

## 2009 Candidate Questionnaire

### SECTION I

#### BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot

First Name	Middle Initial or Nickname	Last Name
<b>Max</b>	<b>M.</b>	<b>Vekich</b>

2. Office sought (include office, jurisdiction, position/district number):

**Port Commission Pos. 4**

3. Are you the incumbent?       Yes       No

4. How long have you resided in this district/city?

**Two years in City of Seattle in the High Point neighborhood.**

5. How long have you resided in King County?

**Five years.**

6. Is the office sought partisan or nonpartisan?       Partisan       Nonpartisan

7. If partisan, please indicate party:

#### CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name: Friends of Max Vekich

Address: PO Box 19511

City/State/Zip: Seattle, WA 98109

Campaign Phone: 206-658-3514

Campaign Fax: 206-322-6108

Campaign E-mail: pending

Campaign Website: maxforourport.com

#### POLITICAL BACKGROUND

1. Beginning with the most recent position, please list public offices you have held. Include positions on appointive boards or commissions.

Public Office	Elective or Appointive?	Dates Held	Leadership Role (if any)
State Representative, 35 <sup>th</sup> Legislative District, Democrat	Elected	1989-1991	Chair, House Commerce & Labor Committee
State Representative, 35 <sup>th</sup> Legislative District, Democrat	Elected	1987-1989	Chair, House Trade & Economic Development Committee
State Representative, 35 <sup>th</sup> Legislative District, Democrat	Elected	1983-1987	Chair, House Agriculture Committee, Vice Chair to State Government Committee

2. If you ran for public office but were not elected, please list those races below:

Office Title	Year of Run
State Senate, 19 <sup>th</sup> Legislative District	1980
State Representative, 35 <sup>th</sup> Legislative District	1990
State Representative, 19 <sup>th</sup> Legislative District	1994

## SECTION II

In this section, we are seeking responses that reflect the four ratings criteria: involvement, effectiveness, character, and knowledge. These are defined as follows:

- **Involvement:** What has the candidate done previously in family, neighborhood, community, volunteer work, employment or public life to suggest readiness to accomplish challenging objectives? How do these activities demonstrate readiness for the challenges unique to the office sought?
- **Effectiveness:** Has the candidate demonstrated promise of being productive in the office sought? Has the candidate shown the ability to work with other people?
- **Character:** Do the candidate's personal traits show the ability to take on the responsibilities of campaigning for and holding the public office she or he is seeking? Is the candidate a leader, participant or observer? Is the candidate trustworthy, reliable and candid?
- **Knowledge:** Has the candidate demonstrated the willingness and ability to learn and adapt? Does the candidate understand the duties and challenges of the office sought? Does the candidate have a firm grasp of the issues important to his or her constituency and their potential effects?

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1. In one page or less, why are you running for this office? (Note: the interview committee will be given a copy of this statement before your interview; at the beginning of your interview you will have the opportunity to expand on this statement in any way you wish.)

Like the President, I'm all for a new green deal. The Port should be prepared to partner and lead in this new opportunity. The Port is THE job engine for this region. It is our regional stimulus. Will we be ready? We need to maintain our industrial lands and base where the jobs grow. Preserve our fishing and international trade jobs. Elevate a thriving maritime sector to emphasize the family-wage worker and not the usual suspects.

To provide direction for the Port in a public-minded way and move away from the good old boy culture. Insider influence needs to be eliminated. Lack of transparency only leads to more erosion of the public confidence. Tough questions always need to be asked. Public campaign funding needs to be explored. Staff needs direction to implement policies in the public interest. As a former state legislator and chairman of three committees that had oversight over state agencies, I bring that experience to ensure the bureaucracy does what the public asks and pays for. The Port needs to remember that it works for us. And it's my job to remind them.

Climate change is going to affect our Port's future. We need to meet the challenges of climate change. Reducing smoke stack gas levels, plugging ships into the grid (cold-ironing), need to be more than token actions. These remedies need to be expanded to all our marine terminals. Truck traffic into the Port should be non-polluting, energy-efficient, and not endanger the health of drivers or the neighborhoods they traverse or the waters that we live and work on. Noise pollution from the third runway shouldn't perpetuate jet ghettos. The Port has a responsibility to make it right. I have the experience to be the voice of reason and accountability at the Port of Seattle.

