

46th District Democrats Federal Questionnaire

Candidate Information

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Office sought: WA 7th Congressional District

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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?

I believe passionately in the Pacific Northwest. I began this race in December because I believe that for our country to get back on track, it will require bold progressive regions like ours leading the way. This Congressional District matters. It matters because Seattle and the central Puget Sound are becoming one of the most important sources of economic and social innovation in the country. Today, our political system does not work for the vast majority of Americans. In fact, it doesn't work for the vast majority of Washingtonians. For our economy and our climate to work for the kids my husband and I hope to have in the future, things have to change. Despite the prosperity that some in our region are experiencing, too many people are being left behind. The promise of our region is not being shared. I am running for Congress because I believe that significant federal change can be driven by regions like ours taking the lead. We need to reinvest in housing as public infrastructure. We need to restore the federal government's role in our safety net. We need urgent action on climate and leadership to hold our country to the Paris commitments. We need to rewrite the rules so our economic system builds prosperity for everyone, not just the wealthy

In the Legislature, I effectively fought to restore our state's safety net, and for a strong budget for affordable housing and homelessness. I passed critical legislation on mental health and legislation to curb rising rates of opiate addiction that is bringing important attention to a crisis. I worked on climate legislation and gender pay equity. I've championed work on criminal justice and public health. I'm thrilled to have the endorsements of over 30 of my legislative colleagues.

I believe in the Pacific Northwest. There is so much that our region can do for the country

and in return, there is so much that our region urgently needs in federal partnership.

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

I was raised in rural Whatcom County, near the Canadian border. My parents moved to Everson, Washington to raise their kids in a farming community, and in a union household my father runs a non-profit focused on agricultural education, and my mother teaches English language learners in the public schools. My mother and her family immigrated to the United States from Cuba, while my father's family traces back for generations in Washington State.

Both parents inspired an ethic of hard work and compassion for those in need.

From Nooksack High School, I attended Princeton University to study public policy. Upon graduating, I won a Fulbright Scholarship to study education systems in Honduras. While abroad, I founded Proyecto Villa Nueva, a non-profit that fosters youth leadership to prevent violence in urban slums. That launched my career in international development, spending five years at the Gates Foundation, where my work focused on economic opportunity for small farmers. In 2013, I was appointed to represent the 43rd district in the Washington State House. In that role, I have been guided by my beliefs in environmental stewardship, fair wages, shared economic growth, and social justice. As a legislator, I translate my values into policy. In 2015, I sponsored Joels Law, which helps families get emergency mental health treatment for loved ones in crisis. The bill passed with overwhelming bipartisan majorities in the Washington State House and Senate. I also sponsored bills to protect renters, to address the epidemic in heroin and opioid use, and to reform our criminal justice system. Throughout, I have worked to build strong relationships with

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 have been a long-time supporter and member of the Democratic Party and have never been a member of another party. In addition to my own campaign, I have been a longtime PCO in my district democrats, volunteer, contributor, and supporter of the Democratic Party, Democratic candidates and progressive issues

What's your plan to win?

I am proud to report we have kicked off our aggressive field effort. Our Field Director was the first position I hired on this campaign because this campaign is about 7th District voters – listening to their hopes and concerns, speaking with them about our campaign, and building a movement to create change. We've already knocked on thousands of doors and had hundreds of conversations with voters about issues they care about the most. We're running a professional, data-driven campaign that will feature direct mail, TV, digital, and other channels of direct voter contact.

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?

There are many candidates in this race who share our core values. There are many candidates in this race who are fighting the right fights, and standing up for progressive

principles. But our generation can't afford to wait for these values to work themselves into law - we know, all too well, that hope and great speeches can't always overcome the fierce racism, obstructionism, and radical conservatism our next member of Congress will face from their Republican colleagues. And after coming of age with George Bush in the White House, and an era of Republican obstruction under President Obama, we know that just fighting the good fight isn't enough any more. We deserve an effective Congressperson who has a track record of winning progressive legislation that upholds our values, even in a divided legislature. Someone who has worked in effective coalitions to actually move the needle on issues we care about. I believe I am that candidate.

