

40th Legislative District Senate: General Election, Nov. 3, 2020

Candidates for 40th Legislative District Senator were invited by *Salish Current* to answer questions on ten topics: coronavirus, state budget, local economy, policing, climate, education, health care, housing, transportation and border closure.

Charles (Chuck) Carrell (R-Burlington) chose not to submit responses to the questionnaire.



Sen. Liz Lovelett (D-Anacortes) is running for re-election to the 40th Legislative District Senate seat. Her responses are below.

Coronavirus. *In the future would you advocate more than voluntary stay-at-home, masking and social distancing directives to contain the coronavirus pandemic?*

Lovelett: When coronavirus first broke out, every level of government was scrambling to understand what response was appropriate. Now that we have equipped our hospitals, invested in PPEs, set out safe work guidelines and prepared our agencies to respond, we are better positioned to offer support and best health practices quickly. Our state is working to keep case counts low and our hospitals have not reached capacity limits. Our protocols are working, and if we can maintain adherence to these directives, we can weather this crisis until we've reduced case counts and a vaccine is distributed. We would need significant capital to economically insulate people if we are to shut down to Phase 1 again.

State budget. *When you work to balance the budget, what would you specifically cut? What would you save? How would you raise revenue?*

Lovelett: Being a sales-tax-based system means that the people in our communities who can least afford it are paying the highest proportion of their income in taxes — one of the most regressive systems in the nation. I believe we have a unique opportunity to fundamentally restructure our tax code to flip it right-side-up. I am focusing my interim work on retooling our economy in the wake of the crisis to encompass tax equity, rural employment opportunities and climate. I believe we can recover stronger by creating jobs focused on infrastructure, forest health management, childcare access, and green energy.

Local economy. *If you think your district's economy should be more diversified, what specifically will you do to make that happen?*

Lovelett: I think we should be supporting our existing businesses to retain our workforce while we create a business environment advantageous to spark innovation and local investment. We accomplish this by creating incentives to attract new capital, dealing with our waste stream more effectively, rapidly expanding broadband connectivity and providing resources to enhance our strengths: maritime, agriculture, aerospace and solar development. Additionally, I believe that achieving a low-carbon fuel standard will augment our local refineries, open new markets and create more energy independence.

***Police.** If you think police reform is necessary to prevent discrimination against people of color, what specifically will you do to improve policing and police accountability?*

Lovelett: I stand with the Black Lives Matter movement. I believe we need to reform qualified-immunity provisions, prosecute officers who break the law, ban chokeholds, demilitarize equipment and create independent accountability boards. Additionally, we need to support law enforcement by making sure they have adequate resources, de-escalation training, debriefing and mental health access, and support from social workers to provide the very complex service they give to our communities. It's not an either/or; it's a both/and.

***Climate.** If you agree that forest fires, extreme weather and changing ocean conditions are caused by changing climate, what will you specifically do to address climate change?*

Lovelett: I absolutely believe in climate science. My top priority is carbon pricing and its relationship to low-carbon fuel standards and our transportation package. We need immediate investments in forest health, culvert removal, habitat restoration, transit access and resources for low-income residents to reduce their energy costs. These can all be capitalized by putting a price on pollution. Industry has signaled a desire to be at the table to achieve this important and historic milestone.

***Education.** What will you specifically do to ensure that every K-12 student has a computer and high-speed internet to attend remote schooling?*

Lovelett: The state is currently engaged in a robust broadband strategy to achieve exactly that. Additionally, our education legislators and working closely with OSPI to ensure that all students and teachers have access to devices, hotspots, and tech support as we learn to navigate remote learning. Internet access is a basic public utility that will require support and investment at all levels of government.

***Health care.** What will you do to improve access to affordable health care in the state and in your district?*

Lovelett: Healthcare is a human right and the state needs to do everything possible to expand access for all, including mental and behavioral health. Providing telehealth options, increasing insurance coverage for counselling, the implementation of Cascade Care, streamlining preauthorization requirements and regulating benefit managers will improve access to care.

***Housing.** What will you do to improve access to affordable housing in the state and in your district?*

Lovelett: A primary focus for my career to date and future legislative action is investing in affordable housing and homeless services, as these types of investments have a positive net gain for our

communities and overall well-being. I will pursue policies to promote infill, place a surcharge on online vacation rentals to provide capital for local government housing initiatives, and consider minimum density requirements in our multi-family zones.

Transportation. *How will you pay for our state transportation needs, including ferry service?*

Lovelett: As a member of the Senate's Transportation Committee, I am excited to continue working on electrifying and cleaning up our transportation sector. As the Senate lead of the Ferry Legislators, I will be working closely with Washington State Ferries to ensure service and to continue replacing vessels. I will point to a carbon price as a mechanism to invest in infrastructure, public transit, multimodal and rural connectivity.

Border. *What conditions do you think need to be met for the border between Washington and British Columbia to be reopened?*

Lovelett: We will have to continue reducing COVID cases by practicing the three W's: Wash your hands, Wear your mask, Watch your distance. We can't fully reopen until we deal with the public health crisis, get better and more widely available testing facilities, and make progress on a vaccine. Then can we negotiate with the Canadian government to open our borders.