

46th District Democrats Legislative & Statewide Questionnaire

Candidate Information

Candidate Name Karen Fraser

Office sought Lt. Governor

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

Why are you running for this office?

I want to continue to work with citizens and public officials for a future for Washington that will be the best it can be--to achieve the imperatives of a quality life for each person which includes a liveable income, work and other opportunities, and respect and justice; for quality and sustainable environments and natural resources, including arresting climate change; and for a government that is OF, BY, and FOR *the people*.

I am committed to assuring that the Washington State Senate operates in a manner that promotes civility, respect, openness, engagement with citizens, upholding democratic principles, and upholding state constitutional and other rules designed to protect the public.

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

I am the most experienced candidate in terms of public/political leadership experience and professional

SENATE I have held major leadership roles throughout my six terms in the Washington State Senate: Democratic Caucus Chair; Capital Budget Chair; Chair of committees pertaining to environment, energy, water, outdoor recreation; Chair (three times) of the joint Senate and House committees on public pensions; Chair of the Senate's administrative committee; service on many other committees; and issues leader on the Floor for a variety of issues.

HOUSE I served two terms in the House of Representatives, where I was Assistant Whip, Vice Chair of the Revenue Committee, and served on several other committees.

STATE BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS Have served on a wide variety.

THURSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONER I was elected to two terms as Thurston County Commissioner (8 years), and in this role interacted with all other local governments in the county, with several adjacent counties, and served on or chaired a wide variety of intergovernmental entities. A major regional role was to serve as the Chair of the Nisqually River Task Force, which developed the landmark, highly successful, watershed plan for the Nisqually River Basin, a regional natural resource.

WASHINGTON STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES I was the first woman elected President of the Washington State Association of Counties, after having been active in many roles in the Association, including serving on the Legislative Committee. These roles included overall Association leadership and lobbying the Legislature on behalf of counties.

LACEY MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL MEMBER I was the first woman Mayor and City Council Member in Lacey. This involved comprehensive City leadership and regional intergovernmental leadership.

WOMEN'S MOVEMENT I coordinated the statewide lobbying for the approximately dozen chapters of the National Organization for Women (NOW) in Washington State. I have an extensive history of a wide variety women's movement leadership and involvement. I am included in oral histories of the Washington Women's History Consortium and in a couple of other publications about women leaders.

LABOR MOVEMENT I was a very active member of organized labor for about 10 years. On a voluntary basis I joined the Washington Federation of State Employees AFL-CIO when I began to work for state agencies. I was an Executive Board member of Local 443 (Olympia), and a Delegate to Federation and State Labor Conventions. At one State Labor Convention, I joined with a coalition of women from several unions to achieve passage of a resolution to establish a Women's Committee at the state level of the Labor Council. It continues to serve the membership.

ADJUNCT FACULTY, THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE I am Adjunct Faculty in the Master of Public Administration Program at The Evergreen State College, teaching classes on legislative policy-making and legislative process. Have been doing this for about 15 years.

STATE EMPLOYEE I was a Washington State employee for about 12 years, principally doing agency legislative liaison work for: Department of Highways, Planning and Community Affairs Agency, and Employment Security Department.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND Graduated from Roosevelt High School, in the 46th District (grew up there on 40th NE). Graduated from the UW with a BA (with honors) in Sociology and a Master of Public Administration from what is now the Evans School of Public Affairs and Governance. Attended Yale University Summer Language Institute to study French.

BALLOT ISSUE BACKGROUND Major involvement in the ERA ballot measure campaign. Chaired the successful Thurston County ballot measure campaign to levy a tax to pay for 9-1-1 service in the County. Active member of campaign committee to get statewide ballot measure passed to fund "Enhanced 9-1-1" (computer aided) services statewide, with a uniform telephone tax which allowed subsidization for

rural areas. I was the Prime Sponsor of the bill in the Legislature, which the Senate Republicans forced onto the ballot rather than have the Senate vote for a tax.

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 chose to become a Democrat, and am quite thoroughly a Democrat. I have never been a member of another political party. I am a long-term very active member of the Thurston County Democrats . Some of my roles have been: PCO, County Convention Chair during a Presidential year, Delegate to State Democratic Party Conventions. I have been a highly active campaigner for candidates from PCO to President and everything in between, and for and against ballot measures. I have worked on innumerable campaigns in many capacities, and have held innumerable fundraisers at my home for local, state, and national level candidates.

What's your plan to win?

With a field of 9 candidates, and possibly more, I seek to get about 25% of the Primary Election vote, to put me in the top two. I'll do it with outreach, with appeal to women voters, with appeal to voters who value extensive public experience, with organizational and personal endorsements, with networking with many organizations and people with whom I've worked over the years in the many facets of my political, professional, and personal life.

