**Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO**

# 2024 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire

The Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO (WSLC) represents over 550,000 rank-and-file workers, represented by over [600 local unions](https://www.wslc.org/category/who-we-are/affiliated-unions/) and councils of 60 national and international unions from every corner of Washington’s economy. The WSLC is the largest labor organization in our state and is the only state organization representing all AFL-CIO unions.

The WSLC is the voice of Washington’s working families, and our endorsements require serious deliberation. Please answer all questions, sign on the last page, and consider signing the supplemental Statement of Principles. You are welcome to email or mail your completed questionnaire, but please make sure it is signed. You may add as much additional space as you need to answer the questions.

Upon receipt of your **completed and signed** questionnaire, you will be contacted with next steps and information to set up a candidate interview with a local Central Labor Council.

**Questionnaires should be returned to the attention of Osta Davis, Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO Political and Strategic Campaigns Director, at endorsements@wslc.org or 321 16th Ave South, Seattle, WA 98144.** You may also contact Osta at 206-817-1124 or odavis@wslc.org with questions.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful participation in the WSLC endorsement process.

# Campaign Information

**Candidate Name:**   **Pronouns:**

**Office Seeking:**   **District:** Please Choose One

**Party:**

**Incumbent  Challenger  Open Seat**

**Do you currently hold, or have you previously held public office(s)? Describe:**

**Have you received a Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO endorsement in the past? If so, for which office(s)?**

**Have you received any endorsement from unions/locals in this 2024 campaign cycle? If so, please list here.**

**Official Campaign Committee Name:**

**Campaign Address:**   **City:**   **State:**   **Zip Code:**

**Campaign Phone:**   **Campaign Email:**

**Campaign Website:**

**Social Media Handles:**

**Campaign Consultant:**   **Campaign Manager:**   **Email:**   **Phone:**

**Are You a Veteran? Yes  No**

**Are you now or have you ever been a union member? Yes  No**

**Please list union(s) and local(s):**

# **Rewriting the Rules of the Economy to Build a Better Future for Workers**

**The policy choices we make today determine whether working people share in the benefits of economic growth and technological progress. The Washington State Legislature must prioritize policies that equip workers and families with tools to improve their lives.**

**Please respond to the following questions to support your stance on these key issues:**

# Union Representation:

U.S. Supreme Court rulings have undermined workers’ abilities to negotiate with their employers. By imposing “Right-to-Work” policies from the bench, the Courts have forced unions to provide services for free to all workers, regardless of whether or not they pay union fees, effectively weakening their negotiating power.

**How would you respond to “Right-to-Work” attacks in Washington State and demonstrate your support for workers to join together to strengthen their voices at work?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Do you commit to supporting public employees’ contract fights?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Employers can refuse to negotiate fair contracts with workers, force strikes, and use families’ financial distress as a bargaining strategy. Do you support extending unemployment insurance to striking workers to level the playing field?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

# Economic Climate:

Washington is considered a high-skill, high-wage state and has one of the highest standards of living in the country. Washington is consistently ranked as a top 10 state in the country in which to do business, by both Forbes and CNBC, with much of this business coming from the Puget Sound area. But at the same time, many business associations decry our state as bad for business claiming wages are too high and workers’ compensation and unemployment insurance benefits are too generous.

**How do you view Washington’s economic climate?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**How would you make our economy stronger in office?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

# Retirement Security:

For several decades, Americans’ ability to retire with dignity has been eroding. As employers have taken defined-benefit pensions away, and high-fee 401(k) plans have become increasingly common, workers have found themselves without the means to retire decently.

**As an elected official, how would you address the retirement crisis?**Click or tap here to enter text.

**Would you commit to opposing efforts to cap existing pensions and replace them with savings plans that guarantee no benefit at retirement?**Click or tap here to enter text.

