

2020 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire for Developmental Disabilities

Name: Mike Sells

District: 38

Position: State House of Reps, Pos. 2

1. If you have a personal connection or professional experience with someone who has a developmental disability, would you describe its impact on you?

As a teacher, I had numerous contacts with children with developmental disabilities. As an Everett Education Association President I was in constant contact with the teachers working in the field of special education. I think I developed a pretty healthy respect for those that chose to work in the field and the expectations with which they had to deal, as well as the families working to deal with some pretty unique children. Funding has been a problem for years. Hopefully, we can protect what headway the legislature made since the last session on special needs funding.

2. What are your top three legislative priorities and how would you help people with developmental disabilities in them?

This next session it is going to have to be about protecting all those programs that help families sustain themselves, as much as we can. That includes special needs education. It will be a tall order, given the nature of the billions of dollars in revenue that has not been coming in due to the pandemic. I would support revenue enhancements where we can, like a Capital Gains tax. My priority has always been education at all levels. I serve currently on the House College and Workforce Development Committee. Workplace safety and employment practices and structures that give people a voice in their working lives and work places has always been a concern for me, also.

3. With the current economic crisis, how would you protect services that people with I/DD and their families need?

It is a matter of advocacy during the appropriations process, which I am willing to do.

4. Is there other information you'd like constituents with developmental disabilities and their family and friends to know?

As the chair of the House Labor and Workplace Standards Committee, my focus has been on areas where we can help families sustain themselves. As a member of the House College and Workforce Development Committee I have advocated for trainings and education that provides for family wage/salary jobs, including removing the sub minimum wage for those with developmental disabilities. As a member of the House Capital Budget Committee, I have advocated for building and infrastructure projects that help schools and social services meet the needs of our communities as a priority for those funds.