



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: Mary Fosse

Candidate for which office: State Representative, 38th Legislative District, Position 2

Party affiliation: Democrat

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

Everett City Council, District 1 – Current

Snohomish County Regional Law and Justice Council – Current

Snohomish County Tomorrow – Current

Puget Sound Regional Council Growth Management Policy Board – Current
WA House of Representatives, Legislative Assistant 2020-2022
Everett Council of Neighborhoods Representative & Nominations Committee 2017 – 2021
Everett Districting Commission – Commissioner 2019 – 2020

Community or organizational memberships (past and present):

Everett Public Schools Fiscal Advisory Council 2019 – Current
Delta Neighborhood Association – Chair 2017 – 2021
38th LD Democrats
Snohomish County Democrats
Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
Institute for a Democratic Future
Lawns to Lettuce & Grow a Row
Hawthorne PTA
Everett Special Education PTSA
National Women's Political Caucus - Member & Endorsement Committee
NAACP Snohomish County
Monte Cristo Awards
Communities of Color Coalition
YMCA
America Reads – Youth at Risk Tutor
Walla Walla Animal Shelter
Blue Mt. Heart to Heart (AIDS Service Nonprofit)
Associated Students of Whitman College - Senator 2001 – 2002
UFCW Local 555
Beaverton School Board 2000 – 2001
Beaverton Arts Commission 2000 – 2001
ACMA National Honor Society President 2000 – 2001

Current occupation: Everett City Councilmember

Current employer: Residents of Everett

Are you currently a member of a labor organization? No

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

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

If yes, which labor organization, when, and for how long? I was a member of UFCW Local 555 around 2000 and my spouse was a member of IAM 751 for many years, and my mother has been a CWA member from 1976 to her retirement in 2006. My husband was also a paraeducator in the Everett School District.

General

1. Why are you running for this elective office?

I am running for State Representative, 38th Legislative District, position 2 because we need more champions in Olympia for the needs of workers in this state, especially those who revealed themselves as essential in recent years, as well as our most vulnerable, families, seniors, students and veterans.

I want to advocate for this community, which includes tackling the housing affordability and homelessness crisis, supporting our schools and social infrastructure, holistic approaches to public health and safety, and economic efforts that prioritize living-wage jobs and our skilled workforce pipeline. There is great untapped potential in this region and I know we can become even stronger if we focus on long-term and equitable, comprehensive solutions with everyone's voice at the table. My community wants proactive leaders with the courage of their convictions, and I have a track record of responsive leadership and proven results.

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

In addition to being a longtime dedicated community advocate and volunteer, I am also a mother, wife of a veteran, educator, survivor, and prior small business owner. I currently serve on the Everett City Council, the Snohomish County Regional Law and Justice Council, the PSRC GMPB, and the Everett Public Schools Fiscal Advisory Council. I recently left the legislature where I was the Legislative Aide for State Representative Emily Wicks, and have past work experience as a union worker, an Operations Manager, an Employment Specialist at the Employment Department, and as an Executive Assistant and Special Events Coordinator for Dale Chihuly. While my resume is relevant for this position, it is my lived experience as a survivor, as someone born into low-income housing to a working-class single mother, as someone that has experienced childhood homelessness and overcome poverty thanks to a union, that gives me a greater perspective which is needed in the legislature.

I think it is important to support those who have not always been heard in policy and decision-making arenas, and that means that we value lived experience and diverse perspectives, and that includes those of the working class and from disadvantaged backgrounds. With your support, I believe we can build thriving, walkable, safe and inclusive communities that are resilient and will improve the quality of life for all our neighbors, as well as future generations.

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 just want to concur with your explanation of the foundational problem and the resulting issues. I am very eager for the campaign to reform our regressive tax system in this state and personally believe it would be much more equitable to have more education funding coming from the state level than locally, but that does not help us in the near term. We have to be intentional and balanced in our taxation so that any regressive tax increases that disproportionately impact lower income earners are paired with other economic relief/credits, but even this approach is not ideal because it does not always translate into an accurate public perception. One of the biggest challenges in our state in particular is finding new sources of progressive funding as we have to navigate a limited tool box of options within our tax rules and prohibitions. Where possible, I do support progressive revenue approaches because one's ability to purchase stocks and bonds, commercial real estate properties, or start a business is generally reliant on

and only available for those with existing wealth, and corporate profits have been rising at a record pace. The snowball effect of consolidated wealth is more exponential as the gains and assets increase, and this has created a grand cavernous divide of income inequality that must be mitigated. I am committed to strategically moving progressive revenue options forward in the years to come and I hope you can help me identify potential avenues.