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 Lt. Governor is the only statewide position that serves both in the Legislative Branch and the Executive Branch.

In the Legislative Branch, it is the only statewide elected official that has a direct role in the operation of the Legislative Branch. Very importantly, the State Constitution directs that the Lt. Governor shall be the President of the Senate, presiding over its conduct and operations. This means that the Lt. Governor has a role particularly accountable to all the citizens of the state to uphold the highest principles of democracy---to promote civility and respect in deliberations, to promote openness and a welcoming spirit for the public, to promote resolution of public issues, to uphold constitutional and other rules designed to facilitate debate and protect the public.

To do a good job of this, the President should have a style that is even-handed and fair and respectful toward all Senators. The President should be a careful and sensitive parliamentarian. The President

should be one who knows the processes of the Senate and the Legislature thoroughly, in order to exercise informed and thoughtful judgement in making parliamentary rulings, and in preventing and working through problems. When I called my Senate Democratic colleagues about my interest in this position, they told me generally: You'd be good, you are fair, respected and respectful, know the Senate thoroughly, work well with everyone, respect the institution of the Senate, work well with staff, are organized and work hard.

The rules preclude the President of the Senate from engaging in debate or expressing policy opinions while presiding. The President votes in case of a tie, however, so one's political orientation is important. The President does NOT have veto authority over any measure, and CANNOT block a bill that has passed the Legislature from going to the Governor or the ballot for decision. To attempt to do so would ultimately fail, would be a discredit to the President and the Senate.

The President appoints mostly Senators to a wide variety of committees and other entities, and appoints a small number of citizens to various entities. This should be done in a manner that reflects statewide population and geography and advances equality of opportunity, justice, and fairness and Democratic values and priorities.

The President serves as Chair of the Senate Rules Committee, and there can express opinions and work for and against advancing bills to the full Senate for action.

I am highly experienced in presiding in the Senate. I chair virtually half the Senate now, as Caucus Chair, and have chaired a wide variety of committees and task forces in the past. People are complimentary about my ability to do this respectfully, fairly, and effectively. I have chaired/presided at innumerable public meetings when state and local government experiences are combined.

Democrats know that where opportunities arise, I will always continue to advance the Democratic agenda.

The Executive Branch role is also complex. The Lt. Governor has the opportunity to be a statewide leader in advocating for important values and priorities in many ways---by speaking, by creating task forces, by working with public officials, and with private and nonprofit organizations and individuals.

The Lt. Governor is charged by statute with appointing and chairing an Economic Development and International Trade Committee. Thus, the Lt. Governor is a major leader in promoting international friendship and business. I have been extensively involved in state level international trade and friendship for many years, and have the most experience with this of any legislator, I believe. I have led trade and friendship missions to Asia, and have participated in others to Asia, Europe, and Mexico and Central America. I received a "Commendation" from the Japan Foreign Minister for my work effectively promoting friendship between Washington and Japan. For many years, I was active in the Asia and Pacific Parliamentarians' Conference on Environment and Development. For many years, I organized and led a Legislative International Caucus. I regularly welcome international visitors to the Capitol. I have good relationships with a number of the international consulates in the state.

I believe I am well prepared to move smoothly into this important leadership and friendship role.

The Lt. Governor is a member of four state boards:

- 1) The State Capital Committee, which makes decisions about the Capital Campus. I have long been a member of an advisory committee to this Committee and attend many of their meetings, so am well prepared to join this board.
- 2) The State Finance Committee, charged with reporting on and overseeing state debt. I Chaired the Senate Capital Budget for six years, which is financed half by state bonds. I served on the Senate Ways and Means Committee for over 20 years, so am highly familiar with state finances. I chaired three times the joint Senate and House Committees on public pensions, so am highly familiar with state investment responsibilities. I feel fully prepared to join this committee.
- 3) The Higher Education Facilities Finance Authority, which authorizes bonds for private higher education facilities. My Capital Budget and Ways and Means experiences make me well prepared to exercise informed judgment here.
- 4) The Health Facilities Financing Authority, which authorizes bonds for private health care facilities. Again, my Capital Budget and Senate Ways and Means experiences make me well prepared to exercise informed judgement.

My education: Roosevelt High School, Seattle – Diploma. (Grew up in the 46th, on 40th NE)
University of Washington – BA in Sociology, with Honors; Master of Public Administration, from the Evans School (under a prior name)

If elected what would your top three priorities be?

