



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.

<p>Mari Leavitt</p>	<p>Candidate for State Representative, District 28, Position 1 (University Place)</p>
<p>In Washington, 1 in 6 children experience food insecurity. What steps or legislative actions would you take to address child poverty and hunger?</p>	<p>Food security issues have been a priority of mine this past term and from the moment I came into office. That’s why I joined and am an active member of our legislative team’s Food Fighter group. Programs like Breakfast Before the Bell are great starting points but we must do more. This past term, I worked on a bill that we rolled into a colleague’s bill to ensure college students can access their EBT on campuses and pushed for a waiver. I also passed a bill that increased WIC dollars for the farmers market to a higher rate as those dollars need to stretch farther. Further, I introduced a bill that would require school districts to assign a coordinator to connect with families to let them know about community meal programs during breaks and summer time. In addition, I spearheaded a Pierce County delegation letter this interim to ensure transportation dollars across our State stayed intact and worked with the Governor’s office and OSPI so that bus drivers can continue to deliver school meals to our kids. I regularly shared meal program information to various groups in my district during the interim. I reached out to school superintendents to find out what they are doing to get meals out. I visited with our National Guard at a food delivery program in my district as they served in that critical food delivery role and met with a provider in Nourish. I reached out and had several conversations with our local food providers to find out what they needed and brought that forward to legislative conversations. I called a local reporter two different times to get word out and stories about food programs and eligibility dates coming up (which they ran in local paper). The list goes on. I also worked on a series of bills related to poverty and secured 2.5 million to remove the shelter penalty, received funds for a community dental clinic in my district, secured \$1m for a teen homeless shelter, proposed and passed a bill on low-income housing, expanded ECEAP slots, and again, the list goes on. These are just a few examples. Early learning programs, stability for homeless students and youth in foster care need to be a focus of our</p>



	<p>efforts. As a mom who adopted two children from the foster care system, I am acutely aware of the challenges these families face. Investing in our youth is a key priority of my campaign. Children are our most important resource. We need to bolster our social safety net to ensure that we are providing all of our children with the basic support systems they need to be healthy, safe, and able to learn—this includes a wide net of social services such as an availability of affordable housing and support for foster families. Early learning programs, and stability for homeless students, children, and youth in foster care. We can't continue the race to the bottom where we are pitting all of these critical services against school funding. Addressing the education opportunity gap is another of our most pressing issues regarding struggling youth. We must invest in wrap-around services, mental health services, ESL, and other programs that will ensure children can get the assistance they need to be successful and feel supported and encouraged when they go to school. Also, many of the homeless youth in Washington are LGBTQ. I am the step-mother to a gay son, and I strongly believe that advancing policies that help all LGBTQ individuals to lead happy and successful lives free from discrimination will help lift many people out of poverty.</p>
<p>If elected, in what areas would you support making investments to overcome racial inequities?</p>	<p>As a daughter of a Japanese mother and mother of two African American children, and one who has lived in multicultural environments as a military kid, I'm especially aware of the critical nature that equity is to health, education, and employment options for the success of disadvantaged young people. Every decision I make is viewed through a lens of equity for communities. I wrote my Master's Thesis on Persistence of Native American Students in WA Community and Technical Colleges 25 years ago. In my past work at community colleges, I wrote and received grants for programs for students of color including environmental assessments and culture assessments. I also regularly brought in programs for community members to learn about issues of racial disparity and hate crimes, including programs on white privilege. We can and must do better to ensure marginalized groups feel empowered and have a voice at the table. I will continue to thoughtfully engage the many diverse communities in the 28th LD. I supported several pieces of legislation this past term from the hair discrimination bill,</p>

Please note that Food Lifeline is a nonprofit, nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization and is prohibited from participating or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.

