

Explanatory Note: Our endorsements (and sometimes donations) are generally made to people running for the state legislature, municipal and county offices, public utility commissioners, etc. If you are running for such an office, you may wonder why we are asking questions about state-wide or national issues. The reason is that local officeholders are tomorrow's senators, representatives and governors. Even if you have nothing of the sort in mind now, you may easily feel differently in a few years. We want to put people into the pipeline from, as Howard Dean once put it, "the Democratic wing of the party." We are old fashioned enough to think that the New Deal and the Great Society were good ideas and modern enough to be up to speed on all the latest organizing methods and apps. If you have reservations about answering any of these questions, please explain why.

Candidate Name: Darcy Burner

Position Sought: Washington State House LD5 Position 2

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Do you request the endorsement of the Progressive Caucus? Yes

Labor

Do you support raising state and federal minimum wages? To what level?

Yes. The minimum wage should reflect a full time living wage. I have signed and support the initiative to raise the minimum raise in Washington State to \$13.50/hour. I support the Fight for \$15 at both the state and national levels.

What legislation would you support to make organizing unions easier?

I supported card check legislation when it was scheduled to come before Congress and I was a candidate; I would support additional legislation to make organizing unions as easy and straightforward as organizing corporations. As a note, I voluntarily organized my business; we are affiliated with the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades.

Education

What is your opinion of high stakes testing? How would you change the way students and teachers are evaluated?

High stakes testing does both students and teachers a disservice. Students are evaluated based on whether they happen to be at the top of their game on a particular day or two, and whether they are good at testing – which is not indicative of learning and a particularly poor indicator for many kinds of students including those with dyslexia and other learning disabilities. They also do a disservice to teachers by punishing teachers who take on the most challenging students.

What is your opinion of charter schools?

I oppose charter schools. Public schools provide protections for students, teachers, and taxpayers under the law; charter schools provide no such protection. As a consequence, every study of charter

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schools has found that they skim the easiest students and they find ways to push out students with unusual requirements, including those with learning disabilities. They deny teachers the protection offered by unions, and they deny taxpayers the accountability of elected school boards. We should be doing innovation *inside the public schools*; things like the Tesla STEM school in the Lake Washington School District provide a good example.

Environment

How would you promote development of alternative energy and prevent privatization of natural resources?

There are significant things that we can do at a state level – including important things that are revenue-neutral – that would make a difference in the development of alternative energy. For instance, geothermal heating and cooling systems can reduce energy usage for heating and cooling houses and buildings by roughly 85%; the biggest barriers are availability of drillers and the upfront capital cost of installing the wells. Updating regulations for driller licensing so that they are based on demonstrated competency would allow expansion of the number of qualified, licensed drillers, and the use of local improvement districts could allow the sale of municipal bonds to pay the capital costs and allow homeowners and businesses to do the installations with zero upfront costs and bond payments that are smaller than the energy savings.

What are your plans for increasing investments in renewable forms of energy production? What types of renewable energy do you favor most?

The easiest place to start is to make significant public investments in the technologies that pay for themselves. Retrofitting not only public buildings but also using bond mechanisms to retrofit houses and commercial buildings could help us make huge advances without diverting funding from other priorities – a win all around. Continuing to provide incentives for utilities to invest in renewable resources like wind farms makes sense.

Finance/Taxation

What would you do to facilitate implementation of public banking and monetary reform?

I support a state bank, and will work with Senator Hasegawa to make it happen.

What solutions do you propose to fix WA State's highly regressive tax system?

The actions of the Washington State Supreme Court in the *McCleary* case provide a mandate to reexamine Washington's sources of revenue and tax structure. As that occurs, there is an opportunity to ensure that any changes made to the tax system make it more progressive than it currently is.

Health Care/Retirement

Explain your position (for or against) Medicare for All (aka single payer health care) in terms of the effect on local citizens, service providers, and government.

I support Medicare for All; no American should be without access to healthcare.

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What policies do you oppose and what polices would you promote with respect to Social Security and Medicare?

I support increased benefits for Social Security and lifting the cap on income for both to strengthen both programs.

Security/Public Safety

How would you act to stop the militarization of local police forces and establish civilian oversight of law enforcement?

Police forces should recognize that they serve the people. While we have seen citizen oversight bodies put in place where there have been documented problems, it might be a more general good idea to have such citizen oversight of law enforcement.

How would you preserve national security while protecting American's right to privacy?

The Fourth Amendment provides a Constitutional requirement for a warrant when government invades the privacy of individuals. Such requirements should be vigorously upheld as an appropriate balance between individual rights and national security.

General

Do you consider yourself a Democrat? Do you consider yourself a progressive? Why?

Yes, I am a progressive Democrat, because I believe that government exists to serve *all* of the people.

What parts, if any, of the [Washington State Democratic Party Platform](#) (← click link to view) do you disagree with? Why?

None.

If this is not your first election, what other offices have you run for? If it is your first campaign, what other campaigns (candidate or issue) have you participated in? What did you learn from those campaigns?

I ran for Congress in 2006, 2008, and 2012. I came close enough in 2006 and 2008 that we didn't know for a week who had won, and was defeated in the 2012 primary when my Democratic opponent spent \$2.5 million of her own money in the primary.

In all three races, many millions of dollars were spent to defeat me. More independent expenditures from Republicans were made against me in 2006 and 2008 than in any other district or Congressional race in Washington State history, before or since. In 2012, an extremely wealthy opponent spent roughly \$3 million in the primary to the roughly half a million my campaign was able to raise. Money *is* political power and contributes to a vicious cycle in which our government responds only to the wealthy.

For democracy to function, we need to find ways to more broadly distribute power.

Have you ever been a precinct committee officer or held other Democratic organization offices?

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Yes. I am the PCO for Ames Lake (and have been for several years), and am the secretary of the 5th Legislative District Democrats. I also serve on the 5th LD Democrats endorsement committee.

What single issue is the most important motivator for your run for office? What proposals do you have for dealing with it?

Washington State has historically played an incredibly key role in pioneering progressive ideas that are then adopted by the rest of the country. Washington was the first state in the 20th century to give women the right to vote, kicking off the suffrage movement's success in the adoption of the 19th Amendment. The fight for \$15 started here and spread to the rest of the country. We were one of the early states to champion gay marriage, and now gay and lesbian couples can marry in all 50 states. If we want to move our country in the right direction, it's not sufficient that we elect Democrats: we need to elect progressives who will push the envelope.

Are there also important secondary issues? Describe your approach to implementing solutions?

We must fully fund education; we must build an inclusive economy that works for everyone and grows from the middle out; and we must make Washington the first carbon neutral state in the country and show everyone else how it's done.

I'm a huge believer in finding solutions that actually work, and then building the public support and political coalitions to make them happen. We win by actively working to advance progressive ideas.

If you are running in a heavily Republican area, do you have a reasonable chance at winning? If not, how do you plan to use your candidacy to build ongoing connections among local people who share progressive values?

Despite it's reputation, the 5th LD is *not* a heavily Republican area: in 2012, the first Presidential election year with its current boundaries, Barack Obama got 56% of the vote, Maria Cantwell got 58% of the vote, and Mark Mullet got 54% of the vote in the district. Our current polling shows me leading the Republican candidate 44%-41%. This is a winnable race if I have help from my progressive friends and allies.