

## Questions for LD42 State Senate Candidates:

As the outcome of the last Senate race in 2018 was decided by only 46 votes it is fair to say the 42<sup>nd</sup> District is evenly split between Democrats and Republicans. Whomever serves in the Senate seat will be expected by the voters to have a good understanding of the issues raised across the political spectrum.

### 1) What will you do to be effective in Olympia?

One of the keys to effective leadership includes the ability to not only to talk, but to listen. I will be present and attend the needs of the State Senate and the needs of the residents of the 42<sup>nd</sup>. I will humbly listen and learn from the key stakeholders as we tackle the challenges of our time to deliver effective solutions. To be effective in Olympia, I will reach across the aisle and find the points that unite us, rather than the areas that divide us. I believe that we have more in common than what separates us, and that we can, in good faith, achieve great things for Washington together.

### 2) Why are you the best candidate to represent the 42nd Legislative District and what distinguishes you from the other nominees?

I grew up here, and I believe that my youth will deliver needed diversity to a Senate whose average age is much higher than mine. It is my generation that will soon be the largest voting bloc, the largest taxpayer base, and, ultimately, that will be tasked with solving Washington's greatest challenges. I want to get young people involved and show them that while politics can be messy, they can make a real difference. A healthy democracy requires an engaged electorate, and that necessitates involving my generation. After all, the decisions being made today will influence my generation perhaps more than any other. That's why we need a seat at the table.

### 3) If appointed, what will be your top priorities and why?

- Flooding relief. This is a pressing issue, as we need to make sure those impacted by the flooding get the help and relief that they deserve. This is an opportunity for both sides to come together and put people above politics.
- Addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness. Addiction, mental health, and root causes of homelessness must be assessed and addressed in a responsible manner.
- Housing affordability. The lack of workforce housing and affordable housing must be addressed so that Whatcom County can responsibly grow.
- Agriculture. Our agriculture community has been devastated by high temperatures and flooding. Exploring innovative ways to promote sustainable agriculture is not only good economics, it's the right thing to do.
- Police Reforms. Safety is important for me, and Whatcom County needs to be a place that is safe for all people, which includes equipping law enforcement with the training and tools they need to protect our communities.

- Education. As a young person, I understand the importance of equipping our schools to provide a world-class education to train tomorrow's leaders.

**4) How would you help maintain viable agriculture in the 42nd District?**

We need to listen to the key stakeholders in the agriculture sectors so that our farmland is protected and used in a responsible manner. Agriculture is a competitive industry, and we must be vigilant in ensuring that the 42<sup>nd</sup> is an effective and efficient producer of agricultural products. As the Nooksack basin shows us, water usage and management is a key part of this process. I agree with Governor Inslee and Laura Watson's advocacy to create more areas for water storage, which will allow us to mitigate many of the detrimental effects of severe weather events.

**5) The State House currently only allows vaccinated members to be in the House Chamber. If the Senate decides to impose the same vaccination requirements in order to be present in the Senate Chamber, are you willing and able to comply with this requirement?**

Yes.

**6) Share with us your thoughts on the Growth Management Act, and what, if any changes you would advocate for immediately?**

We need to revisit the goals of the GMA to ensure that the goals are updated to meet Washington's current needs. Part of the plan currently lists affordable housing as a specific goal. I think this is an important goal, but I think that we should add to the goals to be more comprehensive. For example, we should consider specifically adding a goal to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness, instead of approaching the issue on an ad hoc basis. Another important goal to add might include how we deliver broadband to our communities. The next 30 years, like the last 30 years when the GMA was passed, will only increase the need for broadband. As the world changes and develops, so should the priorities of the Growth Management Act.

**7) Housing affordability is a key issue for all communities. Share with us your housing affordability priorities.**

Whatcom County is a beautiful place with so much to offer, and that's why we need to have a housing market that is welcoming to people who seek to live here. We want the 42<sup>nd</sup> District to be a place that provides affordable housing to people in my generation, for example. Housing affordability is an area where both sides of the political spectrum agree. It is largely an issue driven by economic policy. We need to increase the supply of available housing. The availability of land, and the way in which the land is zoned, is a key element of housing affordability, so ensuring that there is a supply of land being managed in a responsible way will be critical to achieving more affordable housing.

**8) Our communities are also experiencing increasing levels of homelessness. What will you do as a legislator to meet the needs of Washingtonians who have no housing?**

Effectively addressing homelessness requires that we address its underlying causes, such as addiction and mental health resources. Housing people experiencing homelessness without steps to deal with the root causes is not enough. There are successful programs that can be replicated that will help address this issue in a humane and responsible manner. This will require partnerships with local organizations who are experienced and equipped to help meet the needs of Washingtonians who have no housing.

**9) WA has an affordable housing crisis, what specific legislation would you propose to address this problem?**

I will work with the development community and relevant stakeholders to assess what incentives would work to encourage affordable housing. For example, one of the ways that makes housing unaffordable is the way that fees are structured. We should reassess fees to ensure that developers are building homes in a way that is helpful to growth.

**10) One way the California and Oregon legislatures have addressed the affordable housing shortage is by legalizing multi-family housing in all zoning areas, including single-family zoning, would you support this? Why or why not?**

There are times when single-family zoning needs to be changed to increase density. My support or opposition would depend on the exact wording of the bill. Initially, I think I would support the bill if it provided necessary protections for existing single-family homeowners. There must be a balanced approach to responsible growth in our state, and that includes both addressing the question of density and the availability of land. There are several factors that may play into the policy. For example, it would be important to determine if this law would apply to all single-family zoning. I would also need to see the specifics regarding the level of density allowed. Multi-family housing can be an incredibly effective way to promote growth and increase housing supplies.

