



Andrea Suarez Urbanist Questionnaire 2024

State Representative, LD43, Position 2

Do you think Washington state should have an income tax (yes/no)? If yes, what is the legislative path? If not, what forms of progressive revenue would you champion?

Unfortunately, the voters of Washington have repeatedly voted against an income tax. While I support an income tax, I think there needs to be an education program to better explain how low- and middle-income people would benefit from a state income tax.

Today, about 40% of Americans do not pay any Federal income tax. I would support exempting these people from a state income tax. I also believe a state income tax proposal needs to consider a state equivalent of the federal earned income tax credit.

I would also make it easy for those who would pay a state income tax by requiring them to pay a percentage of their federal income tax. They could fill out the state form in just a few minutes.

To get passage of a state income tax, regressive taxes will need to be reduced. However, an initiative to create an income tax and reduce regressive taxes would likely be declared unconstitutional because of the prohibition of two subject initiatives. Maybe first passing a so-called gateway amendment to allow two subject tax initiatives might be a good way to proceed.



How would you vote on a transit-oriented development bill without an explicit affordability mandate and why?

Hard work deserves affordable housing! I would support an affordability mandate and support social housing initiatives. I would oppose a transit-oriented development without an explicit affordability mandate.

Do you support the rent stabilization and renter protection bill (HB 2114) that made it through the State House last year? If so, how would you approach ensuring its passage in both chambers?

I would have supported HB 2114. I am optimistic that it will pass in the 2025 session because two Democratic senators from the 5th and 24th district who opposed it are running for higher office and will likely be replaced by house members who supported 2114.

What are the highest priority items on your housing agenda?

Affordability is number one. One of the reasons for people are living on the streets and in encampments is mental health and addiction problems. I support housing first with a policy of prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery.

We also must work to prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place. Too many people live on the edge and can become homeless because of an illness, losing their job, or even a car breakdown. It is much cheaper to prevent them from becoming homeless in the first place than finding them a place to live later.



What's your roadmap to fixing educational inequities in Washington state? How can Washington state comply with its constitutional duties regarding education, especially in light of several school districts including Seattle's contemplating school closures to grapple with deficits?

This is another example of how inflation is impacting critical government services. Nothing is more important than the education of our children. I am especially troubled by the proposal to close 20 schools in Seattle and many districts across the state having similar problems.

The Tukwila School District has a high percentage of children from low-income families and is one of the districts in the state that cannot make ends meet. Tukwila has a huge tax base with Southcenter Mall and all the warehouses and businesses south of the mall. This clearly shows there is a problem with the state K-12 educational funding. We must think out of the box and find creative and innovative solutions.

What share of the state's transportation budget should be for alternatives to cars, such as transit, biking, and pedestrian infrastructure?

The state is projecting transportation revenue to decrease by \$56 million and we have a ferry crisis that must be solved. I strongly support pedestrian infrastructure improvements that make it easy and safe to access transit.

Do you support permitting jurisdictions to choose to hold elections in even years? What other election reforms excite you?



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I support giving the voters the choices of how to run elections in their jurisdictions.

Due to the interventions of ballot-initiative-monger Tim Eyman and a state legislature that caved to him even after a lawsuit overturned the measure in 2007, Washington State has a 1% cap on property tax increases, greatly tying the hands of local governments and forcing them to use ballot measures to fund basic services. Do you think this cap should remain? If so, what tools will you give local governments to deal with the [fiscal cliff they're facing](#)?

The 1% cap was part of a Tim Eyman initiative. Despite the courts declaring it unconstitutional, the Democratic controlled legislature passed the 1% limit, and it was signed into law by Democratic Governor Locke. I think that was a mistake because the legislation created no flexibility in times of high inflation and could be adjusted as more areas incorporated into cities or were annexed. It is important to note that this is a state-wide problem. Not just an urban county problem.

If the legislature raises the 1% cap, an initiative will likely pass and return the cap to 1% so we are back to square 1.

I think educational programs that shows people their tax dollars are not being wasted is important. A perfect example is homelessness in King County. In the past ten years over a billion dollars has been spent on homelessness in the county and the problem is worse. I support shelter first. Taking new and innovative approaches to solve homelessness in King County would be a good start for the educational process.