



Candidate Questionnaire

November 2022 Midterm Election

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

Michaela Kelso	Candidate for Washington State House District 6
<p>In Washington, 1 in 6 children experience food insecurity. What steps or legislative actions would you take to address child hunger?</p>	<p>While I thankfully never needed any assistance beyond using WIC, from conversation with others I know that most government assistance programs seem to be designed to discourage people from seeking help. We need to remove barriers to access to government help. Having social workers and community health nurses in rural areas who conduct active outreach, instead of bureaucrats who are waiting for families to come to them is action we can take at the state level. One way to address child hunger is by expanding free pre-school to all communities, accompanied by proper funding for healthy nutrition programs. Expanded (refundable) child tax credits (although that's at the federal level) puts money straight into parents' hands. And universal healthcare! If parents can take their children to regular screenings, problems like food insecurity can be addressed much sooner, before they cause significant damage (plus, they'll have more money available at the end of the month due to no more medical bills).</p>
<p>If elected, in what areas would you support making investments to overcome structural racism and racial inequities?</p>	<p>Establishing working groups with stakeholders to determine which areas the affected communities want listed as priority projects. It will depend on local issues, but I would expect to work on many of the following issues (and probably more than these): Public transportation infrastructure. Establish a grant program to help people upgrade their homes to make them more energy efficient, and healthier to live in. Prioritize pollution remediation efforts in communities of color Prioritize school funding targeting under-served areas Increase access to recreational areas (stress reduction) Housing availability/homeowner ship programs Potentially setting rent controls in areas with unsustainable growth and gentrification.</p>
<p>Discussion of reforms to public safety and law enforcement are often polarizing but require law enforcement and community working together to focus on facts and agree on solutions. If elected, will you commit to working on these issues and what outcomes would you prioritize?</p>	<p>Increase funding for community resources, mental health treatment access, diversion programs. Ending the school to prison pipeline is a major goal, along with more equitable application of the law. Reworking the curriculum of LE training facilities with a greater emphasis on de-escalation. Bail reform: If bonds are really needed (which most of the time they are not), they should be set not only based on the severity of the alleged crime, but also on potential impacts continued incarceration would mean for the suspect and their family. If non-violent offenders are forced to remain behind bars simply because they cannot afford bail, locking</p>

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	<p>them up will punish their families more than the individual. Lost income cannot be easily replaced by the remaining parent if the other one is behind bars.</p> <p>Stop charging children as adults. They are not adults, no matter how horrible the crime was.</p>
<p>What measures will you support that promote equity and fairness in Washington’s tax code and create more opportunity for community investment?</p>	<p>I know it's very unpopular, but we need to think about establishing a state income tax. Right now, it is renters who pay property taxes on homes and apartments they don't own, often to fund schools and other local infrastructure they do not benefit from. Decoupling school funding, including teachers' pay, funding for fire districts, and emergency services from property taxes should result in a lower tax burden for most residents of WA, while staggered income tax rates ensure that those who can afford to pay more do so.</p>
<p>If elected, what will you do to alleviate hunger and poverty, and create economic opportunity for Washington state residents?</p>	<p>In the short term, raise income limits for assistance programs and remove barriers to accessing them. Fully funded pre-school and free school meals for all children attending public schools will make it easier for their parents to budget and reduce their monthly expenses related to child rearing. At the same time these programs will need to be staffed with qualified candidates.</p>
<p>Yes/No Section</p>	
<p>Will you commit to support a 1% levy on wealth held in financial assets, such as stocks and bonds for individuals of worth over \$1 billion?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>Will you support expanding access to school meals at no student cost?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>If elected, will you insist proposed laws, bills, policies, and practices be evaluated for racial justice and equity?</p>	
<p>Will you commit to supporting the work of the Food Policy Forum and its recommendations?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>Will you commit to implementing the recommendations in the Use Food Well Washington plan?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>

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