To make progress on major imperatives:

- 1) Prosperity statewide that benefits ALL---livable incomes and benefits for all, whether working or unable to work; grow the strengthen the middle class; end wage, opportunity, and education and training gaps for women and many people of color; and family friendly leave and workplace policies.
- 2) Social, economic, political, legal, and environmental justice and equity for ALL---including ending pervasive violence and assuring quality, enjoyable communities.
- 3) Government that is of, by, and FOR the people--- providing quality, responsive, and well-funded services and protections---including overturning Citizens United, enactment of the Voting Rights Act, requiring large out of state campaign contributions to be reported, making voter registration and voting easier, making our tax system fairer, and more.

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?

This is one of the great imperatives. Yes, yes, and yes to your questions. Among the strategies needed are these: increase the minimum wage; improve sick, safe, and family leave policies; pass legislation assuring women have the same professional development opportunities as men; improve family friendly workplace policies, including opportunity to breast feed, child care, flexible schedules, and more;

incentivize more well-paid part-time jobs; don't fire women before men if workplace difficulties occur; hire more older women; have women role models in many categories of positions; increase payments and improve various facets of the TANF system and Working Families program to be more family-friendly; publicize information about wage and opportunity gaps to better sensitize employers and the public about the problem; provide awards and positive feedback to excellent employers; try to bring back the "comparable worth" approach to salaries; do a better job of getting women into apprenticeship programs; do a better job of getting girls into math and other STEM fields; more scholarships for women entering "nontraditional" fields; more support for students to reduce student debt; reduction of campus rape and improved processes for penalizing perpetrators, since this crime can cause years of problems for victims that reduce their earning potential; and more.

In addition to bills and budget items, there needs to be a cultural-social campaign to improve attitudes and presumptions about women and girls. Washington is actually one of the leading states for laws to help women succeed. However, in many, many cases, there are social-cultural presumptions and attitudes that cause their abilities and achievements to be overlooked, and therefore harm their opportunities for hiring, more pay, and advancement. A couple of recent examples in Seattle that made the news: Seattle City Council women members berated on a gender-based basis for their vote on a large proposed project; the Seattle Fire Department Incident Commander at the explosion site in Greenwood who was left out when the Governor came to praise the Department. There are actually endless stories.

As Lt. Governor, I would like to join with others to make major change.

How will you work to address racial equity?

The recent report on massive racial disparities in the Seattle School district is horrifying. Basic Education MUST have full funding, and Basic Education must include major investments in ending this apparent two-tier system.

Many of the proposals I listed above should also apply to race disparities: massive investment in educational opportunities in neighborhoods with low educational achievement; incentives to do well in school and graduate; encourage cultural/ethnic mixing and appreciation in schools; scholarships for higher education and job training; internships with government and business which could lead to good career/job options; student loan forgiveness for entering various professions; more effort to go into getting people into well-paying apprenticeship programs; developing more apprenticeship programs; stronger policies requiring state and local government contracting with smaller and medium size minority contractors; getting good role models to be more visible in educational institutions, work places, and civic life; more publicity about major achievements of people of color in our state, national and world history; doing better recruiting of candidates for positions; assure that various fraudulent or predatory financial and commercial practices that might target people and neighborhoods of color are enforced against and end; and more.

Continue to improve public health and health care resources in communities with concentrations of people of color.

As with women, there is a need for a social-cultural campaign to help people of color to not be overlooked or taken for granted---which hinders hiring, salary setting, promotions and related opportunities. Fight against inappropriate language.

Help people of color to be elected to public offices, and encourage appointment of more people of color to state and local government boards and commissions. Encourage people of color to be actively engaged in political campaigns in leadership roles to improve their visibility and develop campaign capability.

Study and evaluate and potentially change the “psychological tests” that law enforcement officers must pass to qualify. Change the training and attitudes within some law enforcement agencies to be more of “community protectors” than a “military force.” Evaluate whether some crime definitions are excessively targeted to people of color.

I was the Senate Prime Sponsor last session of a bill which creates a Task Force to develop legislation and other recommendations for next session to end the horror of law enforcement using lethal force against unarmed people of color. It was signed into law. I worked closely with the Thurston County Black Alliance in the development and passage of this legislation.

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

Our state tax structure is “upside down.” It is the most regressive tax structure among states in our country. We should revise it to be progressive. There are many ideas for doing this. Some excellent ones which I support are in your Platform.

Tax incentives/tax breaks which are proposed for the purpose of benefitting jobs and the economy should have to pass several tests: a 10-year sunset; an independent analysis of the likely economic value; a claw-back provision if the jobs don’t materialize. The recommendations from tax break studies done by JLARC should be seriously considered, which hasn’t happened to date. To make the tax system fairer, we could lower the sales tax, extend sales taxes to more services, and add taxes of various types to the types of transactions that higher income people engage in. I could support most options that would result in a progressive tax structure: capital gains tax; carbon tax; income tax (not politically feasible in the shorter run); and more.

