

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
Rodney		Tom

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

State Senate, 48th Legislative District

3. Are you the incumbent? Yes No

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

21 years

5. How long have you resided in King County?

44 years

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

7. If partisan, please indicate party: Democratic

CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name: **Rodney Tom for State Senate**

Address: **P.O. Box 594**

City/State/Zip: **Medina, WA 98039**

Campaign Phone: **(425) 250-8211**

Campaign Fax: _____

Campaign E-mail: **rodney@rodneytom.com**

Campaign Website: **www.rodneytom.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 Senator	Elected	January 2006-2010	Vice-chair of Ways and Means (2008-2010) Vice-chair of Education (2007-2009)
State Representative	Elected	January 2003-2007	

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

Office Title	Year of Run

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?
-

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 am running for re-election to the State Senate to continue my effective representation for this district. I feel very strongly that I bring a balanced, common sense solutions-oriented approach to the State Senate. Moreover, I believe that these skills are important in order to solve our state's problems, which include the economy, education, and transportation.

As Vice-Chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, I have stressed an independent, principled focus on tackling a budget crisis, the likes of which we have not seen since the Great Depression.

In 2009, I was the chief architect of the state budget that closed a \$9 billion dollar revenue gap with no new revenue. I have also been instrumental in driving education reform, being one of the key members of the Education Finance Task Force, which drafted legislation updating our current 30 year-old school financing system. Fundamentally, I believe our state should focus on research and practical solutions.

With the passage of House Bill 2261, our state is finally on track to fulfill our constitutional obligation, where education truly is the paramount duty of this state. HB 2261 was a bi-partisan collaboration, mainly between six House and Senate Republicans and Democrats, that put aside partisan differences in order to focus solely on what was best for improving education outcomes for every child in Washington state.

In 2009 I was selected as Co-Chair of the SR 520 Work Group, a group designated with the task of trying to untangle a stalemate that has kept us locked in gridlock for 15 years, over how best to replace the existing bridge. Through determined effort and lots of public input, this last year we passed a bill that I prime-sponsored, finally allowing construction to begin on both the pontoons, and the Eastside portion of the corridor. This also set up a framework where we could continue to iron out details on a Westside solution that works for the affected neighborhoods, while recognizing the regional importance of the corridor.

I am a proven leader who gets results, who is not afraid to work across party lines, and who puts the interests of my constituents, and the citizens of Washington state above special interests.

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

I believe I bring a wealth of knowledge to the budget process and education financing, which are two very complex policy areas that few individuals in Olympia understand in a comprehensive way. I also have the ability to work with diverse interest groups, focusing on a common solution without losing sight of making sure the outcome is effectively implemented.

I also really enjoy engaging with constituents, holding numerous town halls, where we take questions in an unstructured manor, so not only am I able to relay my opinion on policy matters, but that I also get feedback on areas of concern for constituents.

I think I bring a rare quality of being able to be an independent voice, standing up to the immense pressures of groupthink, while at the same time, being an effective member of the Legislature. Many members come to me for advice because they know my thoroughness of preparation and principled approach to decision-making.

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.

My top three accomplishments include being the chief budget writer during the toughest economic environment Washington state has faced in over 60 years.

Helping pass education reform, which was a long embattled struggle, that is often talked about, but rarely acted on in a manner that will bring real change to our education system, helping kids compete in a high-tech, global economy.

My third accomplishment would be the work I have done to untangle the SR 520 bridge project, a project that most pundits thought was a doomed process. Through tenacity, a willingness to listen, and gained cooperation of many diverse interests, we are finally moving forward on the bridge project, culminating in the passage of my bill that frees up construction dollars so that the bridge project can start this year, with final completion in 2014.

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.

For the past 18 years, I have been successfully selling residential real estate on the Eastside. Real estate has taught me a lot about the importance of listening, and how real life issues like transportation and education affect individuals and families on a daily basis. During this time, I also had the fun experience of starting my own business, and finding out firsthand how government regulations and procedures affect small businesses.

The most important this about selling real estate is finding the right solution to your clients' housing needs. The only way to do this is by asking lots of questions, listening intensively, knowing the market, and then applying that knowledge to help bring about one of the biggest dreams most of us have; owning our own home.

For 5 years now, I've served on the Board of the March of Dimes. The March of Dimes is working to prevent birth defects, focusing its concentration on pre-maturity and proper pre-natal care. This experience has solidified my determination for the importance in upfront investments by government entities. These dollars are 1) fiscally responsible by reducing long-term expenses, but more importantly 2) are the right thing to do from a humanitarian standpoint.

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

The duty of a State Senator is to help pass laws that enhance our lives, while maintaining the freedoms we've been so richly blessed with in this great country. It's a balancing act between providing essential government services in the most economical manner, while finding the fairest means of paying for them.

I believe the most important duty of any public official is the ability to listen to the public, and then incorporate all the divergent viewpoints and interests into one executable policy that will solve the problem at hand. It's bringing an open mind, and then finding practical, common sense solutions that work in both the short and long term.