



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*

Name: Mary Anito

Position: House

Legislative District: 34th POS 2

Email: Maryforseattle@gmail.com

Website: Maryforwa.com



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?

Not with IDD but my older sister was declared permanently disabled at 19 following a car accident where she received a severe traumatic brain injury. I was just a toddler so that's the only version of my sister I really know. Watching her struggle to finish college (though she succeeded!) and try living independently helped me understand the challenges she interacted with daily. With her injury being a brain injury, she looked like a typical young woman and people couldn't understand the frustrated outbursts

and sometime outlandish commentary. But her pure love of my kiddos was unlike anything I saw. She passed away last year after a 5 year battle with cancer and her willpower up until the very last day was unmatched.

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 don't feel like our education systems effectively serves people with IDD and their families. We've tried different models and I don't think we've fully figured out an effective system. Empowering every young person to acquire the education they deserve is a must. Making sure our schools are fully resourced is a top priority of mine. The cuts we've made over recent years are very concerning.

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

With advanced technology and research, we have much better resources today so making sure everyone that needs those resources is aware of them and has easy access is important. I would like to get universal healthcare for all Washingtonians as I believe a high quality consistent healthcare system will raise the bar for our entire society. In recent years, I've both been on the board of a Young adult homeless shelter and been building and renovating homes – housing is a basic human need and accessible housing is a must to help people live independently for longer. In addition to housing and healthcare, my third top priority is education, as a mom of three (3) kids. Every child deserves a high quality education and making sure we have the right programs to meet each student where they are with the resources they need should be a given in our amazing state.

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

Talking to the support organizations and service providers who work in this space is important, as well as connecting with the families and voters who live in this space everyday. They are the subject matter experts so the more

we design systems and solutions in partnership with the users of the systems, the better the solution will 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?

Making sure we're getting the pipeline full of folks who can help staff the community faculties and getting the facilities built in time and cost effective manners is key to being able to meet the demand. We should look at other models that have worked and not worked to help build the best solution from the beginning.

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

As a mom of kiddos, I know advocating for our kids is second nature to all of us. Being a primary caretaker for my sister during her final months, asking people to do even more when they're already doing so much isn't fair. We need a better community support network. As a state, we can and must do better. I appreciate all of the ideas and suggestions to work on long term solutions to serve our communities. Thank you for your partnership.