

46th District Democrats Legislative & Statewide Questionnaire

Candidate Information

Candidate Name **Eric Aaron Miller**

Office sought: **Washington State Treasurer**

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Facebook: **<https://www.facebook.com/groups/MillerForOffice/>**

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

Why are you running for this office?

I am running a Write-In campaign for Washington State Treasurer because I believe in giving people a voice, giving people a choice, and fighting for what the people believe in. Washington States electoral process failed it's constituents by sending two state Republican treasurer candidates to the general election even though more people voted for Democratic candidates overall in the primary election. Washington State has a "sore loser" law which bars the Democratic primary candidates from running in any way, shape, or form during the general election.

This is where I step in. I'm here to provide not only a progressive choice to the citizens of Washington, but to fight for a job that I believe I have the capacity to excel in, all the while providing a voice and an "ear" to the great citizens of Washington.

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

I indeed have experience as a business consultant, project facilitator, computer network manager, marketing consultant, compliance manager, and more real life experience then both of my opponents combined. I am NOT the type leader who tells YOU where we are going, even when it is against your wishes. I am the type of leader who will ask you where you want to go then do EVERYTHING in my power to get you there.

Political Activism

- Current Precinct Committee Officer for Precinct 119
- Elected as Precinct and Legislative District delegate representing Bernie Sanders
- Democratic Caucus Captain and Lead Organizer for the Sanders campaign
- Started my own Digital Media Group to cover Washington State politics
- Met and networked with many progressive candidates and elected officials from across the country, especially from Washington State
- Have attended or organized hundreds of protests over the last 14 years, ranging from protesting the potential closure of South Sound High School, to protesting the TPP, etc
- 2007 Olympian Awards of Excellence recipient for community service (awarded by Gov. Christine Gregoire)
- Canvassed, caucused, and phone banked for both Barack Obama and Bernie Sanders
- Have worked for a variety of campaigns for Democratic/Progressive candidates in all capacities, ranging from doorbeller to campaign cabinet
- South Sound High School Fund-raising Committee Chair
- Volunteered in Compton, California in their public school district as a security guard
- Implemented a suicide prevention program in the North Thurston Public School district
- North Thurston Public School district Student Senate Secretary
- South Sound High School ASB Secretary
- Volunteered with multiple organizations to work with at risk kids, especially Together! And CYS

Business Qualifications

- Developed tax software for a local tax company when I was only 16 years old (this also meant learning to be proficient in tax preparation)
- Was listed on Cambridge's top 50 "Who's Who" of young business associates in 2007
- Managed a call center with a staff of 80 people by the age of 19 (I was the youngest employee)
- Assisted in the creation of a compensation plan for a natural pharmaceuticals multi-level marketing company
- Worked as the accountant/bookkeeper for a variety of Washington Businesses
- Have been a marketing/accounting/business consultant to a wide range of business types throughout Washington for 10 years
- Worked in the corporate office of a Payday Lending chain as a Project Facilitator (consulted to the branch offices individually for accounting and marketing solutions)
- Former manager of a chain of "big box" tax preparation locations

- Started my first business (a non profit that made wood, handcrafted pens with proceeds donated to charities) at 15 years old
- Negotiated with businesses throughout high school to "fill-in" budget gaps for extra-curricular activities my school could not afford
- Received a full-ride academic college scholarship

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 do consider myself a democrat, however, I believe a progressive coalition aimed at uniting people from different backgrounds around issues that we all care about is also beneficial. I consulted with State Chair Jaxon Ravens, primary candidate John Comerford, and Thurston County Democrats Chair Katie Nelson prior to entering the race. I was elected as a precinct delegate on March 26 2016 and I was then elected Legislative District Delegate on April 17 2016. I am currently the PCO for district 119. I attended every convention/caucus all the way from the March caucus to the State Convention. I worked on a variety of campaigns for democratic nominees in a variety of roles this election season (from volunteer to campaign cabinet). I run an Independent Media Company and have filmed speeches/events for dozens of Democratic candidates across the state free of charge and provided them to the candidates. I was Caucus captain and Site Leader for the Bernie Sanders campaign for my precinct caucus and county caucus. I canvassed, caucused, and phone banked for Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012 and Bernie Sanders in 2016. I am the co-chair of one sub committee in Thurston County (Addiction/Mental Health sub committee) and an active member in 2 others (Criminal Justice and Homelessness). I volunteered at the Thurston County Democratic headquarters this summer and helped them setup their computers and pack away any technology that was not needed. I also am a member of an offshoot group of Thurston County Democrats called Thurston County Progressives which is essentially the local progressive caucus.

