



Julio Cortes Urbanist Questionnaire 2024

State Representative, LD38, Position 1

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?

I support income tax in Washington, as just part of the overdue drastic tax reform needed in this state. First, we need to prevent the loss of the progress we've made: I-2109 would repeal the state's capital gains tax. I endorse NO on this initiative, and strongly support the retention of Capital Gains. I also support estate taxes and wealth taxes. Implementing a wealth tax is necessary to bolster government's spending on public services and programs and to use its revenue to offer credits to low-income taxpayers. It would also increase the quality of public facilities (e.g. parks, transportation, schools, etc.), add funding to our social services, and help resolve the issues of homelessness in Washington.

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

There are many complexities and nuances associated with the specific transportation needs of my community and in my role, but the necessity of affordability is not one of them. I would make clear at every step of the legislative process that a TOD bill without an affordability mandate is unacceptable.

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?



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Absolutely, I was proud to vote yes on HB 2114 and be a sponsor of that bill! I will continue my work to see through its ratification. As State Representative, I work everyday in Olympia to ensure our working families are at the forefront of our decisions, and that across the political aisle we can demonstrate to the legislature and to the community how important this bill is.

What are the highest priority items on your housing agenda?

Affordable, accessible, and safe housing is a basic human right and is necessary for the health of our communities. As State Representative, I will work tirelessly to create more affordable housing options, wrap around services, and fight for housing stability by championing policies geared towards protecting both our vulnerable populations (renters, low income, seniors, etc.) and lower and middle income families. This includes aggressively increasing funding for affordable housing development, implementing rent stabilization measures to control skyrocketing rents, and promoting policies that prioritize affordable housing options for all income levels. Additionally, I support initiatives to strengthen tenant protections and increase homeownership opportunities, ensuring that housing is truly affordable and accessible for all members of our community.

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?



I envision our public education to be adequately resourced, safe, accessible, with the best education possible. It's our responsibility as legislators to give our children pathways to success. I firmly believe that so many educators and paraeducators face issues because they don't have the resources to handle them appropriately. Which is why I co-sponsored HB 2380 in this previous session. I will continue to champion legislation that increases the amount of resources schools have available, including behavioral health specialists, school nurses, and teachers. I have always supported common sense gun legislation and will continue to do so if re-elected. While working towards safer gun laws, we must work to address other areas that contribute to schools being unsafe. That includes sexual harassment, discrimination, assault of any kind, and how we view restorative justice. Equity and diversity in schools foster an inclusive environment where every student feels valued and empowered to succeed regardless of their background: there is no place in our education system to allow personal politics and beliefs to be imparted on our students. Our teachers should only teach a fact-based curriculum and I am committed to doing what I can to ensure that is implemented and protected.

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

A significantly increased portion of the state's transportation budget should prioritize alternatives to cars like transit, biking, and pedestrian infrastructure. This investment promotes sustainability and equitable access to transportation. I look forward to learning more from leaders and organizations like the Urbanist about what budget reforms specifically would meet the community's needs.

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



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I absolutely support allowing jurisdictions to hold elections in even years for increased voter engagement. Other election reforms I'd support that prioritize accessibility, inclusivity, and integrity, are measures like expanding early voting, automatic voter registration, language accessibility, and ensuring election security.

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](#)?

I strongly advocate for the removal of the 1% cap on property tax increases imposed by Tim Eyman's initiatives. This restriction severely hampers local governments, leaving them with few options beyond ballot measures to fund vital services. A balanced approach to fiscal policy empowers local governments with alternative revenue-raising tools, like granting municipalities greater flexibility in diversifying revenue streams, using progressive taxation models, and providing targeted state assistance to mitigate immediate fiscal pressures. Collaborative efforts between state and local authorities are imperative to safeguard essential services, and uphold the well-being of Washington residents.