

2020 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire for Developmental Disabilities

Name: Gerry Pollet

District: 46

Position: House of Representatives Pos.#1



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

I've enjoyed many wonderful opportunities to work with people with developmental disabilities and their families. When our children were young, we had to advocate for IEPs. I met many families and youth with developmental disabilities who shared their experience and wisdom with us, and with whom we shared our growing experience. Now, as a legislator, working to support services, eliminate unconscionable waiting lists and to fund and improve special education are top priorities of mine.

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

I am a vocal advocate for funding and improving services for the entire spectrum of people with developmental disabilities. I've focused on providing leadership for youth in school and transitioning from school and working towards the goal of fully funding special education with provisions of the services needed by every child with disabilities.

[KING5 investigators](#) referred to me as "the Legislature's top special education advocate" because fully funding and improving special education is a major reason why I ran for the Legislature. I've led the legislative efforts to fully fund special education, to end the unconscionable cap on number of children needing services in each district which the State will fund, and to have a blue ribbon commission on improving special education services.

In order to provide the services we know are needed, from community based care to respite services to school provided therapy, we need to make our tax system much more fair and stable. Therefore, a major priority of mine is to reform our tax system by taxing the great wealth in Washington, rather than asking the lowest income people to support the services they need via sales tax.

This summer, I am working hard to move our school districts to provide therapeutic services which many children with developmental disabilities, autism and other disabilities have lost while at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. For many children,

the lost time may have irreversible effects. We need to ensure schools offer in person therapeutic services which students have not been provided for months.

We face an unprecedented loss of billions of dollars in state tax revenue due to the pandemic. There are many voices calling for us to make drastic cuts in services. If they prevail, DD services will be hit hard even though they are already woefully inadequate. That is why making our tax system more fair with revenues from closing massive tax loopholes and taxing corporate and individual wealth is a priority for me.

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

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I will partner with the ARC of King County and state organizations to share the individual stories of how services are already inadequate. It is the individual stories of people who rely on services which move legislators off the fence and get them to commit to supporting funding for DD services. The ARC of King County has excelled at training and organizing to having those stories told to legislators.

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

I was deeply honored when the ARC of King County recognized me as a legislator of the year in 2017 for my work on behalf of families with developmental disabilities. I strive to live up to that recognition by the ARC of King County. I'm available to meet with constituents. When we are not Staying Home Staying Healthy, I welcome people to join monthly drop in discussions with me around the district. During session I try to hold drop-in discussions in the 46th District every Saturday. See my website or Facebook page for my Traveling Town Halls.

Gerry Pollet

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