

46th District Democrats Judicial Questionnaire

Candidate Information

Candidate Name – Kristin Richardson

Office sought – King County Superior Court, Position 52

Mailing address: P.O. Box 51019, Seattle, WA 98115

Phone: (206) 214-7970

Email: kristin@richardsonforjudge.com

Campaign Manager Name: Ann Brockenbrough

Consultant(s):

Web site: www.richardsonforjudge.com

Facebook: [facebook/Kristin Richardson for Superior Court Judge](https://www.facebook.com/KristinRichardsonforSuperiorCourtJudge)

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

Why are you running for this office?

Experience matters, and I have the most of any candidate running for judge this year. We are losing seven experienced, quality judges to retirement. I know my way around the courtroom and the evidence rules. I am prepared to hit the ground running and can handle any case or motion sent to me, from the start. I have lived much of my adult life in a courtroom. I am now ready to preside over those courts. Citizens deserve to have trials handled by Superior Court judges that have done trials themselves. I have done more than 100 jury trials.

I have empathy and compassion and recognize that for many people, the judicial system is not only frightening but carries consequences that deeply affect their lives. I have worked with thousands of disenfranchised, minority, and marginalized victims and witnesses over the years. Many felt they had no one to stand up for them. Dealing with the most vulnerable in society, and giving them a voice, has been a meaningful and educational prelude to what a judge deals with on a daily basis. I believe a judge is mandated to treat everyone with respect, reasonableness, and a chance to be heard. I am ready to do that.

Alternatives to incarceration, specialized courts to handle specific problems, and diversion programs are sure to grow as prisons become increasingly overcrowded and recognition of racial inequities in the prison population become more focused. Citizens have the right to expect that their grievances will be heard before a judge who is knowledgeable and experienced, who listens, and who make decisions based on the law. That is the judge I strive to be.

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

I am a senior deputy prosecuting attorney for the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office. I review and assist police investigations, file charges and try cases in Superior Court. I was on the homicide unit for 14 years. I created and led the office's Cold Case Homicide Unit. My current assignment, handling Sexually Violent Predator Unit commitment and release, has offered me the chance to work in a civil pleading and trial practice, as well.

I have handled hundreds of domestic violence cases, sexual assaults, and crimes against children. I have also argued more than a dozen cases in the Court of Appeals and state Supreme Court. Over my career, my work assignments have included the Elder Abuse Unit; Homicide Unit; supervisor of the Felony Trial Team (non-sex felonies); Negotiator/Early Plea Unit; and supervisor on the Special Assault and misdemeanor units. Each of these units led to knowledge that will serve me well on the bench, from the power of negotiation to the ability to empathically impart bad news to people in distress

I am a former newspaper reporter and taught trial skills to third-year law students as an adjunct professor at Seattle University School of Law.

What's your plan to win?

Although my campaign started late, in part because of the late announcement of the incumbent's retirement and in part because I underwent surgery soon thereafter, I have a strong support and fundraising system behind me. In a very short amount of time I have amassed endorsements from nearly 40 judges as well as elected officials, law enforcement, and community members. My experience speaks for itself, but I have a solid plan for advertising and community outreach to inform the citizenry what I would bring to the court.

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?

Superior Court is the highest level court in King County, and a judge is typically in court four to five days a week. Superior Court handles everything from civil filings to mental health commitments to criminal trials. More than anything, experience in trial is a paramount requirement due to the high number of trials heard each day in King County. I have spent 25 years in Superior Court courtrooms. I have the legal knowledge, intellectual curiosity, and experience to step into the most serious cases from Day One. The many endorsements I have received from judges familiar with my work attest to that.

A judge also affects people's lives in a tangible way. The move toward restorative justice, and the fight against mass incarceration and implied bias, as well as bail and funding courts through fees targeting the poor, are important issues of which a judge must be cognizant and familiar. I am deeply familiar with them and on the cutting edge as a member of one of the most progressive offices in the country on these issues.

Have you engaged in pro-bono work in recent years? If so, please describe that activity and if/how that was meaningful to you.

Apart from the public service inherent in my job, pro bono work in the traditional sense is not available to me because my expertise is in criminal law, and any outside work would constitute a conflict of interest. However, I have been deeply involved in the diversity and anti-bias work of the Washington Women Lawyers Foundation, as well as the non-profit crisis and counseling services of Victim Support Services. I also served on the East African Community Outreach Committee, assisting first-generation immigrants to understand the court system.

It has often been said that it is the duty of legislatures to pass laws and the duty of courts to enforce them. However, courts at all levels have invoked principles of interpretation to adapt legislation and constitutional provisions to a myriad of controversies. Two such principles are "public interest" and "original intent". Please now respond to the following questions based on your legal and personal experience. Include specific examples to illustrate your answers where possible.

When reviewing cases, how do you define what is in the "public interest"?

The public interest is basically the good of the people. Obviously different constituencies with different agendas will differ on what they consider to be for the good of the people. I see it as whether society benefits or suffers from a decision, compared to what is already in place or not already in existence. It is not a judge's job to change the law, but it may be a judge's job to interpret it with future impact in mind. The legality of gay marriage is one example of where, for years, a particular constituency prevailed with what it perceived to be the correct agenda. It eventually became apparent that what a particular court thought about that agenda did not, in fact, match what the public envisioned for the future.

With special regard to our state constitution, should the "original intent" of the document be considered when addressing modern legal disputes? If so, how do you balance it against arguments that the constitution is a "living", not static, document?

It is not possible to predict whether a case will involve interpretation related to original intent because analysis must start with case precedent addressing the issue. While I may not support a strict adherence to original intent, prior cases on a particular issue may require otherwise. Insofar as a judge may use discretion on issues that have not arisen before, however, I believe the constitution is a living document that has, over time, reasonably been interpreted in a manner that allows its adaption to the issues of today.