



AFT Washington 2022 Candidate Questionnaire

About AFT Washington

AFT Washington represents approximately 6,500 education professionals working in community and technical colleges, regional universities, early learning, and K-12. Our members work with all ages of students, from young children in pre-K education settings to adults in higher education, as well as all facets of education. Our members are bus drivers, maintenance workers, faculty, paraeducators, food service workers, custodians, success coaches, grounds crew members, and more.

Together, with our members and national organization, we advocate and fight for:

- Safe, welcoming, and thriving neighborhood schools for every student, and high-quality, affordable post-high school opportunities to fulfill our paramount duty to help *all* students succeed, at every level;
- Economic and advancement opportunities for everyone;
- Affordable, high-quality healthcare for everyone;
- Democracy, pluralism, and voting rights by involving the voices of students, parents, and the community, side-by-side with educational employees and elected officials;
- Racial, social, financial, and civic equity, and fighting back against discrimination, hatred, and bigotry.

We hope you will take this opportunity to complete the questionnaire below and allow us to better understand your candidacy. Completing the questionnaire is required for consideration of endorsement or possible campaign contributions. If our Committee on Political Education (COPE) decides they would like further information, we may ask you to participate in an interview.

To be considered, return your completed questionnaire via email, by close of business, on March 25th to aftwashington@aftwa.org. If you have questions, please leave a message at 206-242-4777.

Candidate Biographical Information

Name: Javier Valdez

Candidate for which office: WA State Senate, 46th Legislative District

Party affiliation: Democrat

Political background (*offices held or currently hold, offices ran for, party positions, etc.*):

State Representative, 46th Legislative District, 2017-current
Precinct Committee Officer, 1992-current

Member, Democratic National Committee (DNC), 2020-current
Member, WA State Democratic Party Executive Board, 2003-current
Member, WA State Democratic Party Central Committee, 2000-current
Member, King County Democrats Central Committee, 1993-current
Chair, 46th District Democrats, 2007-2008
Chair, 43rd District Democrats, 1997-2002
Chair (founding), King County Young Democrats, 1993-1995

Community or organizational memberships (past and present):

Tabor 100, WA State Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Hispanic Seafair Organization, Institute for a Democratic Future

Current occupation: Senior Equity and Inclusion Advisor

Current employer: City of Seattle

Are you currently a member of a labor organization? Yes

If yes, which labor organization, and how long have you been a member?

AFSCME, Council 2 (WA State Council of County and City Employees), 2011-current (served as my local's first president for four years)

Former member, International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, Local 17, in the late 1990's (now known as PROTEC17)

If not currently a member of a labor organization, have you ever been?

If yes, which labor organization, when, and for how long?

General

1. Why are you running for this elective office?

I am running for the State Senate to continue serving the residents of the 46th Legislative District, where I have focused on gun safety, tackling hate crimes, fighting for contracting equity in our Dept. of Transportation, bringing accountability on the lack of diversity in our WA State Patrol, and continuing to be a strong leader in race and social justice in our Legislature, to name a few.

2. What qualities distinguish you from other candidates for this office?

Having served in the WA State Legislature for the past five years, I am proud of the bills, policies, and budget priorities I have championed, but also proud of serving as the immediate past Chair of the House Democrats Members of Color Caucus, and becoming a committee Chair after serving just three years (State Government and Tribal Relations Committee). I will bring my well-known work ethic to the State Senate and continue to work respectfully with all of my colleagues to achieve the priorities for my constituents, but also represent those who share similar backgrounds like me, a first-generation Mexican-American from eastern Washington, whose parents and grandparents were farmworkers and laborers, and a product of public education.

Revenue and Education

1. For decades Washington State has had the most regressive tax system in the country, contributing to underfunding of public education and many other investments in the public good. **The pandemic has highlighted the numerous gaps in education funding that persist, for example in the form of the digital divide, the need for wrap-around services, stagnant wages, etc. When new funding is allocated, it is often for specific populations of students or specific programs and in relatively small sums. How will you approach finding new sources of revenue to both invest in Washingtonians and create a more progressive revenue system?**

I have consistently supported new funding measures (which you list below) to bring not only additional, but a much more equitable mechanism for individuals to pay their fare share of taxes. I have also been a consistent supporter of adopting a state income tax.

