



2018 Legislative candidate survey

Candidate name: Kathy Gillespie Legislative district: 18

You are a candidate for: House of Representatives ☒ Senate ☐

If you are a candidate for the House of Representatives, which position are you 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?

Two, 4-year terms on the Vancouver School District Board of Directors. Retired in 2017.

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.

Speak out to constituents and in Olympia to make the case that shortchanging local governments is costly and unacceptable and ultimately diminishes the ROI taxpayers expect for their tax dollars promoting cynicism and mistrust of state government. Voters tune out when local authorities talk about getting less from Olympia and may think it's just the blame game when in fact the funding shortages are very real and

combined with the property tax limitation, cause significant issues impacting cities' abilities to deliver basic services at the levels expected, the levels needed for safety and quality of life.

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?

Speak out to constituents and in Olympia to talk about the missed opportunity cost and demonstrate that the PWTF is a tremendous engine for growth that pays taxpayers back over and over if the funds are available. I think legislators have to stop undercutting the fund and solve budget problems without raiding designated funds.

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 ☒

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

I need to learn more. I am concerned about the phrase "override local zoning". I would need to ask questions, weight pros and cons and try to establish what the unintended consequences may be before committing to a strong yes, no.

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.

Support Oppose

☒ ☐

I think we are quickly approaching – and passing – the time when the diminished shared revenue and property tax limitations are really catching up with our cities and undermining Washington’s ability to build strong local communities well equipped to manage local issues to the satisfaction of citizens and in the best interest of growing our economy, ensuring safe communities and well-educated citizens equipped to work and live healthy lives. I’d like to see Washington legislators set aside partisanship and really focus on repairing and building, providing needed financing and really investing in the basics because what I hear from city managers and executives is that we are falling behind and the artifice of “all is well” is wearing thin. We need to prioritize infrastructure development to fuel the job growth we need – especially in SW WA!

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.

OR 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.

- 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!