2. Describe your most important personal characteristics or traits as they relate to the office you seek.

I grew up in Aberdeen, Washington, where people believed in the dignity of work. Years of hard work and production left these blue collar towns clinging to jobs in industries that weren't sustainable. By the 1980s all these industries were depressed and diminished. As a state Legislator in the Coastal Caucus I worked with the Port of Grays Harbor, State of Washington and Corps of Engineers to keep the navigational channel open. Any future of that community depended on keeping a port.

After I was out of office, I continued my relationships with my former colleagues. Later working with the Port of Grays Harbor, I was able to work with Senator Syd Snyder to get a vital rail loop funded by the state. The end result; Grays Harbor is still a viable seaport that is growing. Sustainable commodities like, soybean meal, biodiesel, and liquid bulk products are being exported. I left that behind me, but brought with me a good reputation within the industry; management and labor.

3. Please describe, in sufficient detail, one to three accomplishments or contributions of which you are most proud. These examples should illustrate skills and capabilities you think apply to the office you are seeking. These accomplishments may have occurred at any time in your personal, professional, or public life.

Upon leaving the State legislature, a greater challenge confronted my family. Ivy, my wife, mother of our children and my political partner, developed breast cancer. Ivy was always healthy and lived a healthy lifestyle. She had been my political partner in my years of activism. She was a force in her own right, the Lady Washington and a good many other things would not be. I was no longer the main character, I became the supporting cast.

Ivy had an indomitable spirit and a will to live for her family. She had the courage. My job was easier. I had to do everything possible to empower her in her fight against the disease. I became the morale officer to keep her laughing, often using my secret weapons our two kids, Pete and Ali. I would crank them up and point them at her-they never failed in their ability to make their Mom happy. I became the Inquisitor General, dealing with our Union based medical case manager and more importantly with Ivy's health care practitioners. I became her stage manager- I wanted to make it personal to the people trying to help her. I knew from my years on the House Health Care Committee that personal investment of health care providers made the difference in quality of care. I needed everyone to be personally invested in her.

Since the cancer had metastasized to the liver- the prognosis was bleak. This was in 1994, when fewer weapons were available in the war against cancer. But Ivy fought with every ounce of her strength. Her health care providers went above and beyond to save her. Our family loved her throughout this with all our hearts and let her know it. She passed at home in the arms of her children and I telling us she loved with her last words and hearing the same from us as her last sounds.

Adele Fergusson, wrote two syndicated columns about Ivy's fight in 1996. Her fight and that I could be part of it is the thing I am most proud of in my life.

On a public front a second accomplishment is still making me proud. While I was a legislator and Chair of the House Labor and Commerce Committee in 1989 I brought together a coalition of industry, labor, and environmentalists to pass HB 2222, Landmark legislation to provide unemployment compensation for Washington Farm workers, reduce child labor in the fields, and protect consumers, farmers and the environment against harmful pesticides. My vice-chair and partner in that effort was then a first term legislator, Margarita Prentice, now State Senator in the 11<sup>th</sup> LD. Margarita was instrumental in gaining the endorsement of the 11<sup>th</sup> LD Democrats for my Port commission candidacy. The 11<sup>th</sup> join seven other legislative district Democratic organizations who have solely endorsed my candidacy. Those others include the 5<sup>th</sup>, 33<sup>th</sup>, 37<sup>rd</sup>, 43<sup>rd</sup>, 46<sup>th</sup>, 47<sup>th</sup>, 48<sup>th</sup>. Eight for eight endorsements.

The last accomplishment I mention is the LADY WASHINGTON, the Washington State Tall ship. I introduced this idea for the 1988 State Centennial in 1986. Captain Robert Gray, for whom Grays Harbor is named, was the first of the maritime explorers to penetrate the waters of Washington State in 1792, in his vessels

COLUMBIA REDIVIVA and LADY WASHINGTON. It was a unique piece of history and a major reason Washington did not become part of British Columbia. Simply, the Americans were here first.

The LADY WASHINGTON project served to pull a community out of its depressed timber dependence and court tourism. Washingtonians love their Pacific Coast beaches.