In Olympia, with a razor-thin majority in the house and a two-vote minority in the Senate, I've worked with strong coalitions to pass bills that have increased funding and tools to address for our mental health crisis, and that have increased access to life-saving pharmaceuticals that combat our addiction crisis, and was named the Washington Low Income Housing Association Legislator of the Year in 2015 for my successful work on Affordable Housing. Last week, my CROP bill, which would open up new opportunities in the job market to the 100,000 Washingtonians with a criminal record, passed through the house unanimously and is currently moving through the Senate, along with negotiated measures to: protect tenant rights, expand Medicaid access for people re-entering society after serving time, create new pathways to reduce juvenile incarceration, and create consumer protections for seniors in retirement communities. These are all pieces of legislation negotiated in divided government.

I've also stood strong for our values. I've championed priority legislation for the State's Labor Council to protect farmworkers, to cap co-pays on prescription drugs, to protect reproductive rights, and promote gun responsibility.

My progressive colleagues in the legislature recognize this, and over 30 of them have endorsed my candidacy for Congress. I've also received dozens of endorsements from leaders in the Environmental, Latino, African American, Asian Pacific Islander, Social Justice, Immigration, Criminal Justice, and other communities. These are people who have worked with me, who know my track record, and who are on the front lines of fighting for change in Olympia - and they know that I will be an effective partner in delivering progressive change in Congress. Ultimately, a good leader recognizes that change doesn't just come from taking a strong, unilateral stand on core issues - it comes from building coalitions that have the power to actually make change on those issues. No one person can make change on their own, and I believe my collaborative, strategic approach to leadership makes me the most effective progressive in this race.

If elected what would your top three priorities be?

If elected my top three priorities would be climate change, criminal justice reform, transit and housing.

What are your ideas for combating climate change?

I believe we need leaders in Congress who will stand up to the fossil fuel industry, and who will find creative solutions to grow the clean energy economy in our region and to protect our natural systems. This issue is very personal for me. My family has roots in the Pacific Northwest for over 5 generations I love this place to my very core. My husband is a marine biologist who studies the impacts of climate change on ocean acidification. For the sake of this place we love, and the children we hope to have some day, we are committed to fighting alongside allies in our region for real solutions to climate change, and to center the groups who are most impacted by economic and environmental instability as we search for equitable solutions. There are some immediate steps I think we should take. We need the federal government to put a price on carbon pollution, and to encourage new practices in agriculture and forestry that pull carbon out of the atmosphere. We need to ban fossil fuel extraction on public lands, on and offshore, and we need to build infrastructure that will transition us to a low-carbon future. And we need to make sure that the economic opportunities that come from growing the clean energy economy are directed to people and areas that are most impacted by carbon pollution, environmental instability, and economic inequality.

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?

Securing equal pay for equal work must be an absolute priority for our leaders in Congress. While raising the national minimum wage to a living wage of fifteen dollars an hour is a critical step in this process, we need further steps to ensure that every single woman in our national community earns the same wages as male counterparts for the same work. Despite the passage of the Lily Ledbetter Act, and a window of opportunity with a majority in both chambers of Congress and control of the White House, we still haven't secure pay equity for every member of our society. This must remain an absolute priority for as long as it takes to accomplish. Working families also deserve a diversity of funding for childcare options to ensure that mothers, fathers, and families of any form aren't forced to sacrifice careers and critical livelihoods on their journey's as caregivers to children. Additionally, Congress needs to pass federal legislation to ensure PFML for families of all forms. America lags significantly behind industrial nations across the world in ensuring that families do not have to chose between children and career. PFML is a critical provision also for families giving care to aging parents, and passage of legislation on this issue must remain a focus as we work to secure economic justice for working families in every community.

How will you work to address racial equity?

