

2010 Candidate Questionnaire

SECTION I

BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot

First Name	Middle Initial or Nickname	Last Name
Randy		Gordon

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

State Senator, 41st Legislative District

3. Are you the incumbent? Yes No

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

Last 16 years continuously

5. How long have you resided in King County?

32 years

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

7. If partisan, please indicate party: **Democratic**

CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name: Friends of Randy Gordon

Address: P.O. Box 2025 [1200 – 112th Avenue N.E., #C-110]

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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 Senator, 41 st Legislative Dist.	Appointed 1/10/10	1/11/10 - present	Judiciary Committee; Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee; Early Learning Caucus; Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee
Governor, Board of Governors, Washington State Bar Association	Appointed 6/20/2003	9/2003-9/2005	Budget Committee, MCLE Board, Office of Disciplinary Counsel

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

Office Title	Year of Run
Representative, 8 th Cong. Dist., U.S House of Representatives – Exploratory Campaign	2005-2006 (Withdrew 1/6/06)

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.)

I have always had a hunger for public service that has been expressed in a number of ways. As a law student at Harvard, I served on the Board of Student Advisors, and conceived and founded the still-operating orientation program for incoming students. As a young lawyer working at a downtown firm, I worked as a volunteer tutor in the Harborview Burn Center for injured youth. In my professional work as an attorney, I have always been involved in numerous activities of a *pro bono publico* nature, not motivated by personal gain. This has included my service on the East King County Bar Association Board of Trustees and my election as its Vice President and President. I have served as a founding volunteer of the Eastside Legal Assistance Program, with which I have been involved from its formation in 1992 to the present providing legal assistance to the poor on a *pro bono* basis. I have also been involved as a Board member of the King County Bar Association where I chaired the Youth and the Law Committee and as Governor of the Washington State Association of Justice and Governor of the Washington State Bar Association. I have been an advocate for the integrity of our elections and have provided representation *pro bono* respecting ballot titles, initiatives, and regarding touch screen voting machines. Since 1995, I have been involved in work for the USA-National Karate-do Federation (the United States Olympic Committee national governing body for the sport) and currently serve as its General Counsel, all on a *pro bono* basis. This work enhances opportunities for youth and disabled individuals and advances. I was honored in 2008 to receive the USA-NKF's first Person of the Year award for my work.

I have been deeply involved in the maintenance of professional standards and protection of the public in connection with the Office of Disciplinary Counsel of the State Bar: I was appointed as special district counsel for disciplinary matters six times, served as a hearing officer for the State Bar, and served on the board for professional responsibility. I was honored with the President's Award from the State Bar (2001) and with the Public Justice Award (1998) and Professionalism Award (2001) from the Washington State Association for Justice for some of my work protecting the public and working men and women.

A common thread through my work has been protection of the disadvantaged members of our community and trying to help young people fulfill their potential. My work with the Multi-Ethnic Alumni Partnership at the University of Washington, the Parent-Child Program at the YMCA, the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center, and with the USA-National Karate-do Federation (USA-NKF)(the United States Olympic Committee designated national governing body for the sport) are examples. I was honored with the 2008 Person of the Year Award from the USA-NKF. I have, for the last 11 years been an adjunct professor of law at Seattle University. My work with students included my serving as advisor for the National Women Law Students Association and, on invitation, providing the commencement address on three occasions. I was proud to receive the Outstanding Faculty Award in 2003.

The central point is: I have always and will always find some way to make myself of use and to be of service to my community. This is the greatest satisfaction in life. If it is a labor, then it is a labor of love. My work in the legislature is simply an outgrowth of my lifelong commitment to service.

When asked to run for appointment to the vacancy in the 41st Legislative District left by Fred Jarrett's assumption of the role of Deputy King County Executive, having preached public service to my law students for over a decade, I could hardly refuse. It was, after all, the culmination of a lifelong dream. I was nominated by 76% of the precinct committee officers in the 41st Legislative District and approved unanimously by the non-partisan King County Council. I was sworn in the next morning in Olympia by Justice Gerry Alexander.

Since that time, I have worked every day to be the best, most accessible, most responsive representative of the people that I can be. During the Session and thereafter, I responded to over 3800 constituent communications. During Session, I would stay late on the floor of the Senate making and returning phone calls to constituents. I have held five Town Hall meetings, three of them since the adjournment of the Special Session. I am doorbelling daily to reach out to those whom I have not been able to contact otherwise.