What's your plan to win?

I have assembled an amazing team of media and political minds, including Political Science majors, A computer network engineer major, a board member of Election Justice USA, a PHD candidate in education and former candidates/elected officials to help me get this campaign off the ground. As a write-in candidate who has just decided to run two weeks ago, I understand that this is a battle that will be very difficult for me. But I have to try. The top two system failed us. In my mind, it is NOT right that more votes were cast for democratic nominees in the primary for State Treasurer, yet no Democrat moved onto the general election. I am in this to win, and I am prepared to take office if I do. But winning on election day is not the only victory that I am aiming for. It will be a victory to raise awareness about the benefits of a Washington State Bank. It will be a victory to force the two Republican candidates to come out of hiding, as it has become increasingly apparent that their campaign strategy has been to make as few waves as possible. It will be a victory for me to demonstrate to Washington and hopefully our country that

states DO NOT need to invest in fossil fuel companies or the bullies of Wall street. Instead we can create a state bank and invest in our infrastructure, agriculture, and education and benefit the citizens of Washington at a much greater rate than traditional investing. I am gathering signatures to forgo paying the filing fee for declaring my candidacy. This has allowed me to talk to gas station attendants, teachers, college students, baristas, grocery clerks, farmers, etc and learn from them on a personal level what they feel like is missing from the Washington government. I will be holding a large spectrum of fund raising events as soon as I turn in my needed signatures. I have already assembled a team of nearly 80 volunteers with the help of Washington BernieCrats. I have created a plethora of social media content to create a buzz online to go along with the buzz I will be creating by touring cities, LD meetings, and County meetings across our state. Just today, I was invited by the Stranger newspaper to participate in an endorsement interview with my two candidates.

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?

Typically, the common functions of a state treasurer are managing Washington's cash flow, managing Washington's investments (with the help of investment boards), managing Washington's debt through things like bonds, participation certificates, or guaranteed school bonds, and counseling/consulting with investment boards and commissions on how to manage long term debts and investments. The aforementioned responsibilities will of course be part of my duties, but I would like to revolutionize the position. We need to strive for progress. I will use my position on the many boards and commission to fight for the things that Washington residents care about. I will be in a position to be a voice for the people, and I would gladly use my position for this purpose.

My experiences in the business sector, media sector, politics, and the music industry has allowed me to be a business mind with a twist. Growing up in low income housing or homeless has given me insight into what struggles people are truly facing everyday. I have run for office at every level. Elementary School, Middle School, High School, and College, I was an elected ASB officer all throughout my different levels of schooling. All of these experiences, along with my storied history of activism, have made me an extrovert with zero fear of speaking in public and meeting new people. My business and work experience, and the fact that I had my first business turning a profit at 15, have given me an innovative, out of the box outlook on business and investing.

If elected what would your top three priorities be?

1. Setting up a monthly interactive live stream with Washington residents so that I can update our residents on what work is being done by my office and giving them an opportunity to ask me questions and voice their complaints and concerns.
2. Pulling all Washington investments out of Fossil Fuel companies and diligently investigating other “dirty” investments (e.g. pharmaceutical companies that price gouge).
3. Creating a discovery team to decide a course of action to create a state bank (do we do it by getting the state senate to support legislation? Do we inspire a grassroots group to create an initiative?).

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?

My plans after creating the Washington State Bank includes providing economic support to all Washington residents, regardless of gender or race. I support ANY and ALL legislation for higher wages, childcare, and paid family leave.

How will you work to address racial equity?

As the father of an interracial child, racial equity is of utmost importance to me. Before achieving racial equity, we must first achieve social justice. Equal opportunities for all races and genders must happen. I will vocally support these causes and support any legislation that supports these causes. I have protested alongside the Black Lives Matter movement, the NODAPL movement, and provided media resources for both movements. As a citizen journalist, I have also covered stories about racial inequality in the lack of racial equity in our country in an attempt to shed light on these issues. In my view, systemic racism is an enormous problem and we must fight to achieve racial equity and social justice. I will continue fighting on the front lines, as a protester, and from my position as State Treasurer through supporting legislation, to work for an America that provides living wage jobs and higher education to all people.

