Boehnke     Legislative district:     8, Position 2    

You are a candidate for: House of Representatives  Senate

If you are a candidate for the House of Representatives, which position are your running for? Position 1  Position 2

## Local government background

Have you ever been elected or appointed to a local government position, or served on a local government board, committee, or as staff? *Local governments include cities, counties, public utility districts, school districts, fire protection districts, port districts, and more.* Yes  No

If yes, in what capacity?  
Kennewick City Council, 2016 - Present

## 1. State-shared local revenues

When the state encounters fiscal problems, legislators often take revenues historically shared with cities, or increase fees on services provided to cities to fill the state's budget deficit. Recently, some shared revenues have been restored. However, during the last recession, the Legislature enacted cuts and diversions, while unfunded mandates and other local government cost drivers remained unaddressed, including the following items:

- Changes in liquor tax and profit distributions resulting in losses of nearly \$200 million in funds that supported essential local services, such as public safety;
- Sweeping and diverting over \$1 billion in local utility taxes, real estate taxes, and project loan repayments from the nationally-acclaimed Public Works Trust Fund (PWTF) that helps keep local infrastructure operating; and
- Requiring cities to pay training fees for officers attending the Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA).

Do you support or oppose the Legislature continuing to use locally-shared revenues or revenues intended for capital projects in order to balance the state's operating budget? Support  Oppose

Briefly describe one or more actions that you would take to ensure your views on these issues are accounted for by your caucus and in a final budget.

Fiscal responsibility is key objective and one of my main goals as the 8<sup>th</sup> District Representative. I would work to ensure the budget is balanced every session and that prudent steps are taken to ensure the same for the future. I would work to anticipate any potential increase in spending and offset it with a secure funding line that does not take from other programs to be implemented. As a last resort, cuts to wasteful spending in current programs would be preferable prior to defunding city resources. As a current city councilman, I know the impact that unfunded mandates have on cities and how critical locally-shared revenues are to growth and sustainability. We must keep revenue streams separate and continue to toil in an effort to ensure the medium and long term viability and sustainability of our city services and infrastructure.

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## 2. Basic infrastructure financing

Cities face many challenges when repairing and updating critical infrastructure such as drinking water and sewer systems. Historically, the Public Works Trust Fund (PWTF), a revolving loan fund, was a significant source for financing infrastructure. As the state wrestled first with a recession and then with the *McCleary* education funding challenges, legislators repeatedly turned to diverting these funds and leaving nothing in their place. Since 2013, nearly all of the tax revenues deposited into the PWTF were diverted to the state's education funding account instead. Those revenues were scheduled to come back to the PWTF in 2019, but the revenue diversions were extended another four years.

Would you support or oppose a budget that diverted more resources from the PWTF to address state general fund obligations?      Support      Oppose  
     

Do you believe that it is part of the state's obligation to help fund critical local infrastructure, especially when taxes and fees raised to do so in 1985 continue to be levied?      Yes      No  
     

As a lawmaker, how will you work to secure the revitalization of the PWTF and protect it from future raids?

I support returning the PWTF back to its original program and mandate as soon as practicable. Instead of diverting funds, work needs to be done to restore the PWTF and allow it to accomplish its intended goals. I would work to get on the House committees on Capital Budget, Community Economic Revitalization Board and the Infrastructure Committees and support HB1677. Diversion affects not only the state's infrastructure—but has a deleterious relationship to economic development. To protect from future "raids", I would become a member of the Transportation committee that provides oversight of this program and put in place safeguards to ensure critical revenues are excluded from future budget considerations. I would enact legislation that provides for these safeguards in writing that ensure the taxes and fees raised are allocated accordingly.

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## 3. Homelessness, affordable housing, and mental health

Across the state, housing costs are rising and affordability issues are impacting homebuyers and renters, as well as exacerbating the already critical homelessness problems in many communities. Mental health services are stretched thin and cities (not normally in the business of providing these particular social services) find themselves increasingly trying to help residents and keep their communities safe and secure. Cities have a strong desire to work together with the state, counties, business, nonprofit, and faith communities to help address these challenges. We continue to seek financing, regulatory, and funding tools to help.

Which of the following are priorities for you? Choose all that apply.

- Help to end homelessness
- Ensure adequate mental health services for those in need
- Provide tools to help control the spiraling cost of housing

Would you support or oppose a proposal for the state to override local zoning or density decisions to promote more affordability in housing construction?      Support      Oppose



I agree that local control is important to ensuring responsive government, but only if that directive is in direct support and in accordance with the will and voice of the local people. We have seen evidence of this recently with the Seattle City council attempting to enact a "head tax" focused on one of the largest businesses in the world in Amazon. Their attempt may have been with a kind heart to help fund homelessness, but you cannot successfully extend and extrapolate these tactics state wide. As no two cities needs are identical, there must be a partnership and collaboration between the cities and the state-- working diligently and in good faith together to garner outstanding results for our communities.

If you have any questions, please contact Regina Adams, AWC Government Relations Coordinator, at 360-753-4137 or [ReginaA@awcnet.org](mailto:ReginaA@awcnet.org). Please return your survey by the end of the day on Wednesday, July 4 by:

Email to [ReginaA@awcnet.org](mailto:ReginaA@awcnet.org);

- Fax to (360) 753-0149; or  
U.S. mail to AWC Candidate Survey, 1076 Franklin Street SE, Olympia, WA 98501-1346.

**Thank you for your participation!**