**Would you support public employee pension benefit improvements?**Click or tap here to enter text.

**Do you commit to fully funding public employee pensions like PERS, TRS, PSERS, and LEOFF?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

# Racial Justice:

Racism is a system of oppression, designed to divide the working class so the wealthy elite can consolidate their wealth and power at the very top. At the WSLC, we believe this to be true. Since 2015, WSLC delegates have passed three resolutions affirming this, and we have committed ourselves to doing the work to become an anti-racist organization. Union membership helps close the racial wealth gap: as long as it exists, the racial wealth gap hurts us all. In a study by American Progress, over a 10-year period: “Black households with a union member have median wealth that is more than three times the median wealth of nonunion Black households. Hispanic households with a union member have median wealth that is more than five times the median wealth of nonunion Hispanic households.” We are moving an anti-racist agenda in our unions because economic justice and racial justice are inextricably linked.

**As an elected official how will you commit yourself to supporting policies to make sure that the economy works for people of all backgrounds, and especially for Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities?**Click or tap here to enter text.

**How will you address the economic disparities that permeate our state and what policies would you propose to lift up economic opportunities for BIPOC families?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Which anti-racist groups and community organizations have you partnered with and how have anti-racist principles guided your public service?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

# Protecting Immigrant Workers and Communities:

The Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO supports all working people in Washington, including immigrants and refugees. The WSLC supports working people with temporary protections granted by the executive branch through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals and Temporary Protected Status programs. By extending relief and work authorization to more than a million people, DACA and TPS have helped prevent unscrupulous employers from exploiting unprotected workers to drive down wages and conditions for all working people in our country. We believe in raising wages and standards, empowering workers, and creating pathways to citizenship for all those whose labor helps our country prosper. We oppose immigration enforcement tactics like raids at the workplace and believe extending workplace protections for immigrants regardless of immigration status will allow all workers to assert labor rights on the job.

**What role should the Washington State Legislature play in helping ensure safer workplaces and the basic rights of immigrant and refugee workers?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Would you support policies that raise standards and increase protections for immigrant farm workers, undocumented workers, refugees, TPS holders, and undocumented students?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Would you support legislation to expand or build safety net programs for otherwise excluded immigrant workers?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

# Climate Change:

As the average global temperature increases, those of us with the least means will surely carry the greatest burden. We have seen this manifest in Washington State during periods of extended drought, record-breaking heat waves, and devastating wildfires during the summer months. Farmworkers, firefighters, construction workers, utility workers, and others have put their health on the line to perform their essential work in support of our economy and well-being. As Washington continues to lead the way on clean-energy policies, we can ensure quality union jobs and protections for displaced workers are at the center of the clean-energy conversation.

**As an elected official, will you commit yourself to supporting policies to reduce carbon emissions by investing in high-quality, union-represented, low-carbon jobs in much-needed green energy, water, and transportation infrastructure?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Would you support a transition program to maintain employment, wages, retirement, and health care, and also help displaced workers find work in their communities in low-or-no-carbon industries? How?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Do you commit to partnering with labor to drive carbon reduction strategies that grow employment and unionization opportunities?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

# Healthcare:

As a labor movement, we represent frontline care providers and the working people who make care possible. In the workplace, increasing consolidation and corporate culture takeover of health care have created a staffing crisis that drives burnout and trauma amongst workers and puts licensure and safe patient care at risk.

**When it comes to healthcare affordability, access, and quality, will you stand with workers, consumers, and purchasers in reducing costs?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Will you support mandatory safe patient-to-worker staffing standards, breaks and overtime protections, and oversight that ensures quality patient care even if your local hospital objects?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**70% of us will need help with meals, moving around, or fulfilling basic care needs and other tasks for daily living, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Do you support expanding or strengthening programs that assist people with aging in place, in their homes?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

# Quality Education:

To best support our future workforce, our education system must attract and retain quality, caring educators and help students at all levels thrive. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, more students are coming to school with severe issues caused by trauma, social/emotional learning gaps, and mental health needs. Creating a safe learning environment is a critical part of helping all students achieve their full potential.

