My nephew is autistic. Early intervention enabled him to master reading and math skills above grade level. His journey, and the joy and challenges experienced by his parents and our family, have given me a unique perspective into the needs of both those with disabilities and their families. It’s because of this perspective that I want to work with advocates of those with disabilities.

Washington has a strong record of support for people with disabilities, but we still lag in certain areas. While Washington has 488,620 people with disabilities, only 184,137 are employed – 37%. As governor, I will focus on how we can provide the education, training and incentives to move us toward a goal of 50% employment for people with disabilities.

Like many advocates for individuals with developmental disabilities, I was dismayed when Gov. Inslee’s proposed budget last year cut care and employment support for individuals and families with developmental disabilities. As governor, you will not only have an open door in my administration, I will work to reach out to you for ways we can take positive steps for those with disabilities.