



## 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?**

Yes. I serve on the board of Tommy's Story Hour in Bremerton, which supports people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Tommy's Story Hour has opened my eyes in a very real way. It is one thing to talk about inclusion. It is another thing to see what happens when someone is given friendship, trust, routine, and a place where they are treated like they belong.

Also serving on the Advisory Board for the Silverdale, WA YMCA – I helped one Tommy's Story Hour member secure a job at the YMCA after he had been unable to find work. That experience meant a lot to me because a job can change how someone sees themselves. It can give a person a reason to get up, a place to go, people counting on them, and pride in what they are doing.

I am not a performative person or candidate – those with IDD do not need speeches about compassion – they need doors to open and authentic support. They need real chances to work, build friendships, get around, access care, and live with dignity.

That has shaped my candidacy because I believe government should be judged by whether people can actually live better lives – not by how good our intentions sound. People with IDD should be seen as neighbors, coworkers, friends, and full members of our community.

As a State Representative, I will support policies that expand employment opportunities, strengthen community-based services like Tommy's Story Hour, support families and caregivers, and help people with IDD live with more independence, dignity, and purpose.

Also, the video file was too large to upload, but unlike my opponent, I chose to produce a video voter pamphlet statement because I wanted my message to be more accessible and personal. Here is the link:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?is=1aaOrlZ80mYmZPbf&v=VuBIJsVFX5l&feature=youtu.be>

## **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?**

The biggest systems are DDA services, Medicaid-funded supports, special education, transition planning after high school, supported employment, respite care, housing, transportation, behavioral health, dental care, and caregiver support.

Those systems decide very practical things: whether a child gets the right support in school, whether a young adult has a path after graduation, whether a family can get respite before they burn out, whether someone

can get to work or an appointment, and whether a person can live safely in the community.

My responsibility as a legislator would be to protect the services people depend on and make them easier to use. Families should not have to fight through confusing paperwork, long waitlists, and disconnected agencies just to get basic support.

I would focus on stronger DDA and Medicaid community-based services, better school-to-work transition planning, more supported employment and job coaching, more respite care, more accessible housing, better transportation options, and provider rates that allow organizations to hire and keep qualified staff.

I would also prioritize accountability. Are waitlists shrinking? Are families getting help before crisis? Are providers able to stay open? Are young adults losing support after school ends? Are people with IDD and their families part of the decisions being made?

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

My first priority is affordability and fiscal accountability. Families are being squeezed by housing, health care, child care, transportation, and basic costs. Families supporting someone with IDD often carry even more pressure. I want state government to protect core services, spend public dollars better, and make sure funding reaches the people it is meant to help. For IDD families, that means protecting Medicaid and DDA supports, respite care, caregiver support, and community-based services.

My second priority is better access to health care and human services. This includes primary care, dental care, behavioral health, crisis support, and the providers who make the system work. People with IDD should not have to wait until a crisis to get help. Families should not have to call five different offices to find one answer. I would support stronger community-based services, better coordination, and a workforce that can actually meet the need.

My third priority is livable communities. That means housing people can afford, transportation that works, strong schools, safe communities, and

real paths to work. For people with IDD, this means accessible housing, reliable transportation, school transition plans that lead somewhere, supported employment, and community programs that help people build friendships and purpose.

These priorities all connect. A person cannot work if they cannot get transportation. A family cannot stay stable without respite. A young adult cannot build independence if housing is out of reach. A good system has to see the whole person and the whole family.

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

People with IDD and their families come first, because they live it every day, followed by the people and organizations who do this work daily, including The Arc of Washington, self-advocates, caregivers, the Developmental Disabilities Council, Disability Rights Washington, educators, providers, and community groups like Tommy's Story Hour.

And I show up. Not just during session or when there's a crisis. I listen to what's working, what's not, and what the state is making harder than it should be.

#### **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?**

Washington should invest in home and community-based services as both a civil rights issue and a smart use of public dollars. People with IDD deserve to live in their communities, close to family and support networks. Community-based care should be the direction of the system.

I would protect Medicaid and DDA funding, expand waiver access, strengthen respite care, improve provider rates, and increase access to housing and transportation.

This shift must be done responsibly. Moving away from institutional settings cannot mean underfunded community services.

Any savings from reducing institutional care should be reinvested into community services, with clear results like shorter waitlists, fewer crises, and more people living safely and independently.

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

I want people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families to know that I care deeply about this and that I'm here to listen. As someone with a federally recognized permanent disability that made learning very challenging in my youth, I understand how difficult it can be to navigate systems that are not built with you in mind.

I don't have all the answers, but I will show up, learn from you, and work to protect the supports that help people live with dignity and stay connected to their community.

People with IDD are part of every part of our community, and your voices should always be heard in the decisions that affect your lives. That's just my ethos to truly represent our entire Kitsap community. Thank you for the opportunity and consideration of support for my candidacy :)