

## 46<sup>th</sup> District Democrats Federal Questionnaire

### Candidate Information

Candidate Name: **King County Councilmember Joe McDermott**

Office sought: **U.S. Congress, Washington's Seventh District**

Mailing address: **PO Box 21982, Seattle, WA 98111**

Phone: **206-499-4293**

Email: **friends@joemcdermott.org**

Campaign Manager Name: **Grant Lahmann**

Consultant(s):

**Dan Kully – Kully Hall Struble (Media)**

**Mike Muir – Ambrosino, Muir, Hansen & Crouse (Mail)**

**Andrew Thibault and Ian Stewart – EMC Research (Polling)**

**Tracy Newman – Newman Partners (Fundraising)**

Website: **www.joemcdermott.org**

Facebook: **www.facebook.com/JoeMcDermottWA**

Have you read the Washington State Democrats 2014 Platform? Yes , No \_\_\_\_\_

(See the web link - <http://www.wa-democrats.org/about/documents> - and click "Platform".)

### **Why are you running for this office?**

As the son of schoolteachers, I am running for Congress to ensure that middle class Washingtonians continue to have a strong voice in Washington, D.C. That's why repealing the Citizens United decision and preventing dark money from destroying our democracy will be my top priority from my first day in office — so we can finally achieve the progressive results our families need.

I will also make cracking down on gun violence a key priority. As Chair of the Seattle King County Board of Health, I have led efforts to classify gun violence as a public health crisis — resulting in programs that have saved lives and become a model for both state and federal governments. For too long, politicians in Washington, D.C. have kowtowed to the National Rifle Association. It is past time that we pass tough background checks, ban military-style assault weapons plaguing our communities, and once and for all hold gun manufacturers liable for the over thirty thousand deaths they cause in our country every year.

With 15 years of legislative experience, I am the most experienced candidate running for this seat. Throughout my tenure in public service, I have consistently been a leader in working within my caucus and across the aisle to advance progressive legislation in Washington State. This includes improving public education, fighting for marriage equality, expanding transit, increasing environmental protection,

combating homelessness, enacting campaign finance reform, and addressing the growing income inequality that threatens our middle class.

Our District's residents deserve to have someone working for their interests in our nation's capital, and I intend to serve them in this capacity.

**Please briefly describe your qualifications for this office and your personal and professional background.**

I am the current Chair of the King County Council, representing the 8th Council District since 2010. I earned a bachelor's degree in History and Political Science from Gonzaga University and a Master of Public Administration from the University of Washington. I currently serve on the Sound Transit Board and the King County Board of Health. I have also served on the Board of Southwest Youth & Family Services and the West Seattle Helpline. I was a member of AFT-Washington while teaching at South Seattle Community College. When I was elected to the Legislature I was working as a Senior Budget Analyst for the Seattle School District. My civic activities and memberships include the West Seattle Chamber of Commerce, Vashon Allied Arts, the Highline Historical Society, and the Greater Seattle Business Association.

**Do you consider yourself a Democrat? Have you ever been a member of another party? Have you been actively involved with the Democratic Party?**

I am and have always been a Democrat and am proud of the progressive results I've delivered for Washington families over the course of my career in public service. I have served on the King County Council for the past five years and currently serve as Chair. I represented the 34th Legislative District as a Democrat in the Washington House of Representatives from 2001 to 2007, and then in the Washington Senate from 2007 to 2010, where I served as the Assistant Majority Floor Leader.

From 1998 to 2000, I was Chair of the 34th District Democrats where I remain an active member and PCO today. Prior to being Chair, I was the State Committeeman for the 34<sup>th</sup> District from 1991 to 1998 and served on the Executive Committee of the Washington State Democratic Party from 1995 to 1998.

While attending Gonzaga, I founded a Young Democrats chapter on campus and served as the Young Democrats of Washington National Committeeman from 1991 to 1997 where I served as the international affairs officers in two Young Democrats of America administrations.