As a queer person of color who grew up in a mostly white and rural part of the state, I have experienced racism and homophobia. I have been lucky to have a certain level of privilege, however, that allowed me to be where I am today. Historical inequities in our justice system, along with redlining, exclusionary zoning practices, and continued blatant racism in many aspects of our society, must not be tolerated. I am proud that under the Obama administration, our country is facing this history of racism more directly that we have seen for many years. I will continue to support fully funding the civil rights division of the Justice Department, and hold leaders from the AGs office to account to ensure they are not only investigating based on complaints, but are being proactive across the country to ensure there is equity in policing practices, voting access, housing access, and, where there is not, that our federal government is

intervening in a way that is focused not on equal access - but equitable access, to add the support and resources necessary to attempt to make up for years of systemic discrimination that hold people of color - particularly African Americans - back from attaining success.

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

I firmly believe that much of the most impactful legislative action that our leaders can take occurs behind the scenes and without fanfare. Leaders that strive to be truly effective for their communities must fight for the values that matter most to us, and be willing to build coalitions to achieve results. I am proud to have worked with my colleagues to pass landmark Criminal Justice Reform bills this year, which opened up employment pathways to the 100,000 Washingtonians who have been through our criminal justice system, and create alternatives to juvenile incarceration. Also, we passed significant legislation to expand access to Medicaid, including contraceptives and women's health services, for people leaving our Criminal Justice system. It's the only bill that expands access to healthcare that passed our State Legislature this year.

Additionally, I worked to pass the only piece of legislation expanding renter's rights in Olympia this year. The Fair Tenant Screening Act reduces the cost of applying for apartments and makes it easier for people who've been evicted to regain access to housing. I am proud of the work my colleagues and I championed to protect seniors from hidden costs and fees in retirement homes. There is so much that can be accomplished in crafting the policy that impacts the daily lives of millions of Americans if we keep our focus firmly on delivering results rather than receiving credit.

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?

I believe that previous administrations have damaged our standing in the international community by moving too quickly to military action for dubious purposes and with unclear objectives. To lead the world, our actions must reflect our deepest values as a democracy; protecting the right to dissent and hold opinions as a minority, the freedom to disagree with those in power, the right to free and fair elections, and respect for all members of a society, no matter one's religion, gender, socio-economic status, or sexual orientation. These values cannot be imposed on other nation's by force, they must be lived and demonstrated by our own communities. Additionally, I believe that our approach to foreign affairs have been dominated far too long by the very policies that have led to the climate crisis we are now experiencing. We can no longer afford, philosophically or pragmatically, to maintain policies that feed our nation's carbon addictions at the expense of our own future and our credibility as a global leader. If we are to have any hope of engaging the threat of religious fundamentalism and acts of terror, the solution is a deeper journey into our own democratic and progressive values, rather than resorting to military actions as first responses that only fuel more and more acts of terror.

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.?

Congress absolutely has huge responsibilities in multiple jurisdictions with critical implications to every layer of society. As a Representative, I believe that first and foremost the focus should remain on those

issues that most immediately impact their constituents. In our region, those issues are essential to striking a balance between our rapid growth and fighting for equity in our community. These issues for the Puget Sound center around immediate action to address transportation and housing, as well as the homelessness crisis in our region. The Congressperson for Washington’s 7th district will also have a responsibility to utilize our platform as a progressive leader for both the United States and the world to keep climate action front and center as the nexus point for environmental justice, as well as social and economic justice. We have both the opportunity and the responsibility to demonstrate innovative solutions around climate change and craft a vision for 21st century progressivism that will become a model to communities in every corner of our nation.

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		I support this proposal but I also believe that we need to do even more. We must take the steps we can, while continue to work collaboratively as a party to secure legislative chambers in the 30 state legislatures we’ve lost between 2010 and 2012’s redistricting year. If we fail to organize ourselves at every layer of government, we will miss important windows to control the redistricting process in 2020, secure a sustainable majority in the House, and set the agenda for the next decade of progressive politics to push for passage of a \$15 minimum wage.
Do you support or oppose access to safe and legal abortion?	x		
Do you support or oppose requiring a two-thirds vote to raise revenue?			
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		
Do you support or oppose requiring paid vacation and sick/safe leave?	x		
Do you support			

automatic voter registration?			
Do you support or oppose the death penalty?		x	
Do you support or oppose barring employers from asking criminal history questions in job applications?			
Do you support or oppose legislation to fix "three strikes" law?			