



## **Manka Dhingra Urbanist Questionnaire 2024**

Washington State Attorney General

**The AG's office has many including both the defensive litigation necessary to divisions defending the state and the affirmative litigation the office pursues based on its policy priorities. Compared to what you see as the current balance between proactive and defensive litigation, are there any changes you would make in terms of resource allocation? If so, what?**

I believe Attorney General Bob Ferguson has done an excellent job balancing defensive and affirmative litigation. However, I see opportunities to enhance proactive efforts in key areas affecting Washington residents.

If Trump prevails in November, my top priority will be to protect Washingtonians from federal attacks on rights by the US Supreme Court and MAGA Republicans. I am deeply concerned about these potential threats and will use the full power of the Attorney General's office to defend our reproductive rights, voting rights, and civil liberties.

I plan to allocate more resources towards affirmative litigation, focusing on housing affordability, gender-based violence, the fentanyl crisis, healthcare access, and defending rights against federal encroachments. These are issues I have championed in the Senate and are critical for our communities.

Affordable housing remains a significant issue, particularly in King County. As AG, I will enforce tenant protections and hold landlords and developers accountable.

Healthcare access is crucial. I will scrutinize mergers and acquisitions in the healthcare sector to prevent practices that limit access and increase costs.

Consumer protection and environmental safeguarding are also priorities, ensuring robust enforcement and proactive engagement to protect our communities.



**Do you have a vision for how the AG could prevent and/or reduce housing instability and homelessness?**

Housing is a critical issue for our state. The exorbitant cost of housing creates significant barriers to homeownership and stable rental housing for young adults. I am proud of my record in the Senate, voting on legislation to expand access to affordable housing options, protect tenants from exploitative practices, and hold landlords and developers accountable for providing safe and affordable housing for all.

We must use every tool at our disposal to create more capacity for affordable housing which includes being a partner with our agencies on implementation of bills, working with cities to help with zoning laws and other potential citing issues. I was proud to support 'missing middle' legislation as an important step toward creating more home ownership opportunities and building generational wealth.

As Attorney General, I will be ensuring the AG's office is enforcing the laws protecting tenants, taking a look at allegations of rent fixing and will be an ardent vocal advocate for effective strategies to meet the needs of all Washingtonians to be housed.

**Is there affirmative litigation that your office bring to secure more affordable housing? Given that violations of landlord-tenant law are generally not covered by the Consumer Protection Act, should a new unit be formed to address abusive practices by landlords?**

Affordable housing is a critical issue. The exorbitant cost of housing creates significant barriers to homeownership and stable rental housing. As Senator, I am proud to have voted to expand access to affordable housing options, protect tenants from exploitative practices, and hold landlords and developers accountable for providing safe and affordable housing for all. I was proud to support 'missing middle' legislation as an important step to create more homeownership opportunities and build generational wealth.



As AG, I will enforce tenant protections. I believe a new unit addressing abusive landlord practices would be critical in helping investigate and prosecute cases of unlawful evictions, harassment, discrimination, and other violations of tenants' rights.

I will be a partner in ensuring siting and permitting issues are not a barrier to building more units. I will review statutes, policies, and procedures to attempt to streamline the process of purchasing land to get to the finished product. With my excellent relationship with the legislature, I will be a vocal advocate for effective strategies to meet the needs of all Washingtonians to be housed.

### **How would your office tackle issues of public safety, including reducing gun violence?**

I was the first candidate in WA to make gun violence prevention an official campaign platform in 2017. I have been a champion for gun violence prevention my entire legislative career. As a prosecutor, I have decades of experience working with survivors of violence, standing up for the most marginalized in our community, and having worked on removing guns from perpetrators of violence. For years, I have had concerns about individuals with a history of violence having access to firearms, and I have written and sponsored legislation to remove guns from individuals who are a danger to themselves and others. I have successfully sponsored gun legislation every single year and this year, my bill even had bi-partisan support. I created the Office of Firearm Safety and Violence Prevention in Washington.

As AG, I will continue to work closely with the Office of Firearm Safety and Violence prevention on data collection as well as preventative efforts to address gun violence. I am committed to ensuring we are doing preventative, early intervention, and enforcement in this arena in collaboration with all our community partners. I will create a team of dedicated AAGs to ensure we are implementing all the laws around ineligibility and surrender of firearms in the state. We know that enforcement of our gun laws is not occurring consistently across the state. As AG, I will be the first line of defense in defending all the legislation we passed in the last few years, legislation I helped write, sponsor and champion in the legislature.



**What plans do you have to further advance an agenda of economic justice? Do you have specific plans for certain divisions in that field, including the labor, consumer protection, or antitrust divisions?**

As AG, I will be working very closely with the legislature on all pieces of legislation addressing our upside down tax structure. As AG, I will ensure legislation is drafted with the best legal strategy to defend progressive tax revenues. I have been a vocal supporter of all our progressive legislation in the last 7 years and will continue to lead in this area.

I have spent the last seven years working on the Statewide Poverty Reduction Task Force, which examines systemic barriers in our community to address inequities and I have worked to remove barriers and lead policies that enable people to generate wealth and economic resiliency.

I was proud to sponsor legislation creating our state's first-ever statewide Office of Equity and have led on wage equity and worker protections. I also worked to ensure that every piece of legislation should be viewed from the lens of how it may adversely impact marginalized communities.

As a past union member, I have a 100% voting record with labor. Protecting bargaining rights, worker safety and addressing wage theft will always be a priority.

The antitrust division has to ensure that access to our basic rights of affordable food, housing and health are always protected. Scrutinizing mergers and acquisitions that undermine people's access to basic necessities will absolutely be critical.

Consumer protection is a huge priority for me, and we need laws to keep up with technology and the sophisticated manner in which all of us are targeted. We need education and outreach into communities so they know what their rights are and the role the attorney general can play in protecting them. As AG, I will lead nationally on issues around protection of personal identifying information and cybersecurity issues.

**What plans do you have to further advance an agenda of environmental justice? Do you have specific plans for certain divisions in that field, including the ecology and transit divisions?**



As a State Senator, I was an enthusiastic yes vote on SB 5126, establishing the Climate Commitment Act. I know the law and support the law– and I've been and will continue to be extremely vocal about the need to vote No on I-2117. When we defeat Initiative 2117, our work to protect our air, water, and climate will just be beginning. We must implement, enforce, and ensure that the law is meeting its goals while also ensuring that workers, low-income families, and historically disadvantaged communities are not left behind. In the case of the CCA, we must protect it from future legal challenges, undermining by future legislatures, and uneven application or adoption of programs and policies at the local level. I'll make sure the AGO is an engaged partner in this effort.

Climate change is a public health and public safety issue, and as Attorney General I will work with conservation leaders, Environmental Justice advocates, Tribal Nations, and scientists to:

Expand the work of the AG's Environmental Division to better meet the needs of frontline and vulnerable communities– taking on polluters, reducing exposure to dangerous chemicals, dirty water, and climate impacts

Better enforce the laws in our state– and coordinate regionally and nationally– to safeguard our old growth forests, salmon recovery efforts, reduce carbon pollution and maintain progress on climate action.

Work with legislative allies and the Governor to refine, strengthen, and enforce laws that help Washington families and communities, protect our natural legacy, and set an example for the nation.

Stand steadfast against partisan attacks– here in state from MAGA donors and polluting industries, and nationally from Trump, Congress and the Courts– from rollbacks and attacks on laws that must be preserved.