

2022 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire



Name: Leah Griffin
District Number: 34
Position (Representative or Senator): Representative (Position 1)
Email: info@voteleahgriffin.com



Your Responses via YouTube Video

<https://youtu.be/NGvgt29F87w>

1. Do you have a personal connection or professional experience with someone who has a intellectual/developmental disability (IDD), and if so, would you describe its impact on you? If not, what impact do you want to have for people with IDD and their families?

I do. My mentor growing up was pregnant my Sophomore year of high school when she gave birth very prematurely. Cole was born with a developmental disability, and I watched him struggle through school. My mother was also a paraprofessional for students with developmental disabilities, and when working, she never had the resources and staffing the students needed. Our education system needs to do a better job of supporting both students and the families of students with IDD, and I will work to ensure they have the support they need.

2. What are your top three priorities and how would you ensure people with developmental disabilities and their families are included in them?

Public safety, healthcare, and housing are my top priorities. Too often, those with I/DD are left out of the policy making process within these areas. If elected, I will work to ensure that the voices of those with I/DD and their families are centered within the formation of policies. Firstly, our approach to public safety fails to hold perpetrators of crime accountable and help victims of crime. I will work to create a more modern, effective public safety system which centers accountability and rehabilitation and combats systemic racism. We must provide individual access to behavioral health, job training, and social support services. Secondly, we need a single-payer, universal healthcare system in Washington. I have worked for nearly a decade to increase access to sexual assault nurse examiners, and what is clear is that the reason hospitals do not provide this necessary care is because it's not profitable. Individuals with I/DD across our state continue to lack access to comprehensive, affordable health care which includes dental, vision, and behavioral health services. Washingtonians with I/DD and their families deserve access to personal care and community residential services, which begins with implementing a health care system that places the needs of communities over profits. Finally, the cost of housing has become unattainable for middle and low income families- especially for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. When I bought a house in 2015, it was through a government program which helped first time home buyers. I look forward to crafting similar policies to increase home ownership affordability, as well as creating several thousand housing units across our cities through public development. New housing must be accessible for all, and I look forward to working with groups such as The Arc to ensure that each solution meets the needs of everyone within our communities.

3. If cuts became necessary due to a recession or economic downturn, how would you protect services that people with IDD and their families need?

It is vital that we implement legislation which protects all services for people with I/DD and their families so that cuts do not occur within recessionary periods. This process begins with forming a much more progressive tax code within Washington state so that revenue does not rely on cuts to these vital services. The first, most obvious addition to the tax code is a wealth tax. We have seen the tax burden of the wealthy shrink while working people's tax burden has increased, an inequality which has only deepened throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Those earning in the top percentages should be paying more. I support removing the tax caps that high earners benefit from, such as the \$147,000 cap on the family and parental leave tax. I would support a state income tax, and support the current support of implementing a constitutional amendment to make this tax possible. There are over 700 tax breaks in Washington that disproportionately benefit the wealthy that I would support eliminating. Increasing economic mobility is one of the biggest priorities of my campaign, and implementing a wealth tax in Washington State would be a large step in eliminating economic inequalities and ensuring that cuts to vital services- such as those for individuals with I/DD and their families- do not occur.

4. Is there other information you'd like constituents with developmental disabilities and their family and friends to know?

As a school librarian, I have seen first hand the failure of our education systems to include, account for, and uplift students with developmental and intellectual disabilities. I will work to insist that we consider the impact of legislation on girls, LGBTQ+ students, and students with disabilities. I look forward to working with The Arc of WA, if elected, to ensure that each and every policy that is crafted- in areas from housing to transportation to health care- accounts for the experiences and needs of those with I/DD and their families. Too many Washingtonians with I/DD continue to lack access to paid services from the Developmental Disabilities Administration, and I look forward to working to make sure that these programs are not only more accessible but more comprehensive and include personal care, employment support, and community residential and healthcare services.

Your Campaign Website

<https://www.voteleahgriffin.com>