In my freshman session, I was able to prime sponsor seven pieces of legislation (three of which are now law), draft a constitutional amendment, and co-sponsor another forty bills. I am working hard to represent my constituents and I have been effective as their State Senator, judging by results and recognition, such as the Everett-Herald's "Rookie-of-the-Year" award and TVW's recognition. I was recently honored by the Newcastle City Council for my help in bringing State capital funds to the community to replace aging and potentially dangerous playground equipment at the area's Lake Boren Park. It is deeply satisfying to have been formally and informally recognized by other groups for my work during this Session and Special Session.

From the time I first stood on the Senate floor, I felt at one with my purpose, as though I was at the confluence of all of my skills and experience. Everything that I had done before as an advocate, mediator, arbitrator, hearing officer, activist, and volunteer joined together to give me effectiveness and joy in the ability to speak for the voiceless, protect the defenseless, make positive change in people's lives, and serve the common good. I am seeking the chance to continue this work.

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

Representing one's fellow citizens in a democratic society is, to my mind, one of the most important public services one can undertake. It is challenging and deeply satisfying work to make decisions that benefit others. It calls upon character and being grounded in one's truth.

Five important personal characteristics or traits I bring to my performance of this work include:

Integrity: Integrity embraces both honesty and toughness. In my instruction to students on legal ethics I have defined "integrity" as "keeping your shape under pressure." The truth is, the bigger risk in the legislature is not giving up heartfelt beliefs, but losing one's way and forgetting what one believes. I am constitutionally incapable of being bribed – most of us are. But there are subtle temptations and vulnerabilities to which all of us are susceptible: the approval of colleagues, the desire to get along, insecurity about our command of the subject at hand, submission to authority, confusion about what is at stake. It is vital to know who you are and what you believe and to be fearless about the electoral consequences of doing the right thing, as you are given to see the right. I believe that I have demonstrated throughout my career the toughness and clarity to do the right things for the right reasons. As will become clear elsewhere in this submission, I have been able to demonstrate integrity at many junctures in my life. Integrity often manifests as tenacity – sticking to one's beliefs.

Advocacy and Collaboration: As the only practicing lawyer in the State Senate, I bring to my work in the Senate a set of skills honed over the years in my service as advocate, mediator and arbitrator. The ability to respectfully advance a heartfelt opinion, to build bridges, find common ground, make friends, work with staff and colleagues, and bring others along towards (if not to) your viewpoint. The ability to advocate for a position with every fiber of your being, but to be respectful of others who differ. A friend of mine once passed along a comment someone made about me that I have treasured every since: "That's Randy: hard on the issues, easy on the people." That was said about me and I always try to keep it true. I believe that my first Session in the Senate demonstrated my ability to be effective by working with others, irrespective of party. This included a number of matters, including a State Constitutional amendment. Service in the State Legislature requires giving everything one has: stamina, clarity, patience, active listening, and problem-solving. I have also been fortunate to have formed important relationships, vital to any performance as a legislator, since legislation is a "team sport."

Compassion: A fellow feeling for the voiceless and the disempowered, those who depend upon a caring government, is vital and informs everything I do. There is no action I take that does not get run through the filter of "is it good for the people." How does it affect those who cannot speak for themselves? My legal career has placed me squarely on the side of those who need representation against the powerful. My advocacy over a decade in duration for the workers in Birklid v. Boeing is evidence of compassion allied with tenacity.

Industry: Being a Senator is hard work with long hours. I prefer hard work and long hours, to idleness. So, although others may feel differently, the way I am put together

I derive the most lasting satisfaction from achievement as a product of personal effort. I have been working all of my life, starting at age eleven, usually more than one job. In high school, one summer I had three jobs: maintenance of a campground (including scrubbing the shower stalls with muriatic acid), working evenings as a bus boy at a restaurant, door-to-door sales for Fuller Brush. One day I ran into an older gentleman named Max Doner in all three of my roles. He wrote an unsolicited letter of recommendation to a friend of his, Robben Fleming, then the President of the University of Michigan, where I was admitted later that Fall and attended as an undergraduate. I worked throughout my college years, maintaining a 4.0 average, and would periodically check in with Mr. Doner. Hard work is a way of being, a habit, and a vital trait for this sort of work where there is so much to do.