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

10/15/20



	<p>hate crime legislation, establishing an office of equity, policy relating to language relating to persons with disabilities, honored legislation for Dolores Huertas Day, and a host of other policy bills voted on or co-sponsored in the House. I worked on several pieces of housing and homelessness legislation as a member of the Housing Committee, as well as ensuring redlining practices of the past do not continue. I am also a strong advocate for doing everything we can to ensure we reduce the opportunity gap in education as well as provide for the health of communities of color by reducing harmful environmental impacts to clean air as air pollution impacts communities of color more so. Further, I work hard to ensure housing options are provided equitably and that redlining practices of the past do not move forward. I also primed legislation to expand post-secondary options in prisons as people of color are significantly overrepresented in the inmate population and we need to ensure persons have skills when released in order to get to work. I also support ethnic studies required legislation. I would always like to know if there is work I can do or changes I can make to be a better ally to the Black community. I always will welcome your feedback and conversations about how I can best promote equity and racial justice. I'm proud to have the endorsement of the Tacoma Black Collective for my re-election bid for 2020.</p>
<p>How will you address the role of government and taxes during your campaign and address this issue in the legislature should you be elected? Specifically, are you supportive of tax code reform? Taxing capital gains in Washington state? And funding the state's Working Families Tax Credit?</p>	<p>Right now, I support the work of the Tax Reform Task Force and look forward to what recommendations they bring forward for review. This is an extremely important question that will define the next few years' legislative cycles. Our middle class is increasingly asked to shoulder more and more of the tax burden with skyrocketing property taxes, increased gas taxes, additional bridge toll costs, and unsustainable tax breaks with loopholes for the wealthiest few. I will continue to be a strong advocate against any more regressive taxes, and will fight for transparency and accountability in our budget system. I will emphasize sustainable revenue resources professors and experts in the field, and of course, workers and families to find these new sources of revenue that won't crush our middle class and working families.</p>
<p>Please describe policies and investments you would support to improve farm worker rights and living conditions, if you are</p>	<p>Farm workers represent the backbone of American labor and I am deeply committed to improving their rights and living conditions. I supported SB 6261 to hold farm labor contractors accountable for their recruiting practices. I have</p>

Please note that Food Lifeline is a nonprofit, nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization and is prohibited from participating or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.

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

10/15/20



elected?

also sponsored and supported many bills that protect the rights of all workers, including those in the agricultural sector. I would support legislation that more strictly regulates the conditions in living spaces for farm workers, as well as legislation that increases their wages and provides more worker protections.

If elected, what will you do to alleviate hunger and poverty, and create economic opportunity for Washington state residents?

See responses above as this was covered there as well. Economic opportunity is a great equalizer. When that sense of equal pay for equal work is stripped away, the notion of racial equity tips towards a dangerous path of further widening the opportunity and achievement gap. We must work against discriminatory policies and practices that continue to diminish the rights of people of color. I am committed to ensuring every person in Washington state has the ability to be successful and valued in the economy. When it comes to higher education, we need to work on making college more affordable. The single greatest way to grow our economy is to invest in our institutions of higher learning. That means making tuition more affordable and increasing accessibility for our next generation of workers. By easing the financial burden of opportunity we will see greater equity among all people in Washington state, as higher education is the key to opportunity and upward mobility. Data bears out that a person's socioeconomic status is considerably improved when one completes some form of postsecondary education. The reality is that over 90% of jobs will need some form of postsecondary education in a degree or certificate or apprenticeship program in order for workers to be successful. The success of our communities are dependent on a strong and cohesive system of postsecondary options in our State. Washington in many leads the way in our institutions and options and we can not simply afford to slide backwards. These programs must be affordable and accessible to meet those needs. I began my journey through higher education at Tacoma Community College, and I am committed to ensuring every student in the 28th LD and across the state can also pursue affordable, quality education.

Yes/No Section

If elected, will you insist proposed laws, bills, policies, and practices

Yes

Please note that Food Lifeline is a nonprofit, nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization and is prohibited from participating or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.

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

10/15/20



be evaluated for racial justice and equity?	
Will you commit to implementing the state Food Policy Forum's recommendations to mitigate the agricultural symptoms of climate change and to help farmers adapt?	Yes
Will you commit to supporting efforts to reduce wasted food if you are elected?	Yes
Do you believe that every human being deserves physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life?	Yes

Please note that Food Lifeline is a nonprofit, nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization and is prohibited from participating or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.

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

10/15/20