

46th District Democrats Judicial Questionnaire

Candidate Information

Candidate Name: Mary Yu

Office sought: Supreme Court Justice, Position 1

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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?

I wish to continue serving as a Supreme Court Justice because I believe my experience as a trial court judge has enriched the discussion of cases at the court. As a Justice my commitment is to: 1) remain independent in my thinking; 2) write opinions that are intellectually honest and broadly accessible to the public; 3) be civil and professional in our group decision-making; 4) read and study the law while recognizing that each case affects individual lives; and 5) adhere to precedent unless it is shown to be incorrect and harmful.

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

After serving as a trial court judge in King County Superior Court for over 14 years, I was appointed to the Washington State Supreme Court in 2014. I was subsequently elected to a two-year term and am now running for a full term in 2016. I received my B.A. from Dominican University in River Forest, IL; my M.A. in Theology from Mundelein College of Loyola University, Chicago, IL, and my J.D., from the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, IN. My full CV can be viewed here:

https://www.courts.wa.gov/appellate_trial_courts/supreme/bios/?fa=scbios.display_file&fileID=Yu

What's your plan to win?

We are working on securing endorsements and contacting voters through social and traditional media. I have been campaigning since January 2015 and have had a lot of voter contact around the State.

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 qualities for a judge are the ability to listen, follow the law, and create a courtroom setting that is fair, efficient and protective of everyone's due process rights. I have fourteen years of experience at the trial court level and two as a sitting Supreme Court Justice.

As a Justice, I believe the most important qualities that one should possess are: 1) an ability to work with others in group decision-making; 2) a willingness to approach each case with an open mind; 3) a commitment to read and study the law while recognizing the impact of our decisions on the lives of individuals; 4) the capacity to write opinions that are easily understood by the public and completed in a timely manner; and 5) a desire to be intellectually honest in deciding each case.

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

As a judge, I am prohibited from providing legal services to individuals. I have been active in my community through service on Boards and I am co-chair of the Minority and Justice Commission.

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"?

When a case is before an appellate court, the "public interest" means a matter that is of concern to the broader public; that is the subject of the case affects more than just the parties to the case and could have an impact on the broader public/common good. I also recognize that the cases decided at the Supreme Court often establish a rule of law that will be applicable to everyone within our jurisdiction and an awareness of that broader public interest is critical.

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?

When reviewing cases with regard to the state constitution, we look to the original intent to determine what the words actually mean and what the framers originally intended. Constitutional principles do not exist in a vacuum and require application to specific facts and circumstances within the context of a case or controversy.