

46th District Democrats Legislative & Statewide Questionnaire

Candidate Information

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Office sought: Lieutenant Governor

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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?

As a person of color, a child of immigrant parents, and a person with a disability, my lived experience has given me a unique perspective, and taught me the value of hard work and creative solutions—traits I have brought to my work in the state legislature on behalf of Washington’s 48th District, and now want to bring to the office of Lieutenant Governor on behalf of all Washingtonians.

I believe the role of Lieutenant Governor is entrepreneurial in nature, and offers opportunities for innovation and leadership. I hope to utilize these opportunities to tackle the challenges our state faces: income inequality, the opportunity gap, and climate change.

As Lieutenant Governor I will focus primarily on the following three areas:

(1) As presiding officer in the senate I will rule on the constitutionality of bills and cast tie-breaking votes on legislation. Drawing upon my legal background, I will use my parliamentary and procedural powers to ensure that our values are reflected in the legislation we pass.

(2) I will have the responsibility of appointing officers to more than forty boards and commissions, and I’ll do my part to make sure that they reflect the true geographic and demographic diversity of our state, and create leadership opportunities for those who are often not engaged in government.

(3) Finally, as the holder of a statewide office, I will have the ability to act as a statewide spokesperson and champion progressive values in every corner of the state. As Lieutenant Governor I intend to use the bully pulpit to advocate for progressive issues, create and take advantage of earned media opportunities, partner

with the Governor, Legislative leaders and allied groups on key initiatives, and work with our party to help recruit and support our platform and candidates in all 49 legislative districts.

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

I currently represent the 48th Legislative District in the State Senate where I serve on the Democratic Leadership team as Democratic Whip. From 2012-2014 I represented the same district in the State House of Representatives.

I am an attorney by trade, and practiced law at Perkins Coie from 2009-2013 advising technology startups. In 2013 I was named Professor and Distinguished Lawmaker in Residence at the Seattle University Law School where I teach courses on legislative procedure and on intellectual property.

I earned my undergraduate degree from Columbia University, my master's degree at Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, and my law degree at Yale Law School.

I currently sit on the boards of the 5th Avenue Theatre, the Bellevue College Foundation, and the Bellevue Downtown Association, and I previously served as a Civil Rights Commissioner for King County and as a Human Services Commissioner for the City of Bellevue.

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

Yes. I have been a Democrat my entire adult life, and have been proud to serve as a PCO, a member of the Senate Democratic leadership team, and a recently-appointed member of the 2016 DNC Platform Committee.

I have been active in Democratic Party organizations, working for Democratic elected officials, and on progressive issues. I am a 2010 Institute for a Democratic Future alumnus, a former staffer in the office of Sen. Maria Cantwell, and a former member of the King County Young Democrats Executive Board.

What's your plan to win?

I am proud to be the frontrunner in this race, leading in both fundraising and political support. I have raised over \$475,000, more than twice my nearest opponent, and have earned the support of over 100 elected officials and progressive organizations across the state. My plan is to build on this success by continuing to assemble the resources and coalition of supporters needed to prevail in the Primary. I intend to have a serious field campaign as well as significant paid media.

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 position of Lieutenant Governor is unlike any other; it exists in both the legislative and executive branches of state government. First and foremost, the Lieutenant Governor presides over the State Senate,

where his or her constitutional, parliamentary, and procedural rulings can determine the outcome of legislation. As a lawyer who has taught legislative procedure at the Seattle University School of Law for three years, I am uniquely prepared to preside fairly and effectively, and to work with legislative Democrats to advance a progressive agenda.

The Lieutenant Governor makes appointments to over forty boards and commissions, ranging from the Gambling Commission to the Sentencing Guidelines Commission. As a blind Iranian-American and a person of color, I know how important it is to use these boards and commissions to reach into diverse communities throughout our state, and to give young people access to public service opportunities.

Finally, my legislative record shows that I am dedicated to using the position to champion progressive values throughout the state. As the prime sponsor of statewide paid sick leave legislation, the Washington Voting Rights Act, legislative language acknowledging that climate change is real and man-made, and “Cap the Copay” legislation to curb the costs of prescription drugs, I have used my time in the Legislature to take a leadership role on some of the most important issues of the day. I look forward to continuing this work as a statewide elected official. My commitment to doing so is reflected in my wide array of endorsements: I am supported by elected officials from Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma, Bellevue, Kent, Everett, and a dozen other jurisdictions in nearly every part of the state, which will allow me to play an even better leadership role throughout Washington State in the years to come.

