



Candidate Questionnaire October 2018

Food Lifeline’s goal is to elevate the issue of hunger with candidates during the election cycle. Each candidate for state and federal office received our questionnaire. For every candidate that replied, their original responses are presented as submitted. See results at foodlifeline.org/advocacy.

Amy Walen	Candidate for Washington State House of Representatives, District 48, Position 2 (Redmond)
<p>If elected, what will you do to end hunger, alleviate poverty, and create opportunity in Washington state?</p>	<p>I am committed to helping working families, seniors, and small businesses, and will work to replace high property taxes with solutions that tax wealth, not jobs and hard work. I support policies that increase access to sustainable, locally produced food from our family farms in Washington through food banks and farmers markets, as well as encouraging cities to create community gardens where low-income residents (or any residents for that matter) can grow their own food. I also support increased incentives for local farmers. I believe that the government should provide funding for food programs rather than relying on churches and charities to feed the hungry. Like healthcare and housing, food is a human right. In regards to strengthening our state economy, I think it is important that we protect our farmers in Eastern Washington by ensuring that they have free access to the transportation system and port to get their products to the market. In an effort to reduce income disparities, we should ensure that enforcement of the new fair pay laws is being enacted. It breaks my heart to see families unable to afford to feed their children, and older adults priced out of their homes due to rising property taxes. Funding essential services through property taxes is not sustainable or equitable. I believe that increased funding for hunger prevention and relief programs can and should come from tax reform. We need to clean up our current tax code so less of the burden is placed on low or middle-income earners or fixed-income families. I would like to start by closing corporate tax loopholes, especially those corporations that aren’t creating jobs in Washington state or those that have bad business practices that harm our environment. I would also like to ensure that there are sunset provisions, so we can continually revisit who is getting tax breaks. I also support additional revenue sources through a capital gains tax and a carbon fee.</p>
<p>In Washington, 1 in 5 children experience food insecurity. What steps or legislative actions would you take to address child poverty and hunger?</p>	<p>While I am pleased with what the Legislature accomplished in 2018, passing the Breakfast After the Bell bill as well as the Farm to School initiative, I know there is much more work to be done to ensure no children in our state go hungry. I think we need to be intentional about prioritizing our investments in</p>

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	<p>underrepresented communities or where food scarcity is the greatest. I think partnering with schools and existing social services organizations is the more effective way to support children in our communities who are hungry. For example, I support increased investment in afterschool and summer meal programs across the state, providing no-cost breakfasts, lunches, and snacks for kids and teens who may go hungry at home. I am also supportive of nutrition education for parents, funding food banks, and increasing farmers markets and community gardens across our state. I believe it is a fundamental duty for our government to protect the most vulnerable among us, which is why I am committed to advancing policies that champion the health, well-being, safety, and education of children in Washington state.</p>
<p>Food insecurity is a major contributor to poor health and higher healthcare costs, what steps or legislative actions would you take to help food insecure people with chronic diseases, like diabetes, have access to nutritious food?</p>	<p>We live in a beautiful, bountiful state where we are fortunate in being able to grow an abundance of fresh produce. As your mission states, hunger doesn't have to happen. I am a huge advocate of social safety net programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the nutrition program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and recognize that the majority of the funding for these programs comes from the federal government. In my view, improving access to nutritious food should come from collaboration and community partnerships between the state government and existing social services and nonprofit organizations. The state should provide funding so that all people living in Washington have access to wholesome, nutritious food. I support Medicare and Medicaid expansion and understand that like housing, healthcare has become unaffordable for many. As a cancer survivor, I experienced the exorbitant costs of treatment firsthand. I am also the legal guardian of my nephew who has diabetes. I'm aware that diet can be a contributing factor to chronic illness. I know that food is medicine and having proper nutrition can be healing and prevent diseases. I support universal healthcare so everyone has access to the health care they need. I consider access to nutritious food to be an aspect of a holistic approach to healthcare.</p>

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Food Lifeline | 815 S 96th Street, Seattle 98108 | foodlifeline.org

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