

Candidate name:	Jim McEntire	Legislative district:	24th
You are a candidat	te for: House of Representatives S	enate	
If you are a candid which position are	ate for the House of Representatives, your running for?	Position 1 Position 2	
Local government background Have you ever been elected or appointed to a local government position, Yes No 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.			
If yes, in what capaci Commissioner, Port 2015	ty? of Port Angeles, 2008 through 2011; and	I Clallam County Commiss	ioner, 2012 through

# 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	Support	Oppose
locally-shared revenues or revenues intended for capital		$\square$
projects in order to balance the state's operating budget?		

# 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.

RCW 43.135.060 speaks to unfunded mandates and prohibits the legislature from imposing them on local governments. If the State is to have a Public Works funding assistance account, or a toxic cleanup account, those funds should be treated similar to a trust fund, and not as a substitute for general revenues. I will be very reluctant to vote for a Capital Budget that countenances a sweep of such funds, many of which may be sourced originally from State General Obligation debt.

# 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	Support	Oppose
from the PWTF to address state general fund obligations?		$\boxtimes$

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

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

I'm going to have to understand the tax revenue sources better, which I will do once in the legislature. But as a general matter, if the voters, cities, and counties, etc., were told in the '80s that certain tax revenues were going to be dedicated only to local capital funding projects, then that's where they should stay ... especially since the Growth Management Act's interpretations over time have created hard infrastructure requirements on local governments. All four corners need to have a hard understanding on that point, before the fiscal committees begin their work. I'll ask that the State Auditor be given funding for a performance audit of the local capital assistance accounts that are funded from bond proceeds and dedicated tax revenue sources. I'll be happy to work with AWC and WSAC on this last point.

# 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
- $\mathbf{X}$ Ensure adequate mental health services for those in need
- $\square$ Provide tools to help control the spiraling cost of housing

#### Would you support or oppose a proposal for the state to override local zoning Support Oppose or density decisions to promote more affordability in housing construction? $\mathbf{X}$ $\square$

### Please elaborate on what you suggest doing to address one or more of these issues:

"Ending homelessness" sounds too much like an aspirational goal, and less like a mechanism to meet temporary needs for those able to work, and more or less permanent needs for those who are disabled and unable to support themselves, and who have no family or resources. Mental health treatment is squarely a state responsibility and we need to do a much better job in properly funding local governments who contract with treatment providers, etc. I marked 'support' to the local zoning question rather reluctantly, since if the state delegates land use authority to cities and counties, it should not take that authority back in a capricious way. But, the solution to a tight housing supply is to allow private markets to build more houses. There may be too many restrictions and building regulations imposed, thereby creating unnecessary cost and time constraints on the private housing market. I would gladly have an extensive conversation on this thorny issue.

# 4. Economic development

Economic development opportunities vary greatly across the state. Some communities have deteriorating commercial or industrial areas or lack the needed infrastructure for critical development, and others lack access to adequate broadband services. AWC supports expansion of current programs and funding, including expansion of state Local Revitalization Financing (LRF) and Local Infrastructure Financing Tool (LIFT) programs as options to incentivize economic development and support job creation.

Would you support or oppose legislation that expands the financing Support options available to local governments for economic development?

ort	Oppose	

### What other ideas do you have for bolstering the state's economic development opportunities?

Rural districts like the 24<sup>th</sup> need all the tools they can have to help the economy grow faster. I would very much appreciate a briefing and conversation on this issue. Rural economic development was central to my time in local government and is central to my campaign.

# 5. Local control

Cities succeed when they can respond to local residents' unique needs and desired outcomes through exercising local control. The State Constitution and state statutes provide cities with wide discretion in serving their communities. However, the Legislature sometimes considers preempting cities from enacting local ordinances or engaging in certain activities. We believe that the relationship between the state and cities functions best as a partnership, where the state gives careful consideration to the varied conditions of local governments, and appreciates the importance of retaining local flexibility.

Do you believe that local control is important	Yes	No
to ensuring responsive local government?	$\boxtimes$	

If you disagree that local control should be preserved, please describe one or more specific issue areas or situations in which the state

should preempt local control.

If you agree that local control should be respected, please describe how you would argue for the protection of local control to colleagues who want to preempt local governments.

This notion is central to the idea of distributed power and authority in a Constitutional Republic. But it should exist within a uniform legal structure. Preservation of personal rights secured in the Constitution should not vary all that much between State and local jurisdictions. Property rights should be fairly uniform across local governments, within some reasonable framework for allowing local opinions to be taken into account. Taxing authorities should be specific and uniform throughout the panoply of local jurisdictions with taxing authority.

OR

If you have any questions, please contact Regina Adams, AWC Government Relations Coordinator, at 360-753-4137 or <u>ReginaA@awcnet.org</u>. Please return your survey **by the end of the day on Wednesday**, **July 4** by:

- Email to <u>ReginaA@awcnet.org;</u>
- 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!