Judgment: In my life, I have been called upon to exercise judgment on both a personal level and as part of the bona fide occupational requirement of my job. As a mediator, hearing officer, arbitrator, I have had to develop a sensitive taste for what is fair and just. In the end, judgment is the amalgam of one's life experiences and values, the fruit of hard work, compassion, and intellectual rigor, applied with sensitivity to the social and moral context within which one acts.

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.

Birkliid v. Boeing: In 1988, I undertook representation of over a dozen plastic bench mechanics and clerks, sickened by workplace exposure to phenolic resin compounds used during the construction of aircraft. Evidence emerged showing that workers were exposed to temperatures of 110 degrees F. and higher, while they worked using heat guns on rolls of phenolic resins without the benefit of any safety gear such as respirators. Their employer, the Boeing Company, based on sworn declarations, had actual knowledge of ongoing injury, but denied any relationship between exposure to these toxic exposures and illness that repeatedly had workers taken from the plant floor by ambulance. Under law that had existed for over 73 years, the exclusive remedy available to injured workers was workers compensation. They had no direct civil action against their employer. Over a period of 11 years, I represented these workers, pleading their case in the King County Superior Court, U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington, Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, and Washington State Supreme Court. In 1995, the Washington State Supreme Court determined that the law of Washington would change to protect workers, giving them a right to proceed against employers who had "actual knowledge of certain injury" and "willfully disregarded that knowledge." This unanimous landmark decision of our State Supreme Court was decided in favor of my clients and against the largest employer in the State and enabled our case for the workers to move to resolution in 1998. These workers, many of them single parents, most of them women, many of them minorities, were able to change the law to benefit all workers. This case transformed both Washington law and my own sense that I could make a change. This experience demonstrates my creativity, optimism, tenacity, compassion, and commitment to positive change for the benefit of the powerless.

Congressional race: In March 2005, I filed and declared myself as a candidate for the U.S. Congress in the 8th Congressional District. The interest in this sort of public service had

been a lifelong dream. I was the first candidate to file and set about the process of organizing, fundraising, and running an aggressive campaign across the District for the balance of 2005. I was clear at the outset that my purpose was to change the U.S. Congress, a majority of which was then Republican, to put “brakes” on the policies of the Bush administration with which I strongly differed. Nine months into the campaign, it became clear to me that the political landscape was such that there would be a contested primary in September, just over a month before the ballots “dropped.” A second candidate had joined the contest and at least three others were contemplating doing the same. I reflected over the holidays in late December 2005 and realized that the political reality was such that I had to make a choice: (i) participate in a process that would lead to a contested primary in September, virtually assuring that no Democratic candidate could defeat the incumbent; or (ii) give up my own personal ambitions and support the other candidate so as to maximize the chances that my underlying purpose could be fulfilled and a Democrat could be elected to the 8th. Again, to remain at one with my purpose, I supported my Democratic competitor, Darcy Burner, endorsed her and lent her my support throughout the District. Once I withdrew and supported my one-time opponent, all others who had thought of entering the race withdrew.

My decision on January 6, 2010 was to withdraw from the race to put my purpose ahead of my ambition.

I had raised well over \$100,000.00. Rather than further my personal ambitions, I created a PAC called BLUST8 PAC and supported dozens of State and federal races in the 2006 election cycle, our candidates prevailing in all but two of the Washington State races. The clarity of purpose and commitment to further the values I shared with supporters trumped self-promotion. I reflect on that time as a defining moment that has both directly and indirectly led to my current service in the State Senate.

Constitutional Amendment.

Following the tragic murder of four Lakewood police officers by an individual released on bail, Washington State bail policy became the subject of passionate debate. I felt that the Constitution should not be changed lightly and opposed any change to the State Constitution in the superheated environment surrounding the murders. Changing the bail provisions would be only the *third* time in Washington State history where the criminal procedure provisions of the State Constitution had been amended.

The House and Senate had both circulated versions of the bills that, on review, I felt to be either ineffective or damaging to our Constitutional liberties. In fact, I was the only person on the Senate Judiciary Committee to vote *against* both proposed amendments. I did not stop there, however. After meeting with judges, defense attorneys, prosecutors, and the ACLU, I crafted language early one morning on the back of my daily “blue card” schedule (a photograph of this language is on page three of my post-session newsletter). My language gave our judges the discretion they needed to deny bail to those charged with offenses punishable by life in prison upon a showing by clear and convincing evidence of a propensity for violence resulting in a substantial likelihood of danger to the public or to any person. It also protected our civil liberties.

