

46th District Democrats Legislative & Statewide Questionnaire

Candidate Information

Candidate Name: Jeff Sprung

Office sought: Washington State Auditor

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Have you read the 46th LD Democrats Draft 2016 Platform? Yes ✓, No _____
(Go to http://www.46dems.org/2016_ld_caucus and click "Draft Platform")

Why are you running for this office?

I am running for three reasons. First, our current State Auditor faced trial for federal crimes, and I want to use my skills, record, and independence to restore the outstanding reputation the agency deserves. Second, I plan to use my experience as a lawyer for whistleblowers who has recovered over \$750 million stolen government dollars to ensure accountability in the use of Washington citizens' investment in our government and improve our State's primary whistleblower program, which is managed by the Auditor's office. Third, I want to fulfill the reason we have a State Auditor: to inspire confidence in our government. As Auditor, I plan to take on the false Eyman-fueled narrative that government is wasteful and ineffective, by talking not only about where government falls short but where it succeeds in improving our lives and communities. By taking on this myth about government failure, we can start to restore the public's faith in government and justify young people's fantastic hope for the future.

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

I am a first generation American. My parents were persecuted and driven from the country of their birth because we are Jewish. My father spent over two years in Auschwitz, until his escape and rescue by American soldiers. My parents taught me to fight for people who don't have a voice in the system, and as a lawyer I became an advocate for working people, consumers, and whistleblowers.

I am a graduate of University of Chicago Law School, a former government prosecutor, and a partner at a national law firm rated in the top ten in our field by the National Law Journal. My practice focuses on representing whistleblowers who report government fraud. Over the course of my 30-year legal career, I have helped recover to taxpayers over three-quarters of a billion dollars from drug companies, Wall Street banks, and dishonest government contractors. I am the only candidate for Auditor with experience managing financial audits and investigations. I am the only candidate who already has returned tax dollars to the public.

The next State Auditor must exemplify independence if we are to restore the public's image of the office. I am not a career politician, and I am not beholden to anyone. Attorney General Bob Ferguson has endorsed me because he knows my skills and expertise. I have never sought money or sponsorships from big companies; instead I have taken them on for stealing from taxpayers. I am completely independent from the agencies and companies I will be auditing, which is the right fit for our State's watchdog especially at this time.

Outside my law practice, I have a leader in many progressive organizations. I am the immediate past president of the board of Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii. I led the coalition for the Washington Association for Justice that achieved passage of the Washington Medicaid Fraud False Claims Act, which recruits whistleblowers to protect our State's \$9 billion investment in Medicaid. I am on the Advisory Board of the statewide environmental organization, The Hanford Challenge. I have written about how to transition our economy away from dependence on fossil fuels by requiring corporate polluters to internalize the costs of climate change, rather than impose them on the public. The members of the Jewish community to which my wife, children, and I belong, the Kavana Cooperative, chose me as its second president.

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

Democratic values are part of my fabric as a person. My personal history has instilled in me the conviction that those without a voice must be heard, and that equality is not just a matter of abstract principles but a concrete experience.

My parents were persecuted and driven from the country of their birth because of our religion. My family's escape and immigrant legacy led me to become a fighter for people who don't have a voice in the system. My parents were Democrats and the beliefs I formed through my family's history are consistent with the Democratic Party's beliefs. As a lawyer I became an advocate for working people, consumers, and whistleblowers. My fight for individual rights also led me to serve as immediate past president of the advocacy arm of Planned Parenthood for our four-state region. I learned during my years with Planned Parenthood Votes that denying women access to reproductive health care and abortion services can condemn them

to poverty and preclude them, heartbreakingly, from contributing their immense potential to our economy.

I also have two young children, and I'm angry that we're leaving them a world with a worsening climate. I strongly support an aggressive and progressive carbon pricing policy that help communities transition to cleaner energy jobs and better health outcomes for kids and families. In 2014, I wrote an article on Crosscut.com on how our property insurance industry is falling short in requiring carbon polluters to internalize the costs they impose on all of us, and laying out a "green insurance plan" for Washington. As a member of the Hanford Challenge's Advisory Board, I'm involved in ensuring that we don't leave the next generation with a toxic nuclear dump in eastern Washington, and that we clean up the Hanford Nuclear Reservation. My beliefs best align with the principles of the Democratic Party.

What's your plan to win?