**What's your plan to win?**

We will engage with voters in every corner of the Seventh District, from Edmonds to Normandy Park, through a robust field program and communications plan. Over 68% of voters in this solidly Democratic district already know my progressive work through the state legislature and King County council which is why in the latest poll we released I have a 26% advantage over my opponents, while over 70% of voters have not heard of either of the other main candidates. This is a structural advantage to start the race with as I have represented 24% of the district over the past five years, and 20% of the district the previous ten years in the state legislature. It is from this strong base of support that I plan to build our grassroots operation and engage voters on the issues about which they truly care.

**What do you see as the most important functions of the position you are running for? What qualities do you possess that make you the candidate best suited to this role?**

I have spent the last 15 years in public service delivering progressive results for Washington families. From passing legislation to allow home care and child care workers to organize, to civil rights and marriage equality for the LGBTQ community, to statewide campaign finance reform, to saving ecologically important regions in the Puget Sound such as along Maury Island, to expanding transit that serves the entire central Puget Sound and especially communities often overlooked who need transportation options the most. *I'll put my track record of proven progressive results up against anyone's. In a time of hyper partisanship and division, that's the type of experience and work that is sorely lacking in Washington D.C. right now and why I'm inspired to run.*

Getting progressive results means building relationships and coalitions, knowing when to work for a series of small victories or when to refuse compromise insisting on complete policy goals, and showing up to do the job your community has elected you to do every day – on the good and the bad days. This is what we need all our Members of Congress to do, and that is the type of legislator I have been and look forward to being should I be fortunate enough to be elected this November.

**If elected what would your top three priorities be?**

- 1) Overturn Citizens United and pass campaign finance reform, thus creating an environment where Congress can address the issues that too often divide us today – from climate change to gun violence.
- 2) Build relationships and coalitions to promote legislation addressing racial and economic equity.
- 3) Forcefully advocate to bring resources to Washington state and the central Puget sound region, including additional federal funding to support and expand transit, affordable housing and environmental conservation.

**What are your ideas for combating climate change?**

I find it imperative to lead on policies to address our climate crisis. It is important that we reduce carbon emissions by investing in low-carbon jobs and ensure a just transition for workers in carbon-intense industries. I have led on this issue since I served in the Legislature and most recently championed efforts at the King County Council to adopt our Strategic Climate Action Plan, about which Earth Day founder Dennis Hayes said, "Your plan is the best that I've seen." We must also not pit labor against the environmental community, but rather foster a strong Blue-Green Alliance between labor and the environmental community, as we all simply must succeed in this effort. From retraining programs for workers with new clean-energy technology and developing the smart grid for our energy infrastructure, to investing in our transportation systems that enhance transit and reduce congestion and pollution, I will push the United States to invest in saving our environment and good jobs.

In 2008, as a Legislator I voted for state legislation to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions, setting limits for 2020, 2035 and 2050 to ensure progress. However, no program has been created to achieve those limits. Without a program, there is no chance of success. Washington needs to step up to meet these targets and those set by the EPA's 111d Clean Power Plan, whether by a Carbon Tax or Cap and Trade program.

**How will you support women and families' economic opportunities? Would you support legislation closing the wage gap, funding childcare options, and requiring paid family leave?**

It is beyond ridiculous that we are the only industrialized nation that does not support our families with basic and important policies that are proven to improve quality of life while simultaneously generating more effective workers. I've led on these issues already here in Washington and King County. We passed paid parental leave for all King County employees and I am working this year to expand that to full paid family leave to account for everyday situations beyond just the arrival of a child into a family. We've taken tangible steps at the County to promote gender and racial pay equity, and I was one of the first elected officials to endorse and support SeaTac's successful \$15 minimum wage campaign which led the nation.

In Congress, I support and look forward to cosponsoring and passing the Healthy Families Act (H.R. 932/S. 497) which will provide paid sick and safe leave for workers, and the FAMILY Act (H.R. 1439/S. 786) which will provide paid family and medical leave so that women and men have stability and security when taking care of themselves and their families. Further, I am proud to endorse and have signed Raise Up Washington to raise our state's minimum wage and require sick leave. I look forward to cosponsoring Representative DeLauro's Paycheck Fairness Act that will remove loopholes in the Equal Pay Act and help put women on a more equal playing field in the workplace, and support Senator Murray's Raise the Wage Act as a baseline effort to raise the federal minimum wage and would work with the coalition of legislators pushing for \$15.

