

# King County Democrats 2026 Endorsement Questionnaire

**Candidate name**

Kelabe Tewolde

**Candidate name pronunciation**

KAY-leb (like Caleb)

**Candidate pronouns**

He/Him

**PDC Filer\_name**

Kelabe for Washington

**Campaign phone**

206-588-6096

**Number we can text or call if we have questions about this form**

206-302-8029

**Campaign email**

[hello@kelabeforwashington.com](mailto:hello@kelabeforwashington.com)

**Campaign website**

<https://www.kelabeforwashington.com/>

**LinkedIn**

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/kelabe-tewolde-7423a8ba>

**Instagram**

[https://www.instagram.com/kelabe.tewolde?igsh=MXdoOHo2ZWVyb204bw%3D%3D&utm\\_source=qr](https://www.instagram.com/kelabe.tewolde?igsh=MXdoOHo2ZWVyb204bw%3D%3D&utm_source=qr)

**X/Twitter/Bluesky/Threads/etc.**

<https://bsky.app/profile/kelabe.bsky.social>

**Link to candidate headshot**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1awFZGx7b8XIKuJSyOL811Ex9MLDH9g8d/view?usp=sharing>

**Campaign manager name**

N/A N/A

**Campaign manager email**

[hello@kelabeforwashington.com](mailto:hello@kelabeforwashington.com)

**Campaign manager phone**

N/A

**Consultant name**

Christian Sinderman

**Consultant email**

[christian@nwpc consulting.com](mailto:christian@nwpc consulting.com)

**Jurisdiction of office sought**

State House

**Specific office**

LD 37 Representative Pos. 1

**Are you a Democrat?**

Yes

**Have you ever been a member of another political party?**

No

**Does your campaign have a code of conduct for staff and volunteers?**

Yes

**Will you share a link to your code of conduct?**

<https://www.kelabeforwashington.com/codeofconduct>

**Please describe your background (education, employment, community and civic activity, union affiliation and political activity).**

I am the son of an Eritrean refugee. My mother worked as a CNA and homecare worker and has been a proud member of SEIU 1199NW at Swedish Hospital for over 20 years. Her union made a real difference for our family, I saw firsthand what it means to have workers organized and protected.

I am an alumni of Rainier Scholars, a program that changed the trajectory of my life. That experience showed me what happens when you invest in young people early, it's where I learned the best prevention isn't punishment, it's opportunity. Those values led me to return to Rainier Scholars as an educator, where I've spent the past 8 years as a teacher, advocate, and mentor to students routinely left behind by our systems.

I graduated from Colgate University with a degree in Political Science and interned in Senator Patty Murray's Seattle and DC offices. Outside of work, I have served on the Seattle Planning Commission as Land Use and Transportation Co-chair and organized mutual aid efforts in 2020, helping feed thousands of community members alongside local organizers.

**Why are you running for this position and what differentiates you as a candidate?**

I was born and raised in Seattle. I'm a lifelong renter and an educator who has spent 8 years working with students in the 37th. My family's story isn't abstract policy to me. My mother and I were priced out of neighborhood after neighborhood because no matter how hard she worked, rising costs always outpaced her wages. When we lost my grandmother to lymphoma, we weren't just grieving. We were buried under medical debt that drove my mother to bankruptcy. That's why I'm running. And it's why I'll fight differently than what we've seen.

On housing, I'll push for RUBS regulations, junk fee bans, community land trusts, and investment in social housing. Real protections for renters and pathways to ownership. On healthcare, I'll champion Universal Healthcare and the Washington Health Trust, which could save \$5-13 billion annually. On education, I'll restore the education legacy trust fund, fully fund early literacy and transition to kindergarten programs, and establish the youth development

fund.

What differentiates me is simple: I've lived these issues, I've taught the kids impacted by them for 8 years, and I'm running with a specific plan to fix them, not just a record of time served.

**According to Research Firm ECO Northwest, King County is on track to miss its affordable housing goals for the future. What policies or budget choices will you support to escalate the production of housing in King County, particularly for residents from lower and middle-income levels?**

King County's affordable housing crisis demands specific, urgent action at the state level.

I will fight to protect renters immediately by banning junk fees and regulating Ratio Utility Billing Systems, which inflate utility costs and quietly price out lower income residents in some of our most expensive buildings.

I will advocate for statewide investment in social housing developers, creating permanently affordable mixed income housing where lower and middle income residents are not paying over 30% of their income on rent. The social housing model is self-sustaining and keeps families in place long term.

I will champion community land trusts as a pathway to homeownership for communities historically locked out by redlining. The state must partner with counties, cities, and local land trusts to make this real.

And we must reform zoning to allow denser, affordable housing near transit, and streamline the development process to remove barriers that slow production without improving communities.

We need all of these tools working together. Not one at a time.