Do you support...

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

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 think this is another lesson learned from the pandemic that the establishment of a Universal Basic Income would have been a great safety net for those struggling, but yes I think it would be one tool to help address racial wealth disparities. A year ago I would have said I don't think public sentiment is there yet on this one, but I'm not sure if that's the case anymore.

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?**

As previously mentioned, we need to continuously pursue progressive revenue and reform our tax system. With these new streams of revenue, we must invest in all levels and types of education- including community and technical colleges. Community and technical colleges provide important pathways to a family wage job while also helping us address our workforce shortages. Supporting workers and families and the economy is the kind of solution we need to bring to Snohomish County to help our region grow and thrive. In supporting community and technical colleges, I will always support pay equity for part time faculty. Again, that investment directly supports workers, families and our communities.

4. 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?**

My approach to problem solving is always collaborative. I know that important issues never only have one clever solution. With these issues facing our educators and staff and that students and families

struggle with every day, we need to come together. I will use my position as State Representative to create space for people to come together. I will listen to the experiences and solutions of people living with these issues every day, and collaborate on policy and budget solutions.

5. 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 oppose the privatization of public services. It is not beneficial to my community to replace family-wage public service careers with low-wage private sector jobs, especially when the “savings” is just a lower quality service and a reduction in worker pay simply to line someone else's pocket.

Recently there was an attempt at the Everett Community College to close down their Early Learning Center and replace their accredited program and staff with non-union, low-skill childcare at the YMCA as a cost-cutting measure. I stood in solidarity with the union and workers through a variety of efforts to save the valuable ELC and its family-wage union jobs.



Do you support...

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

Collective Bargaining

1. 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 was born to a union mother who had few advocates on her side, and it was her union that helped throughout my youth to keep a roof over our head and food on our table. When she was faced with injustice, intimidation, and sexism from her employer, it was her union that stood up for us. It was because of unions that I was lifted out of poverty and am where I am today: experienced in the workings of the legislature with a side of good trouble, and serving on the Everett City Council! I will always advocate and support workers' right to freely organize and condemn any anti-worker efforts. If I get the chance for an interview, please ask me about the legislative staff organizing efforts this last session and the resulting legislation.

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?**

I am well aware that employer resistance to unionization happens right here in my community, including companies/employers right now in my very own neighborhood who may encounter lax enforcement of labor laws, if any at all. I am also familiar with union-busting efforts first hand. From the EVCC efforts to transfer union living-wage jobs to non-union contractors, to the resistance of covering employees of state agencies by civil service laws, please know I will speak up, walk the talk, and will always be a strong advocate for workers.

I would be proud to make sure your voice is included in the decision-making arenas so together we can bolster workers' right to freely organize. If elected, I would seek out your ideas on avenues to protect our right to organize, and I am committed to supporting employee contract negotiation efforts.

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.**

These issues are intersectional. I believe it's important that people in leadership positions not only continually reflect on our role in and relationship to harmful systems, but also our responsibility to be accomplices in the fight to dismantle white supremacy. It is with this understanding and ongoing commitment to strive to be anti-racist every day, that I approach policy-making and leadership. Growing up in poverty and experiencing homelessness as a child, and how that instability, constant change of schools, and lack of consistent community impacted my life, choices, and educational opportunities is a perspective valuable in Olympia. I must work, though, to seek out and listen to other perspectives that are still missing from places of leadership and decision making arenas.

Rectifying these inequities must be at the forefront of our minds as we are pursuing and shaping policy.

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?

At the state level, I have been proud to be a part of the efforts to expand Paid Family Medical Leave and increase medicaid reimbursements, and I look forward to working on a variety of avenues to increase availability and access to mental health services and providers and more trauma-informed and comprehensive approaches to public safety.

Locally I was also previously a Commissioner on the Everett Districting Commission helping advocate for better elected representation. And right now I'm working with the Marshallese community on city recognition of their Nuclear Victims'/Survivors' Day and assistance with their cultural celebrations.