I circulated this language and earned the support of the Senate Judiciary Committee members of both parties. Within weeks, the proposed amendment (HJR 4220) received unanimous approval of every member of the Senate, all but two members of the House, and was signed by the Governor. This amendment will be set before the people this Fall for consideration.

My work on the amendment to the Constitution demonstrates a number of skills central to my performance in the legislature. It shows flexibility in my willingness to retreat from a position of “no amendment” to “if we are going to have an amendment, the best one possible.” It demonstrates my willingness to engage in the hard work in a short session of reaching out to various interest groups in conflict, listening, and forging a result. It demonstrates working with members of both parties – and personally with the Governor - and successfully gaining unanimous approval in the Senate and overwhelming support in the House. I am proud of this achievement.

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.

The duties in the legislature involve many skills that draw upon an entire lifetime. Attributes such as patience, loyalty, compassion, and service are learned in the home. My earliest years were shaped by parents who were both teachers. Reading, learning, and academic success were highly prized in my household, as was a sense that one could achieve success as a result of hard work and merit, rather than inheritance. As a result, to this day, I am strongly committed to equal opportunity for all and access to superior public school education as the means by which each person can fulfill their potential. So strong were family values supporting education in my household growing up that for many years I laid my academic success at the feet of my parents, feeling that I had done little more than fulfill their expectations, which I had made my own. Everything that I have done is built on the foundations of the core values inculcated by my parents, my community, and my faith.

I also learned the value of hard work (1964-). I have been employed in one way or another since age eleven when I delivered Newsday in my suburban neighborhood. I would hold two or three jobs: delivering newspapers, mowing lawns, working as a busboy at a local restaurant and in upstate New York, working as maintenance at a local day camp including scrubbing the shower stalls with muriatic acid, working as a coat check at a restaurant, working as a waiter at a catering house, working as a door-to-door salesperson for Fuller Brush (which, along with delivering newspapers, is much like doorbelling as a public official).

At the University of Michigan, following a series of arsons, I helped found and run a Student Security Force (1974-75) for the South Quadrangle. When the arsonist was captured, he indicated that had one of our security patrols come upon him, he would have killed the individual. Asked what my reaction to this would have been had I known this at the time, I answered, somewhat archly: "I think I would have been more reluctant to patrol the corridors at night, alone." Still, I learned much about myself from the experience: my willingness to take charge, to create, to lead, to act, and a sort of physical courage.

As a law student at Harvard, I established the still ongoing orientation program in 1977. For the last thirty three years students coming to Harvard Law School come a few days early and are assigned to small groups (about ten students) with a faculty sponsor and upperclassman and oriented to the law school. I remember the day, speaking with the late Dean Sacks, how this orientation program would forever change the Law School, such that future generations would never be able to relate to the experience we had both had. I did not enjoy Harvard Law School and my response was to change the institution, I think, for the better. The irony is that creating enduring institutions means that the people who come after often will take them for granted. I learned a lesson from this that I re-experienced in the Senate this past Session in connection with my drafting an amendment to the State Constitution: enduring, effective change will often be regarded by those who come after as "common sense" and people will often express it this way: "Wasn't it always like this?" That is the irony of success: it will be taken for granted. Anyone involved in public service should recognize that service must be its own reward as recognition is seldom and fleeting.

As a young lawyer I immediately dedicated myself to learning my craft. At the same time, I felt an ongoing call to service, including volunteering (1979) at the Harborview Medical Center Burn Clinic as a tutor for burn victims. There I learned that burn injuries are not equally distributed throughout the population. Victims are usually teenage boys who face family challenges that leave them at greater risk for injury. Invariably the patients had not thrived in the school environment. I still feel pride at remembering one young man who said, after a class in geography, “You’re not like other teachers. You make things interesting.” I learned about others who had made other choices, some of which left them maimed or disfigured. This was part of my schooling in compassion.