Our strategy involves focusing intensively on the 10 largest counties in Washington and engaging in intensive voter contact in those counties. We are using tools including cable TV advertising, targeted social media advertising, earned media, direct mail, letters and e-mails from elected endorsers, and direct voter contact assisted by labor and other endorser organizations. We have a special focus and associated strategy with King, Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane, Thurston, Clark, and Kitsap counties.

We spend considerable time on fundraising and have raised approximately \$180,000 in four months, with our nearest opponent (Republican Sen. Miloscia) having raised roughly \$40,000 and our Democratic opponent having raised approximately \$30,000. We will prepare carefully for media endorsement interviews and are working with communications specialists at Fuse to do so.

We also have worked hard to gain labor endorsements and are succeeding in obtaining sole endorsements. I received the sole endorsement of the Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council, the Washington Public Employees Association UFCW 365, the Iron Workers Local Union 86, the Laborers Local 242, and the sole recommendation to the Washington State Labor Council from the largest regional Central Labor Councils in our State.

We have been endorsed by the Snohomish, Spokane, and Whitman County Democrats. Our elected endorsement list includes:

Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson
State Senator David Frockt (46th LD)
State Senator Andy Billig (3rd LD)
State Senator Reuven Carlyle (36th LD)
State Senator Pramila Jayapal (37th LD)

State Senator Jamie Pederson (43rd LD)
State Representative Gerry Pollet (46th LD)
State Representative Marcus Riccelli (3rd LD)
State Representative Tana Senn (41st LD)
State Representative Gael Tarleton (36th LD)
State Representative Brady Piñero Walkinshaw (43th LD)
Seattle City Councilmember Sally Bagshaw
King County Councilmember Rod Dembowski
King County Councilmember Larry Gossett
King County Councilmember Jeanne Kohl-Welles

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?

The most important function of the State Auditor is saving desperately needed government funds. Washingtonians are deeply frustrated about the Legislature's inability to fund vital programs – including constitutionally required basic education funding. The Auditor's office is part of the solution: by identifying areas where money can be saved and better used, the Auditor can help the Legislature identify badly-needed funding resources.

More broadly, the purpose of the State Auditor's position is to provide accountability to citizens, and to give citizens faith in their government. We need to restore the Office's damaged reputation, which will be achieved by a leader with real expertise in the unique auditing mission of the Office and independence from the agencies and companies that are audited. A second important issue is providing the accountability and transparency in government that will re-inspire citizens' confidence in our elected leaders.

I am uniquely qualified to fulfill these goals for three reasons: I have a successful, lifelong career in managing financial investigations, independence from agencies subject to audit that will give faith to voters in my impartiality, and a vision for this office unlike any other candidate.

If elected what would your top three priorities be?

The first is restoring the reputation of the Office. I am the only candidate running who has spent his career performing the core mission of the Auditor and to already have recovered taxpayers' money, over \$750 million. In my 30 year career, I've never had an ethical issue. During this time, I helped build what the National Law Journal named one of the top 10 plaintiffs' law firms in the country. The Auditor's office is the taxpayer's watchdog in Olympia, and it will require an independent-minded outsider to Olympia with real expertise to return confidence and effectiveness to the job.

Secondly, I want to identify areas for improving financial accountability, both by government officials but – equally importantly – by private companies that receive government dollars or

tax subsidies. This will enable legislators will be able to address critical budget shortfalls that make it so difficult for us to fund those projects necessary for a thriving community. In order to invest in safe roads, excellent schools, reliable public safety resources, we need every dollar to be put to its best use. As a seasoned financial investigator, I look forward to the opportunity to manage the types of audits that will bring these issues to light.

Finally, I want to use this office to address one of the most critical issues affecting Washington politics from every angle: restoring people's confidence in government. I believe a big contributor to voter apathy is the conservative narrative that government is wasteful and inefficient and fails at whatever it does. This narrative has caused people to lose faith in government and believe that the taxes they pay are a waste of money. We have to play a long-game of changing voters' attitudes about government to get them to support paying the taxes needed to support our government. As State Auditor, I plan to talk to the public and the media not only about where our state and local agencies have fallen short, but also where they have succeeded in bettering our communities. I plan to use the position of Auditor to help improve people's confidence in government, and I believe this will make citizens of Washington not only more engaged but more amenable to funding a vibrant government.

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?

As the immediate past president of Planned Parenthood's political action arm, I know that denying women access to reproductive health care and abortion services can condemn them to poverty and preclude them from contributing their immense potential to our economy. Planned Parenthood gets much of its revenue from Medicaid as a result of serving low-income women, and I will ensure that the State Auditor's Office is not used to tie up Planned Parenthood in Medicaid audits.