Do you support...

	Yes	No
Capital Gains Tax?	X	
Wealth Tax?	X	
Estate Tax?	X	
Elimination of cap on Workforce Education Investment Account tax?	X	

2. During the pandemic, many Washingtonians have lost their jobs and been evicted from their homes. The poverty rate has increased during the pandemic, particularly for BIPOC Americans. In the 2022 legislative session, a bill was introduced that would have given cash assistance to those below the poverty line with a stipend, also known as Universal Basic Income or Guaranteed Basic Income. **What is your position on this policy? Do you believe it can help address the racial wealth gap?**

I haven't taken a position of Universal Basic Income/Guaranteed Basic Income. I know that there was a proposal in the State Senate in 2022 to create a pilot, but that did not make it out of the chamber. If it had and made it over to the State House, I would have supported the pilot. I am also interested to find out how the California law that passed in 2021 is working. But yes, I do believe that if the Basic Income policy works well, it definitely can address the racial wealth gap.

3. Public education, from K-12 through Post-High School has seen state disinvestment for several decades. **What will you do to increase the funding of community and technical colleges in order to invest in the workforce? Do you support pay equity for part-time faculty?**

I have consistently supported increased funding for our community and technical colleges and advocated for that with our House budget writers and team. Every year I meet with faculty from North Seattle College where they present their priorities and requests, and they will tell you my commitment to them has not wavered. And yes, I have consistently voiced support for pay equity for part-time faculty.

- Pre-K 12 employees work with students dealing with a wide range of issues outside of school, e.g. trauma, behavioral challenges, developmental disabilities, health issues and more. This can pose safety issues, for example for paraeducators who are often hit, bitten, shoved or in other ways harmed because of student behavior. Many factors contribute to this phenomenon, which translates to a range of potential solutions. **How would you approach problem solving if a group of workers sought your support in addressing this issue?**

One of the first steps I would take would be to personally meet with the group of workers and personally hear from them on their experiences, what is working, what isn't working, and what resources I can do my best to advocate and deliver what they need to address those concerns. Next steps would include meeting with school officials to relay to them what I heard from the workers and how can they can address those concerns. Then it's also my responsibility to ensure I am supporting in the Legislature those additional resources they need. This could include providing more state resources for more nurses, counselors, and social workers in their schools for example.

- In recent years public officials have attempted to solve budget problems through privatization of public services. This diversion of public funds has led to a poor quality of services, reduced accountability, and a loss of good jobs, while failing to realize the promise of saving money. **What is your position on privatization in the education arena? Please explain.**

I do not support privatization in our education system. As a product of the public education system, my full support is behind our public schools. Twice, I have returned unsolicited contributions from Stand for Children, one in 2018 for \$1,000 and again in 2020 for \$500. If they send me another contribution in the future, I will return that one too, like just like the other two.

Do you support...

	Yes	No
Public tax dollars funding private charter schools?		X
Privatization of school and college resources (i.e. counseling, childcare, student services)?		X
Public Capitol Funds for projects at private colleges and universities?		X

Collective Bargaining

- Many Washingtonians recognize the value of union representation and are organizing at their workplace, such as legislative aides in Olympia, workers at Starbucks, etc. **Do you support every worker's right to collectively bargain for better working conditions, and their right to join a union? Please explain.**

I absolutely support the right of all workers to organizing and forming a union. I'm proud to have been a co-sponsor of the bills for legislative assistants in Olympia to form a union. Additionally, in 2010, when the then Mayor of Seattle threatened to fire a number of City of Seattle employees without justification or merit, over 130 employees at Seattle City Light (where I worked at the time)

organized and formed a union to protect our rights. I was then elected its first president and led our bargaining team through its first ever contract negotiation and ratification.

