



Fund Programs that Work: Our Hope for the Budget

Speakers (In Order of Appearance)

Senator Jeannie Darneille (D-Tacoma)

Senator Darneille has represented District 27 since January of this year. She is a former member of the Washington State House of Representatives, where she represented District 27 from 2001 to 2013. Senator Darneille is former Vice Chair of the Pierce County Democratic Central Committee and Precinct Committee Officer for the Democratic Party. She also served as a Legislative Aide for Washington State Senator Lorraine Wojahn. Senator Darneille has been a longtime champion for protecting the state's safety net programs. She is a ranking member of the Human Services and Corrections Committee, as well as a member of the Law and Justice Committee and Rules Committee.

Joshua Chatterton – A veteran living in Longview, discussing the importance of the Housing Trust Fund (HTF) and the needs of homeless veterans.

Joshua is a disabled veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps. As a single father of four children, Joshua and his family experienced firsthand the struggles of homelessness. He received housing assistance through Longview Housing Authority, which provided a launching point for stabilizing his situation. Now, Joshua works for Longview Housing Authority as a case manager. He is responsible for helping other homeless veterans achieve similar success. Joshua sees Housing Trust Fund-supported community efforts as a very effective way for people to obtain an affordable home.

“Since 1987, the Housing Trust Fund has helped build or maintain nearly 40,000 units of affordable housing statewide. That represents 40,000 opportunities to provide critical stability, dignity, and empowerment to people in need across the state.”

Timothy Corbin – A Seattle resident, speaking on the importance of the Aged, Blind, and Disabled program (ABD) within Disability Lifeline (DL).

Timothy lives with post traumatic stress disorder that creates anxiety and depression. His health is also exacerbated by his bipolar disorder. Timothy has kept a steady job for most of his life, until now. His mental health issues prevent him from retaining most jobs. He receives a Section 8 voucher, which helps partially pay for his rent, but not his other basic needs, like food, electricity, and a phone. He currently receives \$197 a month through Disability Lifeline. And he believes the name is quite appropriate, as this monthly grant truly is “a lifeline” that allows him to live in dignity.

“Disability Lifeline was already cut from \$339 to \$197. I’m terrified it may be cut again or eliminated. Please don’t let this happen. Fund this program that others in similar situations and me depend on to survive.”

Dionne Foster – An Auburn resident, speaking on how Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) is meeting her family's basic needs.

Dionne has been regularly employed since the age of 14. She's trained as a nurse and is a single mom with two sons. In 2001, she became ill. Her condition steadily worsened. And in 2002, she was diagnosed with the autoimmune condition sarcoidosis. This serious illness causes constant pain and requires Dionne to take medication that causes drowsiness, resulting in her inability to work as a nurse, as well as most other available jobs. Dionne has struggled to stay housed, and her family has experienced intermittent homelessness, which then exacerbates both her health care needs and her teenaged son's behavior. She has applied for SSI, a process that is taking a very long time. Until then, she is on Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) that is helping pay part of the family's rent.

“Currently I receive \$385 a month from TANF for the two of us. This is not enough to pay rent anywhere, so we currently live with my older son and his girlfriend. Half of what I receive for TANF helps to pay rent, and I use the rest for necessities such as detergent. If I was in good health, I would gladly take my old job back, but right now, TANF is a lifeline for our family.”

Mindy Woods – An Edmonds resident discussing how the Washington Families Fund (WFF) helped her successfully transition into housing.

Mindy Woods is a life-long resident of Washington and a veteran of the U.S. Navy. She and her teenage son became homeless after their apartment became uninhabitable, and she lost income due to the economic downturn. After more than eight months struggling to find housing, Mindy and her son got connected to a program funded by the Washington Families Fund. They now have a home in Edmonds.

“What I know is that homelessness can happen to anyone, and no one is immune. One health crisis, one job loss, one divorce – that’s all it takes.”

Debby Gaffney – Homeless Education Liaison/Grant Administrator, North Thurston Public Schools

Debby Gaffney is an educator who has been with North Thurston Public Schools for over 30 years. She started her career teaching kindergarten where she had students whose families were homeless. This led her to a different journey in the education system. She now works in the Student Support Department and is the district Homeless Education Liaison and is the administrator for numerous grants. Debby partners with area agencies to help families who are experiencing homelessness access resources so that their children can focus on getting an education.

“It is critical that families have the opportunity to live in safe, healthy, affordable homes so that no student needs to do homework by the dome light of a car or try to wash up for school in a public restroom. Let's make sure that the over 450 students in my district know that they will have a place to call home.”

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