The LADY WASHINGTON gave them reason to stop in Grays Harbor on the way. The ship has since served as flagship of tall ship gatherings in the Northwest as well as a roving ambassador for our state. The LADY is loved throughout Washington, not even mentioning her role in PIRATES of the Caribbean. Telling the story of our maritime past is important. Ways to beautify the non-industrial waterfront are That's why I worked for beautification of the waterfront in Aberdeen and in Bremerton where I secured funding for the USS TURNER JOY Later I contributed and helped raise funds for the founding of the Port of Seattle's Odessey Museum as a way to tell the waterfront' story. Fishing, cargo, trade and the workers who made it happen. What a story. A source of pride.

4. Please list or describe current and past activities in the community in which you have acquired skills that relate to the office you seek. Include your role in the activity and the year(s) in which you were involved. Involvement consists of many areas such as family, neighborhood, community, employment, or public life.

I am a multi-generational longshoreman. (Now a Supercargo in the ILWU (longshore union). Being a longshoreman was my put-myself-through-college job. After receiving degrees from the University of Puget Sound and Grays Harbor College, I continued to work on the waterfront. This allowed me to become more active politically and with my union, the ILWU. A natural fit was an interest in trade issues as I work at the pointy end of International trade in the most trade dependent state.

I campaigned for the State Senate in 1980 at 26 and was elected to the State House of Representatives at 28, in 1982. I served four terms as a Democratic State Representative, 1983-91. In the Legislature I worked with Robert Kapp of the China Relations Council, worked with WCIT and later served on the board of Washington Citizens for World Trade. My well-known love of history enlightened me of the dominance of trade in history. I know trade should be a benefit to all, not an excuse to race to the bottom not an excuse to outsource jobs. I marched with organized Labor at the 1999 WTO march for Fair Trade.

I've kept involved politically, except for a few years after my wife's death, when I needed to be a full time single parent.

In 2000 Maria Cantwell asked me to help her on her Senate campaign. So from advising her on issues, rekindling political contacts to driving her to events, Maria got me back in the game. In 2001, I was elected President of my Longshore Local in Grays Harbor. From the 1980s our workforce had, with the containerization of ports, become a regional work force. Working in all the Ports in Puget Sound, especially Seattle where the local workforce were the friendliest.. (In 1995 I had started the process of relocating to Seattle for work, but my wife's illness put that on hold.) My coworkers from Puget Sound elected me their representative to the International Executive Board in 2003.

The Bush years were hard on my members as well as the country. Background checks for longshoremen rather than inspecting containers and securing cargo integrity. Despite this my union has continued to stay engaged on the Port Security issue. Clearly having a new President and giving the world less reason to fear us was the right solution.

In 2007, I chaired an ILWU committee to interview the Presidential Campaigns. Of the top contenders it was soon clear that Senator Obama was the candidate who best fit my Union's values and interests. My committee was able to recommend an early endorsement for Obama. I was able vote for that endorsement before the Ohio primary.

When Union support for Obama was critical for his success. I was later detailed to represent our Union when Obama met with all the national and International union Presidents to talk about jobs

and how he was going to grow the middle class. On behalf of my Union's President I received Senator Obama's thanks for our early support.

To back up my beliefs, I volunteered with the AFL-CIO on Obama's behalf during the election knocking on doors of Union members in the Portland suburbs. In my own neighborhood, as an active 34<sup>th</sup> District Democrat, in the new green, diverse Highpoint community, I was involved with David Ginsberg at the precinct level. I was appointed the delegate allocator at our first ever precinct Caucus in new Highpoint. All went Obama.

Not one to leave a stone unturned, I spent the night before the 2008 election doorbelling with Alaska Junction PCO Marcee Stone. My biggest supporter in the Port Commission race.

5. Please describe the duties of the office you seek. Which are the most important duties and why?

Learning from unique experiences and opportunities Putting that experience to work for the greater good. Serving four terms as a State legislator, being loyal to your constituents and communities. Working hard for those that need a voice in government.

Being tough enough to ask the hard questions and following them up with appropriate action. Timing. Timing is everything. It is the right time for a worker on the port commission.

It is the right time to elect a commissioner who brings prior experience working with strong bureaucracies to the job. The right time for pro government candidate that believes that the Port needs to be a force for good- a force to meet the Public's needs.

It is the job of the Port commission to serve as the legislative body of the County -wide Port of Seattle to direct and guide the Executive Director and staff.

I served four terms in the Washington State House of Representatives, 1983-91.

Three terms as a committee Chair. Chairing Commerce & Labor, Trade and Economic Development and Agriculture. Lots of hearings, lots of public interaction, lots of tough decisions. Similar to what a Port Commissioner should do.