The State Supreme Court is in effect mandating that local school levies be substantially reduced and replaced with new state sources. This will be the driving tax issue next session.

I have co-sponsored constitutional amendments in the past to allow the gas tax to be used for public transportation.

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

I find I don't get much media attention for much that I do !

Areas I've worked on with excitement and energy, which don't get much media attention include: much energy preventing BAD environmental legislation; improving rights, opportunities, and safety protections for women; anti-trafficking; consumer protection; helping the disabled; improving outdoor recreation opportunities; supporting heritage projects; protecting public pensions; supporting state employees collective bargaining gains; protecting and improving Puget Sound; water policy to protect sufficient water in streams to enable salmon recovery and propagation; reducing air pollution and climate changing emissions; protecting water quality; my bill last session to begin a process for ending law enforcement use of lethal force against unarmed minority members of the population; being the Prime Sponsor of a bill to at least delay one of the high stakes tests high school students have to pass to graduate; and more.

How will you combat climate change?

Question	Support	Oppose	Qualify, if needed
Do you support or oppose Raise up Washington's initiative to increase the minimum wage?			I'm very concerned about the information that it would negatively affect the state's finances.
Do you support or oppose access to safe and legal abortion?	XXX		
Do you support or oppose amending Washington's Constitution to require a two-thirds vote to raise revenue?		XXX	
Do you support or oppose allowing coal or oil to be exported from Washington State's		XXX	

ports?			
Do you support or oppose making two years of community college or technical school tuition-free?		XXX	
Do you support or oppose requiring paid vacation and sick/safe leave?	XXX		
Do you support automatic voter registration?	XXX		
Do you support or oppose the death penalty?		XXX	
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?	XXX		

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?

I answered much of this above. The only way to meet the needs of *McCleary* is to raise substantial revenue. The needs of *McCleary* must include the needs to meet the class size initiative that passed, which we delayed. We should not decimate serving the needs of the poor and disabled to do this. We should not raise tuition to do this.

In the questions above, I indicated I am very supportive of most revenue ideas to increase the productivity and progressivity of our tax system.

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

I have steadily opposed diverting scarce state resources to charter schools. I voted “no” in prior sessions. I voted “no” when it was on the ballot three times. I voted “no” both at the beginning and at the end of the 2016 Session.

Reason: The 1+ million students in public schools must come first. There is a huge variety in K-12 schools that families can choose from. We have lots of private schools in the state, not funded by the state, that families and students can attend.

Lt Governor

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

Of the candidates for this office, I have the most experience in state level international relations and trade. It would be important, first, to remain well informed on national/international developments in order to help the state be well positioned and to use good judgement. Without being well-informed, it can be easy to make a

major error and generate ill-will or lose business. Next, it is important to have good relations with the various international consulates in the state. I have this with a number of the consulates.

Welcoming international businesses to the state is important. Some international trade visits are important, particularly to Asian countries. These need to be well planned, with careful attention to participation and financing and positive outcomes for the state.

I have led trade and friendship missions to Asia. I have participated in others to Asia and Europe. I have been a leader in our Sister State relationship with Hyogo Prefecture in Japan. Two years ago I received a "Commendation" from the Foreign Minister of Japan for my long work promoting friendship between Washington and Japan. I have had a lot of international experiences, including: Environmental Fellow with the Asia Foundation working for the Parliament of Thailand; active member (and two time speaker) of the Asia and Pacific Parliamentarians' Conference on Environment and Development.

I have done a lot of international travel, at personal expense.

It would be very important to have a highly experienced, qualified staff member to assist with these responsibilities. They should also be carried out in close cooperation with the Office of the Governor.

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?

First, the Lt. Governor should make it a regular part of their ongoing duties to be prepared for this responsibility, both the routine and the unexpected. This means ongoing communication with the Governor, other state elected officials, the Division of Emergency Management, and other state agencies. This means knowing the capabilities of local governments. It means staying abreast of developments in the state, in order to have a knowledgeable perspective.

When this responsibility occurs, it is important to work cooperatively with the Governor and with the Governor's top staff. In case of a serious emergency, the Governor would undoubtedly return ASAP. I have extensive experience working cooperatively within state government and the Legislature. I have extensive leadership experience in county and city government which would contribute well to exercising good judgement.

I would not call the Legislature into special session, as one Lt. Governor tried to do. I would not seek to usurp any of the Governor's constitutional duties, such as signing bills, which another Lt. Governor did.

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?

How will you prioritize agency and organizational audits?

Attorney General

What accomplishment from your tenure are most proud of?

Insurance Commissioner

What accomplishment from your tenure are most proud of?