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

I have two huge issues with our current tax structure. As it was recently pointed out to me, there are currently 12 billionaires and 68,000 millionaires residing in Washington State. They do not pay state taxes in Washington. This has suffocated our economy. Homelessness and income inequality has risen before our eyes in Washington state, and enforcing new tax laws that tax the richest of the rich would improve Washington living standards by wide margins. It is not fair that the current tax system leaves poor and working families carrying a far larger share of the tax burden than the wealthy. I support a progressive income tax, which would even things out and not tax the poor and working families at disproportionate rates, while giving a tax exemption to families making less than \$50,000 per year.

The second big issue I have with our current tax system is the way property taxes are used to fund education. The neighborhood a child lives in should not decide the quality of education they receive. In my view, instead of using property taxes to measure a student's education, these taxes should be put into a "pool" and each school should be awarded money based primarily on student population. Every student should be given an equal education and every student should be valued the same. A progressive income tax would also be more than beneficial to our state's education system. Ultimately, even a smaller than normal progressive state income tax could fully fund K-12 education, preschool, and higher education. An example of a new progressive income system that could be the starting point for what I would like to see happen was written by John Burbank, Executive Director of the Economic Opportunity Institute. It is as follows:

"How much revenue would a progressive income tax provide for public services? First exempt \$50,000 of income. Then put in place effective tax rates of 2 percent for a \$100,000 household, 3.5 percent for a \$200,000 household, 5 percent for a \$500,000 household, 6.25 percent for a million dollar household, and 8.125 percent for a \$2 million household. That would raise \$7.5 billion.

Now let's do the math:

- \$7.5 billion in new revenue,
- Minus \$3 billion for K-12 education,
- Minus \$1.5 billion for higher education tuition,
- Minus \$500 million for early childhood education.

That leaves \$2.5 billion on the table. With that, we could take a bite out of our regressive tax system by dropping the sales tax by 1.5 cents. That would cost about \$1.5 billion. And that leaves \$1 billion a year for other public services and a reserve."

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

I have worked with the Washington Fair Trade Coalition and similar groups to fight against the TPP. I am also working with the Progressive Army (ProgressiveArmy.com) to create panels with criminal justice activists, educators, and professors from across the county to discuss and

strategize how to create a country where all people are given a high quality education, innocent people of color are not disproportionately targeted by the police, and how to battle systemic racism.

How will you combat climate change?

One of my priorities is to pull all Washington investments out of fossil fuel companies. I will adamantly voice public support of things like wind, solar, and blue algae ethanol. I will also use my position on the dozens of boards and commissions the state treasurer sits on to voice my support for clean energy, a carbon tax (which hopefully will be passed before I take office!), and I will stand up to anyone who is trying to create situations that do not support our climate. Climate change should be considered an emergency. Our children's lives depend on it.

Question	Support	Oppose	Qualify, if needed
Do you support or oppose Raise up Washington's initiative to increase the minimum wage?	X		
Do you support or oppose access to safe and legal abortion?	X		
Do you support or oppose amending Washington's Constitution to require a two-thirds vote to raise revenue?		X	This is not democratic in my view. It also benefits special interests disproportionately.
Do you support or oppose allowing coal or oil to be exported from Washington State's ports?		X	I only support clean energy.
Do you support or oppose making two years of community college or technical school tuition-free?	X		This is a great stepping stone, but I hope that eventually we can provide full educations to every student.
Do you support or oppose requiring paid vacation and sick/safe leave?	X		
Do you support automatic voter registration?	X		

Do you support or oppose the death penalty?		X	We do not have the right to take a life.
Do you support or oppose barring employers from asking criminal history questions in job applications?	X		I do not think criminal histories should be on a job application for most situations. The neighborhoods I grew up in showed me that people who could make a positive impact on our society are weighed down by mistakes they made in their late teens.
Do you support or oppose legislation to fix Washington's "three strikes" law?	X		The 3 strikes law is archaic. The neighborhoods I grew up in showed me that people who could make a positive impact on our society are weighed down by mistakes they made in their late teens.

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?

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

Lt Governor

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

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?

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?

The treasurer is the ultimate adviser to all investment boards. It is quite literally the treasurer's job to manage Washington's debt through bond issuing. Without making the correct judgment calls, our credit and bond ratings would take a hit. I do see room for improvement. A Washington State Bank would make Washington

substantially less dependent on Wall Street. It would also allow us to survive national recessions/ depressions at a much better rate than states who do not have a State Bank.

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?