Our economy grows when our middle class is strong, and when our workers earn a living wage. It grows when our wages are equitable across gender lines, when families are supported by affordable childcare, and when parents can spend crucial time with their children without fearing financial repercussions. I sued Boeing for one of these very issues: pay discrimination against women. The trickle-down theory has led to the highest level of income inequality our country has ever seen. Not only is this damaging to our economy, but it denies justice when people are locked in a cycle of poverty because they lack access to reproductive care and abortion, education, health care, equal school discipline, nutrition, etc. As State Auditor, I would consider using accountability audits of agencies providing social services to point out that we all thrive when we give people the tools to enter the middle class, and I'd use my access to the media to echo this argument.

What I also can do as Auditor to support a thriving middle class is to make sure every precious, hard-earned dollar we invest in government is used for the important purposes for which we intend it. Not a penny should be lost to fraud or abuse. I am the candidate best-qualified to

protect taxpayer dollars. I was a government prosecutor for four years in Washington, D.C., and then as a lawyer in private practice in Washington State I've worked to get compensation for consumers and taxpayers who were victimized by crime committed by corporate executives.

How will you work to address racial equity?

As the son of refugees from Nazi Germany, whose grandparents and aunts and uncles died because of their religion, racial equity is incredibly important to me. I intend to use the State Auditor's position to ensure that resources are being used to benefit all, not just some, and to help level the playing field. It is wrong that racial minorities in Washington State disproportionately attend more poorly-funded schools, face higher rates of discipline, lower rates of graduation, and higher rates of incarceration. As State Auditor, I will do whatever I can to be sure that our resources are being used to support those programs that have been proven to address these issues.

Describe your stance on Washington's tax structure. What needs to be changed? What should stay the same?

I personally recognize that Washington's tax structure is nationally ranked as one of the most regressive in the United States. As a Washington State Auditor, I cannot legislate in order to change this, but what I can do is change voters' perspectives on government – because giving voter's faith in government is the original function of the Auditor's office. Only once voters have faith in their government will they be willing to invest in it.

I am the only State Auditor candidate who has made this an explicit part of my platform: I want to use the audits the Office performs to demonstrate not just where government falls short, but also where it succeeds. I want to take on the Eyman narrative – that government fails at whatever it tries.

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

I am very excited about improving our State's primary whistleblower program, which is managed by the State Auditor. I believe one of the most powerful tools to address fraud on taxpayers is to increase incentives and protections for whistleblowers. For the past 5 years, I have been the strongest advocate in our state for strengthening whistleblower incentives and protections. This included leading the coalition on behalf of the Washington Association for Justice that achieved passage of a new whistleblower law – the Medicaid Fraud False Claims Act passed in 2012 and extended this session – to protect our State's \$9 billion investment in

Medicaid. If elected, I will strengthen our State’s whistleblower program, by working to ensure it covers not just government employees but employees of private companies that do business with the government.

How will you combat climate change?

I have two young children, and I’m angry that we’re leaving them a world with a worsening climate. I strongly support an aggressive, and progressive, carbon pricing policy that help communities transition to cleaner energy jobs and better health outcomes for kids and families. In 2014, I wrote an article on Crosscut.com on how our property insurance industry is falling short in requiring carbon polluters to internalize the costs they impose on all of us, and laying out a “green insurance plan” for Washington. I oppose subsidizing new fossil fuel-based energy projects such as the proposed methanol plant and liquefied natural gas storage and export facility sought by some in Tacoma. As a member of the Hanford Challenge’s Advisory Board, I’m involved in ensuring that we don’t leave the next generation with a toxic nuclear dump in eastern Washington, and that we clean up the Hanford Nuclear Reservation. I plan to continue my advocacy for a green future for our State’s children when in public life.

Question	Support	Oppose	Qualify, if needed
Do you support or oppose Raise up Washington’s initiative to increase the minimum wage?	X		
Do you support or oppose access to safe and legal abortion?	X		
Do you support or oppose amending Washington’s Constitution to require 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	X		

years of community college or technical school tuition-free?			
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 Washington's "three strikes" law?	X		

The following questions are position specific. You only need to complete the questions for the position that you're running for.

Superintendent of Public Instruction

How will you work to address the achievement gap in our public schools?

Please describe your position on standardized testing.

Given the *McCleary* decision, what legislation do you support or propose to fully fund education and maintain funding for other basic services? Do you support increasing revenue? Given existing public needs and the state of the economy, should such legislation include increasing revenue?

