



Many Voices / One Vision



2026 Legislative Candidate Survey

*Questions for Legislative Candidates — The Arc of Washington
The Community Advocacy Coalition for Developmental Disabilities
The Children's Campaign Fund*

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1. Do you have a personal connection or professional experience with someone who has an intellectual/developmental disability (IDD)? If yes, would you describe its impact on you and your candidacy? If not, what have you learned about people with intellectual or developmental disabilities and how has it impacted your candidacy?

I have been privileged to have personal connections with many folks from the IDD community. Those include members of my church; constituents I have met through the ARC of King County's annual forum; and students of my husband, who taught special education in the Distinct program at Roosevelt High School for four years.

I have learned how disability specialists and caregivers play a huge role in helping people with IDD develop skills and reach their potential. This

reinforced my belief that we have a profound responsibility to support people with special needs and the families that care for them.

One of the main ways we support people with IDD is through our state's paramount duty to provide all students with a basic education. While these vulnerable children are in our care, it is our obligation to provide them with the services and opportunities to seek greater independence and fulfilling futures. I am deeply committed to supporting special education, and it is one of the reasons that funding public schools is my top priority.

In the 2025 session, I served as the prime sponsor of SB 5263, which increases funding for special education services by \$750 million over the next four years. The bill also removes the artificial cap on the number of students who are eligible for these critical services. I also supported SB 5253, which extends special education services for students with disabilities until the end of the school year in which they turn 22.

Although Washington has made progress toward fully funding special education, there is still more work to do. I remain committed to ensuring that our state supports people with IDD and keeps its promise to students and people with special needs.

2. What policies and systems are you aware of that impact the lives of people with IDD and their families? If elected, what responsibility would you have to change those policies or systems?

I am familiar with many policies and systems that shape the lives of people with IDD and their families. I understand that people with IDD need programs that support healthy living in their communities. This includes medical coverage under apple health, prescription drug discounts, and a strong network of medical providers capable of diagnosing and treating complex conditions. It also includes access to housing, food, energy assistance, and supported employment programs to help families meet daily needs.

I am also familiar with our state's support for children and youth. Programs such as Early Support for Infants and Toddlers, the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program, and Head Start all provide critical services during a child's earliest years. This includes vital support for

children with developmental disabilities. These services continue through our K–12 education system, where special education programs play a vital role in helping students develop.

As a member of the Senate Ways and Means Committee , I know that many agencies administer these programs. Within the Department of Social and Health Services, the Developmental Disabilities Administration, the Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation provide essential support and services. The Department of Children, Youth, and Families oversee early learning and childcare programs, while the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction works to ensure that every student receives a free and appropriate public education. These agencies provide the leadership and foundation for a broad network of systems that directly affect the IDD community, many of which I could not include.

As Senate Majority Leader, I have the responsibility to lead our state to ensure that these systems serve people with IDD and their families. I am committed to protecting and strengthening our safety net services for people with IDD, especially early intervention services for infants and young children. I also believe in promoting employment and community inclusion services that allow people with IDD to live and belong in their communities. Finally, we must continue investing in our behavioral health system and workforce so that individuals with IDD can access the care and treatment they need. While our state faces fiscal challenges, we must remain committed to building sustainable systems that protect, support, and empower members of the IDD community.

3. If elected, what are your top three priorities, and how would people with IDD and their families benefit from each priority?

No response provided.

4. When you have questions about how to best support people with IDD and their families, what or who are your trusted resources?

My top three priorities are fully funding our schools, fixing our unfair tax system, and building more affordable housing.

I am running to build a fully funded, world-class education system. As a parent of four children in Seattle Public Schools, I have seen what students and families need. I will continue fighting for better funded classrooms, increased support for special education, more reliable student transportation, and expanded access to extracurricular programs. Washington should be the best place in the country to grow up and get an education, and I am committed to making that a reality. Increasing funding for public schools must include more support for special education, which will provide better services for children with IDD and their families. I am proud of the progress that our state has made towards fully funding special education, and I will build on that commitment to support students.

As the Majority Leader in the Washington State Senate, I led the effort to pass the Millionaires Tax, which only 20,000 wealthy households in Washington will pay, but will provide sales tax cuts and essential services like healthcare and education for 8 million of us. I strongly support additional measures to rebalance our tax structure for working families. I am proud that this legislation benefits the IDD community by providing more funding for essential services that support people with disabilities. The bill also ensures that lower-income people with IDD do not pay a disproportionate amount in state taxes, making progress towards fixing our regressive tax system.

Finally, I support increasing the supply of all types of housing, especially social housing, public housing, and transitional housing for those exiting homelessness. I was proud to support \$19 million in the Housing Trust Fund allocated specifically towards people with developmental disabilities. I am committed to expanding investments in housing for the IDD community and passing legislation to cut red tape, lower construction costs, and increase density to raise supply and lower prices.

5. The national trend -- and legal mandate --- supports transitioning individuals with IDD out of institutional settings and into community-based care, which is not only the best practice but also the most cost-effective approach. Studies consistently show that community-based services cost significantly less per person than institutional care while providing greater independence and quality of life. In Washington the cost of care in a

Residential Habilitation Center (RHC) is more than double the cost of equivalent services in community settings. Although Washington has made progress, continued efforts are needed to align with best practices, civil rights, federal priorities, and fiscal responsibility. Transitioning more individuals into community-based care will allow the state to reinvest savings into services for much needed community-based services. How do you believe Washington state should approach investment in home and community based services for people with IDD in the next five years?

I understand the importance and value of community-based care for people with IDD. Whenever possible, individuals should live independently and remain connected to their communities while receiving the support they need for daily challenges. As the prime sponsor of the Millionaires Tax, I am proud that this funding will help support critical public services, including programs that benefit people with IDD. As we continue working to make our tax system more equitable and sustainable, I am interested in examining how our state can strengthen services that divert and transition people from institutions into community settings.

At the same time, our state is experiencing severe fiscal challenges. I support measures that simplify the process of receiving community-based care and increase accessibility while using our resources effectively. For example, I voted for SB 5187, which included a provision making the Medicaid waver system easier to understand and use. As a result, the Developmental Disability Administration is streamlining its waivers into residential and non-residential categories. I hope these changes will make this service more accessible and transparent.

I believe that in the next five years, Washington will continue leading the way in supporting people with IDD through community-based services. By promoting independence and living in community, we can ensure that these people can reach their full potential in our society.

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

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