If elected what would your top three priorities be?

Education:

Securing a quality education for our children remains a critical issue statewide, and addressing the McCleary decision, as the Court, the public, and our conscience demand, is the key priority for our legislature in the upcoming 2017-18 biennium. As Lieutenant Governor, I will use the powers of the office to help pass a budget that meets our state’s constitutional obligations, including its paramount duty to make ample provision for basic education.

Job Growth:

Contrary to what many conservatives say, our state’s relatively high minimum wage, lack of tip credit, public worker’s compensation insurance system, prevailing wage contracting provisions, and relatively high level of union density have all contributed to a state that is among the most economically sound of any in our country. We still have much more to do, however, if we hope to lift the hundreds of thousands of Washingtonians who experience economic insecurity in our state into the middle class. We must expand opportunity and enhance working conditions for all Washingtonians by establishing a minimum wage that reflects the high cost of living in our state, basic benefits like paid sick, safe and family medical leave, a better funded education system that addresses the teacher shortage and opportunity gap, labor reforms that will allow us to crack down on worker misclassification, wage theft and violations of apprenticeship utilization standards, housing policies that allow people to live near their workplaces, college and workforce training for the 21st century, and investments in infrastructure that improve our state while creating family wage jobs. By implementing these changes, we will continue to lead the country in both fairness and prosperity.

Building a Sustainable Future:

Washington State is home to abundant natural resources, and a thriving trade-based economy—two things that make our state a uniquely wonderful place to live and work. We are facing critical decisions on how to make sustainable investments in transportation and infrastructure that will serve our communities, reduce congestion, and enhance quality of life, while supporting our industries efficiently and effectively in the 21st Century economy. As Lieutenant Governor, I will continue to advocate for pro-growth, progressive policies that maintain and improve our roads, ports, and bridges, while investing in sustainable energy solutions that will power our state in a cleaner, more efficient way.

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 prime sponsor of statewide paid sick leave legislation, I am a strong believer in the importance of placing economic justice at the center of our agenda. Passing the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, amply funding family planning services and expanding access to contraception, making childcare and early learning universally accessible, raising the minimum wage, establishing paid sick and safe leave requirements statewide, passing gender pay equity legislation, and creating a funding source for paid family medical leave insurance are all key parts of ensuring an economy that is more just.

How will you work to address racial equity?

As the prime sponsor of the Washington Voting Rights Act, I believe, as did President Johnson, that the right to have ones vote count is the cornerstone of all other rights and freedoms. It is critical that we establish a method by which communities of color can participate equally in establishing the districting plans used by cities and counties around our state.

Police and criminal justice reform are also an important part of a racial justice agenda. We as Democrats should continue to advocate for drug reform, a bail system that is fairer to those without significant financial means, a better funded public defense system, changes to our LFO system so that defendants are spared exorbitant interest fees, and a correctional system that creates opportunities for higher education and work placement upon release.

Last but not least, we must ensure that the investments we make in funding the McCleary decision are targeted at closing the opportunity gap that lives on as the legacy of systemic racism in our state and country. I have suggested beginning by shrinking class sizes and upgrading school buildings in underserved areas, connecting our schools with wrap-around social services, funding ELL curricula and other programs for New Americans, and being far more intentional about recruiting people of color into the teaching profession and retaining them.

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

We all know that Washington has one of the most regressive tax systems in the country. In the short term I support the Governor’s proposal to generate revenue by taxing carbon emissions. It is logical, progressive and popular. I am also open to other sorts of tax reform such as taxing capital gains. Tax preferences and exemptions should be reviewed regularly for effectiveness, and, whenever practicable, should contain clawback provisions that would allow the state to recoup the cost of the tax exemption if certain job targets were not met.