**Do you support fully funding K-12 basic education including professional, competitive compensation and benefits for educators, as well as additional mental health staff (school counselors, nurses, psychologists, social workers, etc.) necessary to meet the needs of our students?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**School voucher programs divert funds from public schools and have historically led to increased segregation, worse academic outcomes, a lack of accountability, and disinvestment from rural schools. Explain your stance as it relates to school voucher programs.**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**The federal government states** **affordability for childcare costs is a family paying no more than 7% of their income for care.  This will require major public investment, both in making these good jobs, and in helping families with the cost of care while also building more facilities near the places we live and work.  How will you ensure that these public dollars go towards making these good jobs with high labor standards?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

# Public Services:

As a labor movement, solidarity and supporting one another is a fundamental value. Public services are a crucial part of our social safety net and benefit our communities as a whole. Often they are used to offer support for people and communities during their most vulnerable times, and often help keep families and individuals out of poverty. Our state employees, the very individuals that provide the safety net, take on unsustainable workloads due to understaffing and causing many to leave public service for less stressful work at the same or higher pay.

**What potential solutions do you think would improve employment retention in the state's public services workforce?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**How would you advocate for a healthy and thriving work environment for state employees?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Would you support paying state employees a thriving wage?**

Click or tap here to enter text.

# YES OR NO SECTION:

In this section, please respond with either ***“Yes” or “No”*** regarding your stance on these important policy issues.

Apprenticeships:

Washington State has more than 300 occupations with state-registered apprenticeships in fields ranging from construction to health care, to aerospace manufacturing, to the culinary arts. Apprenticeships are 2-5-year programs – commonly funded by employers and employees, not the state – that combine on-the-job training with classroom hours. New workers (“apprentices”) work under the supervision of experienced (“journey level”) workers.

**Would you promote union apprenticeship opportunities by leveraging tax, education, and workforce development policies?**Yes  or No

Contracting of Public Services:

Some argue that the state government should be reduced in size. They support privatizing certain state functions such as the state printing office, state prisons, services for developmentally disabled folks, and more. In general, unions have opposed these efforts because they replace family wage public service jobs with low-paid private sector jobs that don’t necessarily save the state money due to contractors’ profits, and often lower the quality of service.

**Would you oppose the privatization of public services?** Yes  or No

Competitive Wages in Public Service:

The Office of Financial Management – State Human Resources (State HR) – is required by law (RCW 41.06.160) to conduct a salary survey to determine the prevailing pay rates for jobs that are comparable to state classified general government. According to a Survey conducted by the Office of Financial Management, 99% of surveyed state salary positions are below market value, with 66% being more than 25% below.

**As an elected official, will you commit to only supporting budgets that ratify and fund Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs)?** Yes  or No

Gig/Task Based Economy:

The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) excludes workers classified as “Independent Contractors” from organizing under the Act. Increasingly though, more and more employers, especially in the emerging task-based economy, are misclassifying workers as independent contractors. This misclassification exploits workers, weakens Unions, severely hinders workers’ rights, and limits workers’ access to Union representation and denies revenue to the State.

**Would you support legal and political efforts by these misclassified workers to form and join a labor organization?** Yes  or No

Rest breaks:

Under state rule, an employee may not be required to work more than three hours without a paid rest break. The current rules stipulate that workers should receive at least a 10-minute, uninterrupted rest break unless the nature of the work permits the use of intermittent breaks that add up to ten minutes. Widespread evidence across industries reveals that workers are not getting ten minutes of uninterrupted breaks and that the intermittent break rule has resulted in workers simply not getting breaks at work.

**Would you propose policies to ensure workers are not being exploited and are getting all meal and rest breaks to which they are entitled?** Yes  or No

Revenue and Tax Break Accountability:

Washington has faced a structural revenue deficit for more than a decade. Our system of taxes and tax exemptions hasn’t always raised sufficient revenue to cover the social, educational, health, public safety, and infrastructure needs of our growing population. In addition, our tax structure is considered to be one of the most regressive in the nation. Yet, until recently, the most common tax policies passed by the Legislature have been to create special breaks for big businesses, without ensuring that only the best jobs are created for this preferential treatment.