My most proud accomplishments though would be my efforts in environmental justice and increasing resources at my local elementary school:

- 1) Environmental justice: I led a successful campaign spanning from Washington D.C. to Olympia with a coalition of neighbors to secure nearly \$5.5 million for our neighborhood to clean up the toxic Asarco contamination plaguing our neighbors. There was a bankruptcy settlement for an environmental cleanup that ultimately ended up prioritizing the wealthy and predominantly white areas of town, and when the funding ran out, the adjacent neighborhood (that was one of the poorest and most diverse in the city) was still left with significant toxic levels of lead and arsenic in their soils and yards. The DOE recommended that residents not touch the soil or garden/dig without a mask, and so forth. Can you imagine not allowing your children to touch your yard, or worry that your dog was going to track in toxic levels of lead that would make your baby sick? For decades? Our local elementary was the poorest in the county and we are a dense family neighborhood. For too long my neighborhood was ignored and marginalized, and there are more aspects to the whole story, but I had to do something because I saw the injustice that was happening to my neighbors, and they asked me for help. If they were lucky enough to own one of the properties, they weren't even allowed to dig to fix things like sewer lines or install drains because the soil was considered so contaminated that they had no means to dispose of it. I conducted letter writing campaigns, meetings with the DOE, community meetings, meetings with the city and elected officials, and I got the media involved. Through my grassroots work, I managed to mobilize a coalition of neighbors and get nearly \$5.5 in MTCA funding from /olympia for the first biennium (as a neighborhood volunteer).
- 2) The Delta Kids program: Having experienced childhood homelessness and poverty, amidst the pandemic I founded and secured funding for the successful Delta Kids program to bring school and arts supplies and supplemental community-driven educational programming to Hawthorne Elementary, supporting kids in need at the most economically challenged school in the county. I listened to our community and our teachers on what they needed, and I did something about it. I speak from experience on the great impact exposure to art and the tools to create can have on healing trauma, finding identity, and help in lifting youths out of poverty. I knew that if we really wanted to strive for equity in our community, Hawthorne Elementary was the place to start and hopefully have an impact on this generation of children that are suffering right now from chronic disinvestment. The program has been a huge success in our community.

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 agree with the original intent of the initial legislation. Public safety and policing has been an important and ongoing conversation in our communities the last couple of years, and I believe it will continue to evolve. We must balance public safety and clarity for law enforcement while always supporting de-escalation. As a staffer in the legislature when these bills were passed and then changed, I have a fairly interesting perspective on the process if you'd like to discuss in an interview. I also now serve on the Public Safety Committee of the Everett City Council and am passionate about alternatives to traditional policing.

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 will advocate very clearly that hate crimes and this kind of hate has no place in our community. I will support policies and social infrastructure that build resilience, and reforms that will continue to impact the role and culture of our police department. Where possible, I will advocate for diverse representation, because diverse perspectives matter and make for better policy. There is also an active group in my district working on potential policy to address domestic terrorism and white nationalist hate groups in Washington, and the member they were working with just announced they are not seeking reelection. We have already been in contact.

Campaign Information

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

I would be honored to earn your endorsement, and I thank your membership for all their critical work they do, especially in these incredibly difficult last couple of years.

What is your overall campaign budget?

We are finalizing our campaign budget but it will include fair pay for a campaign manager, and a robust voter contact plan.

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

I have over a dozen volunteers.

To date, how much money have you raised and obtained pledges for? Around \$7-\$8K

Please provide any endorsements you have received:

38th LD Democrats

IBEW 191

June Robinson, State Senator 38th LD

John Lovick, State Senator 44th LD

Mike Sells, State Representative, 38th LD

Davina Duerr, State Representative, 1st LD

Brandy Donaghy, State Representative, 44th LD

April Berg, State Representative, 44th LD

David Simpson, Port of Everett Commissioner

Brian Sullivan, Snohomish County Treasurer

Megan Dunn, Snohomish County Council

Jared Mead, Snohomish County Council

Linda Redmon, Snohomish Mayor

Nigel Herbig, Kenmore Mayor

Stephanie Vignal, Mill Creek Mayor Pro Tem

Paula Rhyne, Everett City Councilmember

Don Schwab, Everett City Councilmember

Liz Vogeli, Everett City Councilmember

Melissa Duque, Mill Creek City Councilmember

Mary Dickinson, Lake Stevens City Councilmember

Louis Aaron Harris, Mukilteo City Councilmember

Mason Thompson, Bothell City Councilmember

Charlotte Murry, Stanwood-Camano School Board Member

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