Do you support or oppose charter schools? Why or why not?

Secretary of State

How will you work to increase voter enfranchisement?

Legislature (House and Senate), Governor, Lt Governor

Given the *McCleary* decision, what legislation do you support or propose to fully fund education and maintain funding for other basic services? Do you support increasing revenue? Given existing public needs and the state of the economy, should such legislation include increasing revenue?

Do you support or oppose charter schools? Why or why not?

Lt Governor

How would you use your office to promote international economic development that benefits our state?

When the Governor is out of state or otherwise incapacitated, the Lt. Governor becomes the acting Governor. How would you handle that responsibility? What kind of actions would you take?

Commissioner of Public Lands

In 2015, Washington faced the largest and most destructive forest fires in history. What will you do as Lands Commissioner to prevent or respond to wildfires?

Timber, many parts of the state, is a hot button issue. While some want to protect our forest canopy, others see jobs and resources for building schools as more important. Where do you land in this debate? How will you use your position to find compromise?

Treasurer

What role does the Treasurer hold in maintaining a healthy credit and bond ratings for the state of Washington? Do you see room for improvement?

Auditor

How will you restore confidence in the office of Auditor as a successor to Troy Kelley?

Through real expertise in the core mission of the Auditor, independence from those the Auditor regulates, and leadership and collaboration with the Office's outstanding employees.

My experience as a lawyer managing teams performing financial investigations and audits of taxpayer money directly qualifies me to be State Auditor. The State Auditor's Office is much like the law firm at which I'm a partner; it is not a large government bureaucracy like a county government. My firm has 150-200 employees, akin to the Auditor's roughly 280 employees, and they have specialized and technical skills and work in teams on investigations and audits of the use of government money like the Auditor's staff. I lead these teams. I am passionate about protecting taxpayer dollars so they can be used for the important things we as a State want to achieve, and I will not need on-the-job training as our next State Auditor. Electing an Auditor

with real expertise is critical to restoring public confidence in the office.

Further, after the scandal involving Troy Kelley and the public's skepticism about politics and politicians, it is important to project independence as State Auditor from both government officials and companies that do business with the government. I am not a career politician, and I am not on boards or intertwined with any government official or agency subject to audit. I have always been on the opposite side of the table from companies that do business with the government, and I have not sought donations or sponsorships from corporations. I exemplify the impartiality an Auditor should, and that has resonated with the voters I have spoken with.

Finally, I am a demonstrated leader and adept at collaborating with others. Outside my law practice, I have been chosen to serve in numerous leadership positions. The Washington Association for Justice turns to me when it needs an expert in my field. The board of Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii recently elected me president. The members of the Jewish community to which my wife, children, and I belong chose me as its second president. If elected, I would conduct a survey and interviews of management and staff employees at the Auditor's Office to understand what needs to be done to regain their trust and confidence. The focus of these inquiries would be to learn from employees how they currently feel about the Office, the executive team, the support and resources they get or don't have, whether their workload has grown to a level that it is excessive, what they'd like to see or expect from the new State Auditor, etc.

How will you prioritize agency and organizational audits?

I start from the standpoint that accountability does not just cover government employees but extends to companies that do business with the government or get government benefits. This view will influence the audits I prioritize.

The Auditor's Office performs financial and accountability audits of all government entities every three years. Performance audits involve more discretion, and I would include whistleblower complaints, my policy priorities, and opportunities to help local governments solve problems, reduce costs, and improve value to citizens as key factors in selecting those to perform. Given my background, I am particularly interested in following where most money is lost, which means ensuring those who do business with the government or get subsidies treat us fairly and honestly. In particular, I would be interested in ensuring that companies such as Boeing that receive tax subsidies are complying with the commitments they made to qualify for the subsidies.

Some of the priorities I would bring to the Auditor's Office would be ensuring effective mechanisms exist to protect and encourage whistleblowers, ensuring all accountability audits considered the agency's compliance with open government laws, protecting the personal privacy information in the "big data" possessed by government agencies, promoting best

practices in Washington's higher education system for using public funding to effectively serve disadvantaged students, and ensuring private government contractors are complying with the laws and policies intended to treat workers fairly, such as prevailing wage laws, payments into the workers' compensation and unemployment systems, minimum wage laws, and the use of Project Labor Agreements.

Attorney General

What accomplishment from your tenure are most proud of?

Insurance Commissioner

What accomplishment from your tenure are most proud of?