



Liz Berry Urbanist Questionnaire 2024

State Representative, LD36, 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?

Yes, however I am not sure there is a legislative path as the House and Senate just overwhelmingly passed I-2221 which prohibits the state and local governments from enacting a personal income tax. I voted NO.

We know all too well that Washington state has one of the most up-side down tax systems in the country. We've created a combination of taxes that means those people making the least pay over 15% of their income toward state and local taxes, the middle class pays 10%, and the richest pay about 3%. This is wrong and it's not sustainable. We cannot continue to fund our most vital programs on the backs of the poor and working class, while the wealthy and corporations don't pay their fair share. I was honored to vote for the Working Families Tax Credit that provided 400,000 families with a tax credit of \$300 to \$1,200 per year, benefiting one in four children in our state. We also passed a capital gains excise tax with my support that ensures the wealthiest Washingtonians share in the responsibility of funding critical needs like childcare, early learning, and our paramount duty of providing an education for every child. You can count on my support for ongoing tax reform including a payroll tax on high earners and a Wealth Tax.

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



*

I was proud to cosponsor and vote for HB 2160 which balanced affordability and making development practical in a TOD policy. I don't believe a bill without affordability would have the votes to pass the House, but I have also observed that affordability is a harder sell in the Senate. Hopefully that changes next year.

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?

Yes, I cosponsored and proudly voted for HB 2114 on the House Floor. It died in the Senate and I believe it will have the votes next year due to changes in the Senate but also because this issue is wildly popular with the public and our constituents are demanding action.

What are the highest priority items on your housing agenda?

Rent stabilization, TOD, beef up enforcement for HB 1110 and increase the State's capital investments to build and acquire more affordable and transitional housing.

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?



My son attends John Hay Elementary in Queen Anne and my daughter attends a Seattle Preschool Program at Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center in Discovery Park. Our school is on the list for closure so this is personal to me. It is clear the prototypical school funding model the Legislature passed in response to McCleary is inadequate and should be fixed. Since I was elected in 2020, I have been a strong advocate for the State to abolish its arbitrary cap on special education funding and increase the amount each school district receives for pupil transportation. However this is not enough to close the SPS budget gap. SPS has been steadily losing students and I am frustrated there has not been an analysis about why students are leaving and where they are going. Closing neighborhood elementary schools will be extremely disruptive and I don't have confidence that this plan will solve the underlying issues SPS is facing now and into the future.

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

As the only Seattle member serving on the House Transportation Committee, I am proud to be your urbanist voice. In 2021, we passed a transformational 16-year transportation package that makes meaningful, targeted action against climate change by investing \$5.4B in green transit, bike and pedestrian infrastructure; \$1.3B to electrify our ferry fleet; \$290M in Safe Routes to School programs; and commits 35% of Climate Commitment Act funds into programs serving communities of color, low-income and tribal communities. That's real money for alternatives to cars. The 2024 Supplemental Transportation budget includes \$30+ for green transit projects, \$22M for pedestrian, bike and sidewalk projects, \$196M for hybrid ferries and \$16M for ZEV school buses. I am proud to lead a growing contingent in the Legislature advocating for a greater percentage of transportation funding to green infrastructure.



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

Yes, and I voted for HB 1932 on the House floor this year to do just that.

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](#)?

No, the Legislature should repeal the 1% cap on property tax increases for local governments and I strongly support this effort.