



2018 Legislative candidate survey

Candidate name: Pinky Vargas Legislative district: 42nd

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?

Political background: Bellingham City Council (2013-present), Council President in 2016. I've served as Chair of Community and Economic Development Committee, Finance, and Natural Resources. I'm currently serving on the Justice Committee, and Chair of Parks and Recreation.

Current Boards: Bellingham Chamber of Commerce, Whatcom Tourism Board, Whatcom Lodging and Tax Allocation Committee, and Bellingham Parks and Recreation Board.

Past Boards: Lake Whatcom Natural Resources Commission, Opportunity Council Board, Downtown Bellingham Partnership, Mount Baker Theater, and Greenways.

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.