**How will you work to address racial equity?**

Racism in this country is real, it is structural, and it's an epidemic that we must face together and directly. The problem is seen in so many places, certainly in the early deaths of too many young black men and women, but also in the achievement gap in our schools for all students of color and immigrants, the school to prison pipeline, the racial disproportionality in our so-called "justice" system, in employment and every-day life.

At the County Council, I secured funding for a mentorship program for young black men and identified \$4.1 million in education and public defense funding needed to begin to address the disproportionate impact in our juvenile justice system. But we have to start earlier, by eliminating the achievement gap in our schools and ending the school-to-prison pipeline. How we address truancy and first offenses are solid first steps in this work.

In Congress, I will end For Profit Prisons and will fight to double the federal investment in Head Start programs in our neighborhoods. We can and must ban the box and restore voting rights for former felons who have served their debt to society so they can reintegrate and participate in our democracy. And one of my top priorities when arriving in Congress will be to introduce legislation holding gun manufacturers accountable for the violence caused by the use of their weapons causing violence in our communities. These are small but important steps we can accomplish in Congress to begin moving our country towards a more equitable and just society.

**Are there issues that you've worked on or are excited to work on that are not receiving much media attention?**

I have long been a champion of the transgender community, from lobbying DSHS as a legislator for supportive rule changes to refusing to remove the transgender community from the civil rights bill adding sexual orientation and gender identity and expression to our state's anti-discrimination statutes to enact it sooner. In 2009 I introduced and successfully passed that year legislation to add transgender to our state's hate crimes statute. I have been encouraged since the passage of marriage equality by the focus of many on transgender issues, however at the same time the last six months have shown the work isn't done. My wish is that the media and my colleagues in elective office not demonize a community for political or commercial gain. That this demonization has taken so much attention since December disappoints me greatly.

**What are the United States' essential security interests and needed outcomes in the Middle East? How will you decide what should be pursued with force and which left to diplomacy?**

Failed and failing states in the Middle East and Africa have far reaching consequences. We see ISIL and Al-Qaeda foreign fighters moving to and from these war zones posing a real threat to their home countries – the recent attacks on Paris and Brussels, and the countless others in places like Pakistan and Turkey, bring that into clear focus. Disrupting and destroying terrorist groups and networks must continue to be a priority around the globe, but we cannot tackle this problem alone. We must support local security forces to take control of their own jurisdictions and the democratic infrastructure that can ensure long term success. And we must work towards these goals through multi-lateral cooperation rather than going it alone.

As a member of Congress, there is no more solemn decision than to send an American soldier to battle and I believe all available options for diplomacy and alliance building must be exhausted before moving towards use of force.

**Congress has huge responsibility on many, many issues. How will you prioritize between those most important to you? For example, how will you prioritize funding for mental health services, veteran affairs, education, healthcare, transportation and infrastructure, homelessness, etc.?**

As I have done over my 15 years in legislative offices, I will continue to refuse to pit these important priorities against one another and recognize that what is truly needed is a progressive revenue stream that taxes corporations as well as individuals and ensures effective performance measures of any tax breaks, to meet the needs of our communities and build an economy that works for all Americans.

Question	Support	Oppose	Qualify, if needed
Do you support or oppose adopting Pres. Obama's proposal for raising the national minimum wage to \$10.50?		X	<b>This proposal is not enough.</b> I strongly support Senator Patty Murray's proposed bill calling for a \$12 federal minimum wage as a starting point, and would work with my colleagues in Congress to move towards a \$15 federal minimum wage.
Do you support or	X		

oppose access to safe and legal abortion?			
Do you support or oppose requiring a two-thirds vote to raise revenue?		X	
Do you support or oppose allowing coal or oil to be exported from Washington State's ports?		X	
Do you support or oppose making two years of community college or technical school tuition-free?	X		We must also work towards making four year public higher education institutions tuition free as well.
Do you support or oppose requiring paid vacation and sick/safe leave?	X		
Do you support automatic voter registration?	X		
Do you support or oppose the death penalty?		X	
Do you support or oppose barring employers from asking criminal history questions in job applications?	X		
Do you support or oppose legislation to fix "three strikes" law?	X		