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

As a 3-time cancer survivor, I am very interested in the ways in which, even after the passage of the Affordable Care Act, Washingtonians experiencing serious illnesses are often driven into poverty. I first became aware of the outrageous cost of certain prescription drugs a few years ago, when I was approached by a constituent whose son had a condition known as Eosinophilic Gastrointestinal Disorder (EGID), for which the treatment costs over \$1,000 a month. I introduced legislation to require insurance companies to cover the treatment, but, in doing so, I became increasingly aware of the spiraling copay requirements for so-called “specialty drugs” like the one my constituent needed to purchase or many chemotherapies. That is why, earlier this year, I introduced “cap the copay” legislation for the first time in Washington State to limit the amount that an insurance company can require its policyholders to pay per month in the form of copays. It is my hope that, in the coming years, this and other proposals will lead to concrete action to curb out-of-pocket mandates on people with serious illnesses, and I would love to see increased attention paid to this important issue, since drug costs can often drive people into poverty, the emergency room, or both.

How will you combat climate change?

Last year I became the first State Senator to introduce legislative language recognizing that climate change is real, that human behavior is a significant contributing cause, and that it is an urgent issue that our state must face. We should place a price on carbon, extend and expand the solar tax incentive, invest in clean energy research programs at the UW, develop and pass the next generation of renewable energy standards to build on the success of I-937, close the tax loophole enjoyed by the oil industry, approve Sound Transit 3 and make further investments in transit, bike and pedestrian infrastructure, update our building codes to enhance energy conservation efforts, and work collaboratively with other states and British Columbia to coordinate our efforts for maximum impact.

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

Do you support or oppose amending Washington's Constitution to require a two-thirds vote to raise revenue?		✓	
Do you support or oppose allowing coal or oil to be exported from Washington State's ports?		✓	
Do you support or oppose making two years of community college or technical school tuition-free?	✓		
Do you support or oppose requiring paid vacation and sick/safe leave?	✓		
Do you support automatic voter registration?	✓		
Do you support or oppose the death penalty?		✓	
Do you support or oppose barring employers from asking criminal history questions in job applications?	✓		
Do you support or oppose legislation to fix Washington's "three strikes" law?	✓		

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

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?

Having grown up with a disability, I know how important it is that students be provided essential support services as well as a amply-funded public education. That is why I believe new revenue is necessary to fund

McCleary, so that we can protect and expand services in the areas of early learning, disability support, mental health, higher education student aid, and elderly care.

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

I voted against the charter school bill this year, and it is my belief that these innovative schools would have to be brought under school district control to pass constitutional muster.

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

By law, the Lieutenant Governor chairs the Legislative Committee on Economic Development and International Relations. As the Union's most trade-dependent state, it is critical that we elect a Lieutenant Governor who can dedicate time and resources to strengthening our relations abroad and with members of the Consular Association of Washington, and work to bring trade and new business to our state.

I would use my position to champion fair trade principles, and advocate for trade relationships that raise labor and environmental standards and that have a net positive affect on Washington jobs in all sectors. This past year I joined a group of fellow Legislators on a trip to Denmark to study what strategies have been employed there to combat climate change, and in 2014 I was selected as one of 8 elected officials from around the country to travel to China to learn about how the two countries can partner on environmental and national security issues. My leadership of the LCEDIR would place an emphasis on how we can ensure that our trade agenda creates a race to the top not to the bottom, how we can enhance apprenticeship and workforce training programs to put people back to work, and how we could better support our small businesses, particularly those that are women or minority owned.

One of my top priorities upon taking office will be to facilitate the reinstatement of our state tourism office. We are the only state in the union without a state-funded tourism office, and even with the hard work of the Washington Tourism Alliance we are failing to compete. As Lieutenant Governor I will take the lead on revitalizing legislative, business, and community efforts to empower our tourism office with the resources they need to market Washington State as the amazing place to live, visit, and do business that it is. Just last year we saw a prime example of the incredible impact tourism can have on our local economy when Tacoma hosted the U.S. Open. It is my hope that with new energy and passion for economic development in the office of Lieutenant Governor we can greatly expand Washington State's visibility and competitiveness.

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?

I would be prepared to respond in the event of an emergency by consulting with cabinet officials, the Governor and his staff, and any federal or military leaders necessary. My office would coordinate with that of the Governor to find ways I could fill in at events or ceremonies for the Governor in his or her absence.