

Hi Oly Indivisible!

My name is Dr. Matt Goldenberg and I am your progressive City Council Candidate, Position 3.

I am a licensed clinical Psychologist with years of experience in leadership, equity training, and direct harm reduction services. I live in the SE neighborhood of Olympia with my wife and our two children, two cats and a dog. I am a small business owner and operate a private practice where I serve a diverse clientele as a trauma specialist. I also am a successful consultant with specialization in intersectional approaches to equity. I teach both undergraduate and graduate level courses in two higher education institutions here in town.

People have asked me why I decided to run this campaign. It is about moments, the moments that I have felt, the moments that are to come. I look first to my children, aged three and seven. I want them to hold me accountable to doing everything I could to make this world healthier for their generation and the next. I want them to ask me at the end of my life: "Dad, what did you do in service of others?" This is one of the stories I want them to know, about when their Dad did the brave thing, the scary thing, and the necessary thing.

Olympia is a city that is currently unable to meet the needs of its residents. When we look at the housing crisis, we need to be aware that we got here through a series of mistakes, some of which we created and some of which we inherited. We must be urgent in our response to longer term strategic planning that allows us to position ourselves as a more cohesive community. I believe we need a supported and formalized tenants union. I believe that residents should be given increased time to respond to evictions and I believe housing applicants should receive exact copies of their credit reports when collected by landlords so that applicants do not need to pay multiple fees as they search for housing.

The city of Olympia has described itself as being in a state of emergency, thus we need show a better emergency response plan. The housing first principle is correct, it suggests lower barrier housing as the first step in a long line of interventions. This is why I am running for city council: I would be the only member who has both direct service experience and has expertise in treating trauma. I was on King County's first mobile crisis team where I worked primarily with chronically homeless and chronically ill adults. I also worked at Childhaven, a therapeutic day care for infants who were homeless and/or insecurely housed. After graduate school, I worked as the on site therapist for Neighborcare in their drop-in homeless youth clinic. Let's bring in a council member who has direct service experience and can identify the diverse needs of those impacted by our housing crisis.

We cannot solve our housing crisis just by building more homes. We must ensure that our workers are protected from exploitive practices and are given a livable wage. We can bring a \$15 minimum wage to our city. We can stand with our workers and not cross picket lines. We can support labor organizers and advocate to abolish catastrophic health insurance plans. We can put people over profits.

The Olympia provider to population ratio is staggering for many fields within healthcare. But we also have not been creative in how to increase the healthcare literacy of our beloved community. We can partner more closely with our health providers and agencies to promote healthcare navigation sites. We can ensure that more of our community is enrolled onto insurance and is aware of how to use the available clinics. And we can create lower barrier care that meets our most vulnerable population where they are. I have activated my belief that high quality health care is a right throughout my career.

I believe that many residents want a city that creates equity and inclusion. But when I talk to individuals from marginalized communities, and in regards to my own story as an openly transgender man, I am aware of a lived experience that is distinct from our spoken values. I began to work as a trainer and community organizer in the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) community as a youth, and I have been consistently at work since then. I have also worked professionally as a consultant on racial equity. At South Puget Sound Community College, I teach a diversity course within a program that supports students with language or other academic difficulty.

I am very concerned that as we discuss our housing needs we are not using a full lens to see that for many individuals, their housing crisis is founded in multiple and overlapping disparities. I believe a city led coalition to partner entrepreneurs of color with our local credit unions and small business consultants will both diversify our market and ensure that we are creating opportunities for all families to thrive. I believe we can better manage our streets, sidewalks, and cross walks to increase the accessibility of our residents. And I believe we can expand our 'safe place' program to allow residents multiple options of refuge from harm. Can you imagine if we had a city council that gave even one day a year of working, hands-on, in the community it governs? What if we had a city council that had it's 'special' meetings at our mitigation site, or in our tent cities? Could we work on building a better relationship with our residents if we modeled cooperation and courage by practicing equitable governance? What kind of city council could we be if we were willing and wanting to go directly into the communities we serve and learn the names of the people we serve, not just our campaign donors? All movements started with a vision. What's yours?

Dr. Matt Goldenberg