2. We see ongoing attempts to weaken unions and diminish working conditions here in Washington State and at the federal level. **What policies can support unions and workers' rights and how will you work to enact such policies?**

As a longtime City of Seattle employee, anything we can do to support our public sector unions will always be a priority for me. Public employees dedicate themselves to public service and when that time comes, deserve to retire with dignity and respect with a full pension.

We can also support our unions by making it very clear, we oppose right-to-work policies and legislation.

In the Legislature, I have co-sponsored numerous bills on supporting our labor unions and the right to organize. In 2020, I prime-sponsored the bill that enabled our interpreters that state agencies utilize to become members of the WA Federation of State Employees. The bill passed and was signed by the Governor.

Social Justice

1. What do you see as **your role** as a state official in addressing racial, social, and economic inequities in our educational system? **Please specifically address each issue.**

As a first generation Mexican-American who is a product of WA's public education system, it is my responsibility to ensure that kids who look like me or have similar backgrounds have access and be supported in our public schools. I have strongly supported WA's Dream Act, financial aid for undocumented students, ethnic studies, bilingual programs, and language access. I have also supported more resources in our community and technical colleges for our underserved communities, as this is an often the first point of entry post-high school for black, indigenous, and people of color communities.

2. We are faced with numerous threats to social justice, including ongoing threats to our immigrant communities, the housing affordability and student debt crises, police accountability, and more. **Where have you shown leadership and acted on issues of social justice in the past? What will your social justice priorities be if you win your election?**

In my five years in the Legislature, I have demonstrated this work by my leadership in getting Initiative 1000 passed by the Legislature (unfortunately, it did go the ballot, losing by 1%), changing our hate crimes laws, being a strong voice and advocate for our underserved communities (especially our farmworker and undocumented communities), fighting for contracting equity for minority businesses in state government and the WA Transportation Department, and working tirelessly to ensure the workforce of our State Patrol reflects the diversity of our state. These are just a few examples.

3. Several bills were passed in the 2021 legislative session designed to reduce police violence and hold police accountable; in the 2022 session attempts were made to dilute the definition of excessive force and minimizing the role of de-escalation. **What is your position on these issues?**

I opposed on voted 'No' on both HB 1310 and SB 5919.

4. Hate crimes have risen 25 percent nationally since 2015. But the number of hate crimes in Washington state increased by 97 percent. There were 542 hate-crime incidents reported statewide. **How do you plan on addressing the increase in hate crimes in Washington state?**

I championed and prime sponsored HB 1732 in 2019 that changed WA's hate crimes law. No longer would it be referred to as "malicious harassment". HB 1732 also created a task force to examine additional steps our state could take in addressing the alarming rise in hate crimes. That report produced 20 recommendations, but due to concerns from community members and the COVID pandemic, it was decided to delay looking at new legislation until the 2023 session. It will be my top priority in the State Senate in 2023.

Campaign Information

Are there any additional comments you would like to provide that you believe are necessary in understanding your candidacy?

What is your overall campaign budget?

My budget is \$175,000-\$200,000

How many volunteers are currently working on your campaign? What is your goal for volunteers working on your campaign?

I will be hiring a campaign manager soon and will then start seeking volunteers. My goal is to have as many volunteers as I can find.

To date, how much money have you raised and obtained pledges for?

As of March 24, 2022, I have raised nearly \$85,000

Please provide any endorsements you have received:

WA State Council of County and City Employees (WSCCCE), AFSCME Council 2, WA Attorney General Bob Ferguson, WA Lands Commissioner Hillary Franz, WA Treasurer Mike Pellicciotti, KC Executive Dow Constantine, KC Councilmembers Rod Dembowski, Jeanne Kohl-Welles, and Sarah Perry, St. Senators David Frockt, Rebecca Saldana, and Majority Leader Andy Billig, St. Representatives Gerry Pollet, Nicole Macri, and Sharon Tomiko Santos, and Seattle City Councilmembers Debora Juarez and Teresa Mosqueda.

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