**Would you support a more progressive tax structure?** Yes  or No

**If considering tax incentives, would you ensure that they are tied to tried and true labor standards, job maintenance, and investments in our workforce here in Washington?** Yes  or No

**Do you support the use of tax policy to promote job training and apprenticeship opportunities in construction and manufacturing?** Yes  or No

**Do you support lifting the 1% property tax lid for local government?** Yes  or No

Wage Theft:

It is illegal to not pay or to underpay workers, but many times workers are forced to work off the clock and are not paid their owed wages. The state is also shortchanged in unpaid taxes, unemployment insurance, workers’ compensation premiums, and other social insurance premiums. There is currently no effective administrative remedy to protect workers who were retaliated against for speaking up about wage theft.

**As an elected official, would you commit to addressing wage theft and enforcing wage laws, leave laws, and anti-discrimination laws?** Yes  or No

**Have you ever experienced wage theft?** Yes  or No

Worker Protections:

We have many great workplace protections in Washington — wage and hour, equal pay, health and safety, and anti-discrimination laws. But wage theft, work hazards, and discrimination are problems all too common across industries, and enforcement agencies often have years-long backlogs resulting in less protections for workers.

**Do you support creating private pathways for workers to achieve and maintain fairness in the workplace, and generating the resources for stronger state enforcement?** Yes  or No

**Would you support increasing workers’ access to legal avenues to be made whole?**

Yes  or No

Workers’ Compensation:

Washington State has a workers’ compensation system that has guaranteed injured workers sure and certain relief, in exchange for giving up the right to sue their employers when they are hurt on the job. Some employers have chosen to self-insure their workers’ compensation coverage – opting out of the state system – and others have formed special rating groups to reduce their rates. Unfortunately, many of these employers aggressively manage claims in an effort to suppress them, attempting to reduce costs at the expense of injured workers’ well-being. Either through endless protests and appeals, or through intrusive, frequent medical examinations, some employers have sought to deny relief to workers who are just trying to heal.

**Would you support policies to reduce workplace injuries, and hold accountable employers who refuse to put in place necessary protections?** Yes  or No

**Would you support proposals to increase oversight of third-party interests in our workers’ compensation system like retrospective rating groups and self-insured third-party administrators?** Yes  or No

### Please explain why your candidacy should earn the endorsement of the Washington State Labor Council and its members:

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Candidate Signature:**

**Date Signed:**

**STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS**

***The Chance to Make Life Better, The Freedom to Join a Union***

As a candidate for public office, I am committed to making our community a better place to live and work. I support efforts to raise living standards and to promote good schools, safe streets, a trained workforce, and a vibrant local economy. I know that the quality of life in our community depends on the quality of our jobs, and I recognize that unions give employees a voice at work, improve productivity, and contribute to the economic vitality of our community.

I respect the right of every working person to pursue equality, opportunity, and a better life for themselves and their families. I understand that the decision to join together in a union belongs exclusively to employees, not their employers. I believe that any employer that uses unscrupulous or unlawful tactics designed to harass, threaten, or fire workers for trying to form a union, does its employees and our community a great disservice. I fully support the principle, guaranteed under federal law, that employees are entitled to a free choice to form a union without interference, intimidation, or fear of reprisals.

I am committed to stand by working families that are trying to make life better by forming unions. I will urge employers to remain neutral, respect the choices of their employees, and voluntarily recognize a union when a majority of workers have indicated the desire to join one. I will stand with striking workers who want a fair return on their work. I will monitor what goes on in workplaces in our community and speak out when employers abuse their power.

Additionally, I am committed to supporting union workers during my campaign and will use a union printer and sign shop for printing needs, and work with union stage employees for campaign events.

On behalf of all working families in our community, I will raise my voice to help restore the chance to make life better and the freedom to join a union.

This is my commitment.

**Name (print):**

**Signed:**

**Office Held/Sought:**

**Date:**