



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.

Ted Cooke	Candidate for Washington State House of Representatives, District 47, Position 2 (Covington)
<p>If elected, what will you do to end hunger, alleviate poverty, and create opportunity in Washington state?</p>	<p>Reducing barriers to work starts with reducing barriers to employers. I support streamlining state business regulations and streamlining & lowering state business taxes. I also support easing aspects of the ACA framework which have forced many employers to offer less than full time employment and low wages. Regarding school lunches, right now many schools try to socialize lunch by charging top dollar to paying students and offering credit to many poorer students. The debt is then simply absorbed by the school at the end of the school year. I would like to see every school have an on-site kitchen, even if it's just a 15' by 20' space with some industrial cooking equipment. I'd like to see schools go back to offering cheap staples such as burgers, hotdogs, tater-tots and chocolate milk, at cost, so students could pay closer to \$5 a meal rather than \$10. For students who still can't pay, I'd like to explore the state doing some equivalent of a food stamp program where the student gets a number of discreet stamps and they are responsible for them; if a student uses their stamps by Wednesday, they'll have to go without on Thursday or Friday. No more offering credit. My hope would be that by incentivizing responsibility we would be helping move students towards behavior and choices that help lift people out of poverty. Finally, I support a work requirement for able-bodied welfare recipients. There are already robust job-finding resources available to unemployment insurance recipients and extending these services to more of the welfare system in general will help restore the dignity of working and embarkment on the career ladder for many of those who can work, allowing the system to focus on the most truly needy and those who are work challenged.</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>In my answer to the first question I addressed reducing burdens on employers to increase the job market, making school food programs more effective and encouraging able-bodied individuals to work when receiving welfare. I believe these are the same steps needed to take pressure off the welfare system so it can focus on those who are truly needy- those who are work challenged and those with infants and small children. I also think we need to allow government</p>

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	<p>partnership with expressly religious organizations such as Catholic Charities and the Salvation Army. Drug and alcohol dependency among parents is another factor in childhood poverty and I strongly support bi-partisan efforts in the state legislature to increase the availability of mental health services across the state. Finally strong marriages and families are the best deterrent to childhood poverty and I think our public schools should always seek to affirm the primacy of parents and families in establishing student's values.</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>Medicare and Medicaid are insurers of last resort and right now both systems are inundated with people moved onto them by the ACA, people who in many cases are young, healthy and could easily be getting insurance in the private sector. I support removing ACA restrictions on health insurance plans so the private sector can offer people plans that don't make them pay to cover procedures they'll never need. I also support cross-state insurance and provider competition. And I support encouraging true competition in the drug industry, and drug competition across the border with Canada. These common sense steps would free up Medicare and Medicaid to focus on the truly needy. As a side effect they would also help lower some of the large premiums that family budgets have been struggling under. With more responsive medical care and cheaper prescriptions people will be in a much better position to take advantage of welfare and charitable food services. And the system will be able to better focus on getting help to those who cannot help themselves.</p>

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