



## 2018 Legislative candidate survey

Candidate name:	Debra Lekanoff	Legislative district:	40 <sup>th</sup> LD	
You are a candidate	e for: House of Representatives S	Senate		
If you are a candida which position are	ate for the House of Representatives, your running for?	Position 1 Position 2		
or served on a loca governments include	ent background n elected or appointed to a local gove I government board, committee, or as de cities, counties, public utility distr ction districts, port districts, and mor	s staff? Local	No ⊠	
If yes, in what capacit Enter text here	y?			

#### 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 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.

I will work in collaboration with 40<sup>th</sup> LD seatmates to protect the shared revenue for local governments, and strive to work with the state to work on the restructuring of a progressive tax reform that meets the needs of our State. We can move forward together with a tax reform, at the state and local levels, that reflects the reality of the situations for local and state governments. Costs are rising based on impact of growth and the answer is we will need to address this together as citizens.

#### 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 resource 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 Yes fund critical local infrastructure, especially when taxes and fees raised to do so in 1985 continue to be levied?	No	

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

First, I am interested in serving on the Capital Budget where I would champion support local communities infrastructure. I would oppose further funding to be removed from the PWTF, as this funding helps support a loan program that supports the very infrastructure for water, the most essential tool for every government, local or state. If we do not take care our infrastructure, we are just passing the responsibility and potentially a heathy and financial burden onto the next elected government. Which does not resolve the situation, but rather, increases the cost for tax payers.

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

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

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.

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

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

Please elaborate on what you suggest doing to address one or more of these issues: First, I believe in strong local control of our communities.

Housing shortage and affordability: Over the last five years, the housing market in Bellingham, Skagit, Anacortes, and the counties surrounding them have experienced an exponential boom in value. For our elders who have lived in this community for decades, the cost of living has driven many from their homes. This is strikes a personal chord with me, as I was raised with my grandmother in her family home in southeast Alaska. Without this place for me to grow up, and have my grandmother live out her years of twilight in peaceful, comfortable surroundings, I would not be the woman I am today.

I am looking to strengthen the security of the aging parents and grandparents in the 40th by proposing a senior citizen exemption plan that is set by a threshold of median income level by county. Taking care of the generations who came to make the 40th the community it is today is an important piece in protecting the future of the 40th LD.

But we have to be real folks; the increase of federal decisions on tariffs are impacting us at home. For instance, look at the local developer who is building single family homes, not making millions, but enough to survive themselves. When the federal government implemented the tariffs, the cost of steel rose, thus the increase of a single family home went up for the developer by 9,000. In one day. We as state officials and district representatives need to ensure we have a clear understanding and policy in place to manage what is best for all the citizens. We are one as a community, a district and a state, and my leadership is to remind one another of these roles and to hold true to my values of protecting, restoring and implementing decisions that help us all.

Mental Health: I am committed to restoring and increasing the mental health funding for our communities. It is a fundamental fact that we have no funding and programs to take care of the people facing the mental health issues in their lives. We have seen an increase in drug use, crimes, homelessness, and other detrimental impacts on our citizens.

On all three issues, I believe we need to come together as a community, district and state to address these three issues together. As community members we must stand together in the 40<sup>th</sup> and remember we are one and we must support one another. There. Is no I in community, there is a WE and somehow WE need to get back to this frame work of thinking. I am not a fan of pointing the figure to another county or city but rather working together.

### 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	Oppose
options available to local governments for economic development?	X	

What other ideas do you have for bolstering the state's economic development opportunities? I believe we have opportunities to help our small local businesses by restructuring our B&O tax structure. Small businesses are important to help make our communities strong. I would support restructuring our B&O tax to reduce, or possibly eliminate, the tax on small businesses throughout our state.

#### 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.

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Do you believe that local control is important	Yes	No	
to ensuring responsive local government?	χ		

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.

I believe that AWC also has a role with communicating with me and my colleagues. While the legislature is not in session, I believe it is important for legislators to meet with local city officials to understand the challenges they face. Only by having strong relationships between local and state elected officials is it possible to make good decisions for strong communities.

OR

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

- Email to 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!