**11) Transportation is a key issue for all WA communities. Share with us your transportation priorities.**

The marketplace is demanding different transportation options. We need to make sure that our highway system has the infrastructure to handle these changes in technology. A user-based approach to transportation and infrastructure is essential. We also must ensure that our transportation dollars are being spent efficiently and effectively. Car companies are rapidly transforming with emerging technology. Billions of dollars are being invested in electric vehicles and self-driving technology that will revolutionize our roadways. We need to work with the Federal government to increase funding for upgrades to the interstate system, particularly I-5 and its aging bridges.

**12)** WA State has significant transportation infrastructure needs, historically these investments have been funded by gas taxes.

- Do you believe we need to find more funding for transportation?

Yes. We should always find ways to increase funding for our transportation needs.

- Would you support raising the gas tax to fund additional investments in transportation?

It would depend on the wording of the bill. Generally, the danger with a gas tax is that we can't raise the tax enough in a way that accommodates for a decrease in consumption. As demand decreases for gas-powered vehicles, tax revenues will continually decrease, leaving important transportation projects unfunded. We must look for emerging sources of revenue to fund our transportation priorities. My concern is that a regressive gas tax would harm some of the most economically vulnerable in our community while failing to adapt to emerging technologies in transportation.

- If you do not support raising the gas tax to pay for increased investments in transportation, where else would you get the revenue to pay for it?

I think that we should consider taxing electric vehicles based on the number of kilowatts they consume as supply of such vehicles increases as a possible option to explore. Washington should seek more Federal funds for its interstates, ports, and mass transit projects.

**13)** In the last 2 years the residents of the 42nd have suffered more from the impacts of climate change than most other districts in the State. Two devastating floods, (the latest being the worst on record), drought, declining snowpack, and now severe freezing weather.

- Do you believe climate change is occurring?

Yes.

- Do you believe the recent severe weather events experienced by the residents of the 42<sup>nd</sup> district is due to climate change?

In part, yes.

- Do you believe the cause of climate change is due to an increase of CO2 being released into the atmosphere from human consumption of fossil fuels?

In part, yes. Carbon reduction will be an important priority of mine if I am selected for this position.

- What policies will you advocate for in the legislature that will reduce and/or

mitigate the impacts of the recent severe weather events experienced by the residents of the 42<sup>nd</sup> district

One of the first things we need to do is put someone in the Senate who can take care of the people right now who are experiencing the effects of flooding. Climate change has compounded many of the severe weather events, but these can be addressed with better management. Investing in our infrastructure to counteract the effects of severe weather will be critical to protect our future. I am also monitoring SB 5633, a bipartisan bill, which may make meaningful steps to address these severe weather events.

**14)** Every year the state legislature is considering more and more climate change related legislation. One such Bill currently making its way through the House is Engrossed 2nd Substitute - E2SHB 1099.

- If this Bill reaches the Senate and you were asked to vote on it as currently written, would you vote in favor or in opposition?

I think that the importance of the GMA is that it allows local governments to best plan and account for issues like climate change in an environmentally responsible manner. We should empower, not restrict, the ability of local governments to effectively respond to climate change.

- If you would not vote for it in its current form, but could edit it, what specific changes would you like to see made to the text of the bill, which if made, would allow you to vote for it?

I would consider removing many of the mandatory requirements and instead empower local governments to address these important issues, which is in keeping with the Growth Management Act's purpose. My fear is that a heavy-handed reinterpretation of the GMA will exacerbate the affordable housing crisis and inhibit the ability of local governments to responsibly manage growth.

**15)** If the U.S. Supreme Court overturns *Roe v. Wade*, will you support or oppose state laws and funding to allow all women in Washington to still have the freedom to retain control over their reproductive choices?

I would have to see the wording of the bill. I am hesitant to say one way or the other that I would vote for any piece of legislation that I have not specifically read. I believe that all human life is precious. Women should have freedom of choice in their healthcare choices, and I do not support taxpayer funded abortions.

**16)** Gun violence and the proliferation of firearms used in crimes presents an ongoing danger to law-abiding residents of WA state and the Law Enforcement Officers tasked with protecting us. House Bill 1705 has been drafted to regulate a new threat called "Ghost Guns"

- If this Bill reaches the Senate and you were asked to vote on it as currently written, would you vote in favor or in opposition?

Ghost guns should be regulated in a responsible way that promote public safety. The proliferation of ghost guns, and their use in criminal activity, must be monitored. I will listen to law enforcement to ensure that criminal activity is monitored, addressed, and prosecuted.

**17) WA State has a very robust, inclusive, and accessible approach to voting, what if any aspect of the WA election system do you think needs to be changed and why?**

I am always in favor of efforts that improve access to voting that is safe, secure, and transparent.

**18) If appointed to the position, do you intend to run for election to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Senate seat in 2022?**

My first and foremost priority is to make sure that the residents of the of the 42nd District are represented well during *this* legislative session.

**19) [Applicant Elenbaas only] - If appointed, is it your intention to retain your position on the Whatcom County Council in addition to the Senate position, or will you resign from your position on the County Council effective immediately upon assuming the Senate position?**

- If you intend to retain your seat on the County Council, how will you manage competing obligations that require your presence at the same time in both Whatcom County and Olympia?

**20) What else would you like the residents of 42<sup>nd</sup> district to know about you before the County Council votes on the appointment?**

I want the residents to know that I am excited, I represent the voice of the future, and I will work every single day to improve the lives of Washingtonians. I know that the challenges we face are complicated, but we can solve our generational challenges together. I will listen to everyone and find our common points of agreement. We cannot become cynics, losing hope in the value of our democratic process. Though our nation feels more and more polarized, we must show that we can come together to solve tomorrow's challenges.