For the last fifteen years I have been a student of Hayashi-ha Shito-ryu Karate under the guidance of Hanshi Julius Thiry and Sensei Katherine Jones and Junko Arai. It has been a profound opportunity to test my limits, confront my fears, instruct others, and a study in humility. I recall plainly the day I completed my argument in the Birklid v. Boeing case before the Washington Supreme Court when, after driving home to Bellevue from Olympia, I proceeded with the other students to wipe down the dojo floor on our hands and knees. A contrast like that leaves a lasting impression: don’t be too proud of yourself, there are areas of life where one is stripped of the trappings of ego and prestige. As I progressed to the higher levels as a karate-ka (student), I took on instruction of the newer students. Just doorbelling last week, I rang a doorbell and was greeted by the mother of two of my former students who remembered me from years ago. The two boys had both had developmental challenges and I had been their favorite instructor – they had been talking about me just a few days before in fact, she said. The study of karate had been an organizing principle in their lives and they had thrived in its discipline. The older boy just completed his master’s degree! His young brother is graduating from the University of Washington. The mother thanked me for helping be a role model and inspiration for her children when they needed it. I have realized over the years that once a child learns to be excellent in one thing, they learn how to be “excellent” in anything to which they apply themselves. They know how to get to the place of excellence. For some children, they learn excellence in art or music, for others in traditional academics, for still others in physical education and sports. This lesson continues to inform my view of education and its importance. Humility – I mean a deep and abiding sense that all we have is a gift or a loan – is central to my experience of life.

I have continued with my work regarding the sport of karate, serving in the national governing body for the sport as recognized by the United States Olympic Committee since 1995. Since 2004, I have served as General Counsel for the USA- National Karate Federation. In 2008, I was awarded its first year Person of the Year Award for my contributions to the sport. The truth is that the sport has contributed more to me than I can ever repay.

As a Senator, I find myself drawn to the support of education. And, no wonder, my whole life I have been teaching in one way or another! When my daughters were young, I involved myself in the YMCA Youth Programs, becoming a “Nation Chief” (1992-1993), mostly because I wanted my daughters to have the fun of participating in the special roles associated with their dad being “chief.” Until you have led campfires in song, wearing a headdress longer than you are tall, telling stories to the squeals of dozens of young girls, you cannot fully appreciate just how easy it is by comparison to sit comfortably at my desk on the floor of the Senate! In the words of Tennyson’s

Ulysses: “I am a part of all that I have met.” This experience is, then, also a part of what I bring to the Senate.

In the late 1980’s I increasingly became part of the governance of my profession as a young lawyer, an involvement that began with the Youth and the Law Committee, but ultimately led to my interest in supporting new lawyers and protecting the public as the years passed. This ultimately culminated in my serving as a Governor of the Washington State Bar Association in 2003-2005. Before then, however, I served on the Board of Trustees of the East King County Bar Association, as its Vice President and President (1988-1995); Trustee of the King County Bar Association (1982, 1996-1999); Hearing Officer for disciplinary matters (1999-2004); Governor of Washington Association for Justice (2000-2003); and Governor, 8th Congressional District for the State Bar (2003-2005). I learned about my profession and the ethical challenges faced by attorneys. I also learned much of the depression, alcoholism, and drug abuse that leads to most of the problems in the profession. I have participated in every level of the disciplinary process, from drafting the RPC 8.4 regarding prohibited conduct by attorneys on the Rules of Professional Responsibility Committee to disbaring attorneys to rendering reprimands as a member of the Board of Governors of the State Bar. Managing a multi-million dollar budget on the budget committee of the WSBA, supervising the Executive Director and over one hundred employees, and working with colleagues to govern the 28,000 members of the Bar, all added to my experience overseeing an operating budget. I discovered that in my role as hearing officer there was space to feel compassion and to hold people accountable for their choices as well. I also discovered there that I was a fiscal conservative, always interested in my role as trustee over the funds of my colleagues and suspicious of extravagance.

Since its founding by the East King County Bar Board of Governors, I have served on the Eastside Legal Assistance Program (1992-present), providing pro bono legal advice to my fellow citizens at the Kirkland Senior Citizen Center on a regular basis. I have also undertaken many causes on a no fee basis, many involving the integrity of our elections. It was concern over our democracy that led me to represent Snohomish County citizens in their challenge of touch screen voting machines or that inspired my successful mandamus action against King County for its failure to properly count signatures on a petition. I continue to be very interested in campaign reform and protecting the integrity of our elections.

One of the most profound learning experiences for me was my service as Adjunct Professor of Law for Seattle University School of Law (1999 – present) where I teach Products Liability and Remedies. Helping young people and aspiring lawyers has been one of the most satisfying experiences of my life. Seattle University places special emphasis on public service and during my eleven years as a professor, my own commitment to public service has grown. I was honored with the Outstanding Faculty Award in 2003 and was honored to deliver the commencement address on three occasions. Those addresses are submitted with this application.

