



Justin Boneau

1. Who are you?

I'm a working father and renter, and I want to go to Olympia to fight for workers and renters. My whole life I've been committed to service, first in the Navy as a Machinist Mate in the nuclear propulsion program, currently as a crew supervisor for the Department of Ecology Youth Corps literally cleaning up our state lands and roads, and now I'd like the opportunity to serve you all in Olympia.

2. Why are you running?

As a working father and renter in Whatcom County, I've come to realize that there's no one really like me in the legislature. I've watched my rent rise 3 times in the last 2 years while my wages have stayed the same. I'm far from the only person to have experienced that; it's getting harder to live in Whatcom County. I want to go to Olympia to work for the working class by fighting for affordable housing, universal healthcare, and comprehensive education.

3. What are your top 3 priorities?

Housing is obviously first. As a renter, I see firsthand how predatory landlords and property management companies exploit their working class tenants. We need to seriously invest in social housing, as a start we need to restore the state Housing Trust Fund to its pre-recession levels, then double it on top of that. Additionally, we need to lift the ban on rent regulation so that local governments are empowered to solve their problems their way.

Healthcare is a human right. We need universal, single-payer healthcare to make sure that everyone can live a healthy, fulfilling life. In the US, millions of people every year die to fill the pockets of a few. The system prioritizes profits over humans lives, and this is unacceptable. Additionally, employee-provided insurance serves as another tool to discourage workers from leaving bad situations; it's much harder to shop around for jobs when you and your family depend on a corporation for healthcare.

As a father, I know that education can have huge impacts for working families. We need a serious pre-K system (funded by the state) that will provide future generations

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The Bellingham Tenants Union fights to achieve dignity and security for all tenants by ensuring access to safe, healthy and affordable homes.



the best start available. This will also allow parents to keep their jobs and seek opportunities that the realities of childcare may otherwise preclude. Pre-K benefits entire families, and the long-term impact is an immensely improved society. But pre-K isn't everything. We need to invest in higher education as well; most entry-level jobs require a college degree. The people who can't currently afford such an education are no less deserving than those blessed with wealthy parents. And so many who do attend college have to go deep into debt just to get through, which has lasting repercussions for individuals and their families. I know this personally because, even despite the GI Bill, I am still paying off student debt. With all these strains on the working class, I believe (and the 42nd agrees) that it is time for a change.

4. If elected, how are you going to make housing more affordable, dignified, and secure for working class people?

I mentioned above some of the policies I support for housing affordability, but there is more to be done. We need to work to ensure that housing regulations are better enforced, inspections are more comprehensive and decipherable, and that landlords are easier to hold accountable for their many attempts to exploit tenants. Requiring greater notice for rent increases, limiting the number and amount of such increases annually, and providing information about the resolution of disputes with landlords would be a good starting point. Additionally, we need serious regulation to address the myriad fees landlords extract from applicants and tenants. The state should prepare and encourage the use of a standardized lease designed to protect tenants' rights.

5. How would your housing policies advance equity and racial justice in our community?

As a state, we need to dedicate resources to fighting modern redlining attempts (with varying degrees of subtlety). Segregation is officially over, but in a lot of places it's hard to tell. Providing more social housing and enforcing stricter penalties for housing discrimination would help advance equity and racial justice throughout Washington State.

6. How do you see housing connecting to other issues in our community?

Housing is so fundamental that the consequences of housing insecurity ripple through every aspect of life. If someone doesn't have reliable housing, it becomes nearly impossible for them to keep a job or to care for their family. Fighting exploitation at the hands of landlords can take incredible amounts of time and often legal knowledge that very few have access to. When time is occupied in this way,



there's less time for community involvement, time with family, pursuit of education, and so many other things people need to advance our society. When insecure housing precludes this, the effect is felt by families and colleagues. Without a sturdy foundation, it all comes tumbling down.

7. Would you increase revenue for affordable housing? If so, how?

Yes. One of the first measures I would want specifically to fund affordable housing is a vacancy tax. Capital flights from foreign countries and millionaires' second (and third and fourth) homes shouldn't be driving up rents for the working people of Whatcom County. Additionally, I support a capital gains and income tax, and will fight to see that some of the revenue they create be dedicated to housing affordability. I'd be open to investigating other progressive measures of taxation to support affordable housing.

8. What have you specifically done as an individual to support tenant rights and access to housing?

As a first time candidate, I've never been in a position of power over policy. As a citizen, I'm a member of and helped organize with the BTU and have supported its efforts fighting for affordable housing and will continue to do so after the election. I also support the renewal of the Bellingham Home Fund.

Yes/No Questions:

(If you can not answer YES with a full and honest commitment, answer NO.)

Question:	YES	NO
Are you a renter?	X	
Would you welcome new, multi-family, affordable and mixed-income housing developments in your neighborhood?	X	
If elected, can you commit to sponsoring at least one bill to expand tenant rights in Olympia?	X	
Do you support Rep. Nicole Macri's (D) bill, HB 2583, to repeal the state-wide ban on rent regulation? This would allow local governments to make their own decisions on move-in fee reform and rent stabilization/control laws.	X	



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Do you support 'Right of First Refusal' laws for tenants of a complex up for sale by offering the tenants the option to purchase at fair market price?	X	
Do you support amending the Residential Landlord Tenant Act to include 'Just Cause' eviction protections for tenants, meaning landlords can only evict tenants with proper cause, such as failure to pay rent or destruction of the property?	X	
Do you support expanding the Washington Housing Trust Fund?	X	
Do you support increasing progressive taxes (B&O, income or capital gains) to pay for affordable housing?	X	
Do you support an Empty Homes Tax to pay for affordable housing?	X	
Do you support a Land Value Tax or a Split-Rate Tax to pay for affordable housing?	X	
Do you support Rep. June Robinson's (D) bill, HB 2437, to allow significant new local funding to counties to fund investments in affordable housing without raising taxes, via a sales tax rebate?	X	
Do you support the Bellingham Home Fund renewal?	X	
Do you support increasing the amount of housing that is accessible to people with disabilities?	X	
Do you support locations for safe camping and parking for our neighbors experiencing homelessness in Bellingham?	X	
Do you support statewide laws that decriminalize homelessness?	X	
Do you support statewide zoning policies that permit more home-building and denser housing near transit?	X	
Do you support allowing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in all residential land for more housing options?	X	
Do you support reducing the cost of homebuilding in areas served by transit by ending mandatory off-street parking?	X	
Do you support statewide policies to streamline (reduce regulation such as excessive meetings and permits) the development of housing if a portion of the units were affordable to low- and moderate-income households?	X	
If elected, would you seek an ongoing relationship with the Bellingham Tenants Union?	X	

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If elected, would you ask Bellingham Tenants Union to participate in community engagement processes that involves tenant law or housing justice issues?	X	
If we endorse you, will you share this questionnaire on your website?	X	