**Recent years have seen historic policy wins for renters in the legislature. What additional policy priorities would you advocate for to address the needs of renters?**

I will fight for legislation that further protects renters. We need a ban on junk fees and regulations on Ratio Utility Billing Systems (RUBS), which inflate basic utilities on many renters. These protections would ensure people do not end up overpaying for the basics while living in one of the most expensive cities in the country. Also HB 1217 was passed in 2025 which puts a cap on rents, but the 10% cap is still too high for most renters. In Olympia I will be a champion for protections for renters, creating statewide bans on price fixing, advocating for social housing that will provide permanently affordable mixed income housing, and develop legislation that will allow for a diverse set of housing options throughout the state through new zoning laws which will bring down the costs of housing.

**In the current federal administration, marginalized communities have been under attack. How will you work to protect democracy and human rights in our state?**

With federal overreach from ICE, major cuts to healthcare and education, and an administration targeting the most vulnerable, Washington needs legislators willing to fight back.

I will work to protect our immigrant community by ensuring we are not sharing data with federal agencies that are violating the rights of Washington residents. Sanctuary protections are not optional.

I will push for voting protections including Ranked Choice Voting and defending our vote by mail system, one of the most accessible and secure in the country.

On healthcare, I will advocate for the Washington Health Trust, funded by progressive revenue, to cover residents losing coverage after H.R. 1 and to ensure gender affirming care is protected and accessible in our state.

The 37th deserves a representative who sees these attacks as urgent and responds with urgency.

**At the same time the risk of climate catastrophes is increasing, federal funding and infrastructure support is being cut to address growing climate needs. What policies do you support to improve Washington's climate resiliency, recognizing that marginalized communities are disproportionately impacted?**

As an educator, I've watched my students, all from Black, brown, and immigrant families, bear the heaviest burden of our climate failures. That's not acceptable, and it's not inevitable. Here's what I'll fight for:

**Environmental Justice:** I will prioritize pollution reduction in the Duwamish Valley, one of the most contaminated corridors in the state. Frontline communities can't wait.

**Transportation:** I will work to expand affordable, frequent transit so working families in Renton and Southeast Seattle aren't car-dependent by necessity. Our children need safer and more reliable routes to school.

**Buildings:** I will push aggressive clean building standards with tenant protections built in; renters shouldn't lose housing in the name of green retrofits.

**Land Use:** I will work to reform zoning to allow dense, affordable housing near transit.

**Biodiversity:** I will fight to restore and protect the Duwamish River ecosystem and urban tree canopy in historically redlined neighborhoods.

**Environmental Justice:** I will support green jobs pipelines into our South End communities. This will not only relieve the burden of pollution, but will also benefit the clean energy economy.

**Across the state, small businesses are the backbone of the state's economy. What policies would you support to improve the environment for small, local businesses?**

We need to reduce the burden on small businesses. The hoops that our local small business owners have to go through are so difficult. We need statewide programs similar to "Seattle Restored" where we can support small businesses get off the ground by removing the barrier of entry. This would also help fill the many vacant store fronts throughout the state. This would be great for businesses, but it would also help activate our neighborhoods making them safer as well.

**For citizens to function in today's world, everyone needs affordable access to technology and the necessary skills and supportive resources to succeed in the digital age. What policies will you support to ensure rural and marginalized communities are not left behind?**

Everyone in this state should have affordable access to technology and we cannot allow our rural communities to be left behind. We can start with Universal Broadband and public access points. We can fund high-speed internet and provide high speed internet access to those living in remote communities and the same funding can be used to subsidize internet access in low-income communities as well. We should also work to expand free high speed Wi-Fi access, i.e. expanding access to libraries and community centers with high speed internet access. This would provide access to high speed internet and would be great third spaces where educational opportunities to catch communities up in the digital age are plentiful.

**It is our paramount duty to make ample provisions for the education of all children in our state. What two top education policy priorities will you work to address in the next legislative session?**

As a first-generation college student, I understand firsthand that access to quality education can change the trajectory of a life. Our state legislature has failed to meet the duty to fund education for all children in our state. When our districts have to pass levies to fill the cracks something is wrong. When we have the state paying for kids to leave the state because our behavior health facilities for youth are nearly non-existent we have failed to meet the needs of our most vulnerable students. Every child deserves a strong start. That means fully funding transition to kindergarten programs and early literacy supports, because reading resources shouldn't be a privilege reserved for families who can afford the support. I will work to establish the youth development fund to increase access to positive youth development programs. I will bring back funding for the education legacy trust fund, which includes resources for K-12 education, childcare, class size reductions, and support for teachers. Ensuring better outcomes for our kids. We need to provide pathways to employment for our youth. That means funding pathways to 2 year and 4 year degrees, as well as workforce training.

**Attestation**

- The candidate hereby attests that, to the best of their knowledge, the provided information is true and accurate.

Created on May 11th, 2026.