“A life in the law, in the service of justice” is the language put forward by the SEATTLE JOURNAL FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE, a law review to which I made a submission in 2006 regarding the debate regarding health care reform. That maxim also encapsulates much of my life. My legal education and experience have special relevance to the work of a legislator. As the only practicing lawyer in the State Senate, I bring specialized experience that has and will continue to inure to the benefit of my

constituents. In addition, since 1992 I have expanded my practice into mediation, which has includes learning and teaching about mediation techniques. Bringing people together, despite differences in positions, because of a common set of interests, is the essence of mediation. My article, "A Mediation on Mediation," submitted herewith, describes my philosophy of mediation at greater length.

I have handled mediations involving as many as 42 law firms *simultaneously* and run eight separate mediation sessions *simultaneously* (actually I assigned each room separate assignments and moved in a circle visiting each room in turn). Such experiences are particularly helpful. As a trial lawyer, I have learned how to reduce complex facts to key points of interest and used persuasion to bring about a desired result. I have also learned how to master both the issues and myself so as to avoid unnecessary controversy. That is why I was particularly honored to receive the Public Justice Award (1998) and the Professionalism Award (2001) from the Washington State Association for Justice and the President's Award (2001) from the State Bar for my work seeking to improve the profession.

So much of what makes me effective as a legislator, is what makes me who I am. I welcome the opportunity to meet with you and to discuss further the life experiences that, collectively, have placed me before you at this place and time.

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

Constituent Relations and Service: In a representative democracy, citizens may feel distant from their government and at a loss as to how to solve problems they have with government. One key duty for a State Senator is being accessible so as to serve as a bridge between one's constituents and the government or agency involved as problems arise. This also means being accessible in terms of Town Hall meetings (I've had five this session) to help familiarize the public with the issues and to inform them of your actions so that you can be held accountable. Sometimes the service may be as simple as directing the constituent to the correct agency or advocacy regarding a bureaucratic policy (license plate "Ubuntu"). As an attorney, such advocacy comes easily. Trying to find solutions to intractable problems surrounding medical insurance coverage or support for adult care is harder. Systemic or recurring problems or injustices may require a legislative solution. I consider helping constituents solve problems in their lives one of the great opportunities of public service as a State Senator.

Listening and Policymaking: Although many times people approach their State Senator looking for answers, it is even more common that the State Senator must listen and learn in order to hit upon the right policy. In this, I have felt that I am obliged to ask the right questions. Being heard is one of the healing virtues of representation of one's constituents. Being genuinely heard and cared about lends dignity to both the speaker and the listener. Each State Senator is supported by dozens of staff members and great resources, but in the end determining policy requires the digestion and assimilation of data, statistics, anecdotes, history and the evaluation of credibility, accuracy, reliability, competence. This is one of the great sources of satisfaction and accomplishment as a legislator.

Advocacy, Collaboration and Representation: Representation of citizens and advocacy for policy changes or legislation does not occur in a vacuum. It occurs amid a maelstrom of competing interests. As a representative and leader, a State Senator must learn when to give voice to the citizenry and when to speak persuasively in order to lead one's fellow citizens toward an effective solution. Both are aspects of representation. In order to advocate effectively, one must persuade others with different predispositions. A collaborative problem-solving process that works on the principle that "Issues are Political. Solutions Aren't" involves the same listening and policymaking skills described above, alloyed with the ability to persuade others to see the problem and the solution as you and your constituents do. In the end, effective legislation involves bringing along 24 other Senators and 50 Representatives, plus one Governor, but it is truly based largely on personal relationships and trust. In my freshman term I cultivated many relationships, even friendships, with colleagues and was, as a result, able to get a lot done for my District. This includes original legislation (such as SB 6764), co-sponsored legislation (such as SB 6696), the Constitutional amendment (HJR 4220), and the capital budget allocations to Bellevue (PACE), Newcastle (Lake Boren Park), Bellevue College, and Renton Technical College. It also included working across party lines to get things done such as the supplemental transit bill and the amendment to the Constitution.

I regard myself as a voice for my constituents and a safe place for them to be heard. At the same time, I take leadership and must sometimes educate my fellow citizens as to the reasons for a particular collective action. There must be a balance between my simply being a megaphone and my being a teacher. There must also be a balance between the interests of individuals in the District and the overarching interests of the State. Finally, the actions I take must always be consistent with my sworn duty to uphold the Constitution and my conscience.