

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
Ruth	I.	Kagi

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

State Representative 32nd District Position #2

3. Are you the incumbent? x Yes No

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

58 years

5. How long have you resided in King County?

58 years

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

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

CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name: Citizens for Ruth Kagi

Address: 19553 35th NE

City/State/Zip: Lake Forest Park, WA

Campaign Phone: 206-365-1137

Campaign Fax: NA

Campaign E-mail: kagi@seanet.com

Campaign Website: Expired. I will have a new website in the near future.

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	Elective	1999 to present	Chair, Early Learning and Children's Services Committee
WA. Council for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect	Gubernatorial appointment	1988-92	Chair 1991-2
Human Services and Welfare Committee, National Conference of State Legislators	Appointed by the Speaker	2004-present	Chair, 2008-09

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?

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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 began my professional career seeking a masters in public administration because of my belief in the importance of public service. My entire professional career has been devoted to public policy—at the federal, state and local levels. My primary goal has been to strengthen public policies to better serve people, and to more effectively administer the programs funded through governments. Before my election to the legislature, my primary focus was employment and training programs to give work opportunities to disadvantaged individuals. As a volunteer and a public policy consultant, my primary interest was children and families, and the impact of poverty on a child's potential.

The legislature has provided the opportunity to influence policy in the areas I care most about. As chair of the Early Learning and Children's Services Committee, I am able to influence public policies affecting parents and young children, including child care and early learning, parent education and support, and developing strategies to help families escape poverty. In addition, I work extensively with child welfare, which demands thoughtful and painful policy analysis related the issues of parent support, early learning, and poverty. Washington is working to better integrate the separate systems that serve this population, and I am fortunate to be in a position to provide leadership and support for this effort.

Over the past six years, I have worked with Governor Gregoire to lower child welfare caseloads, invest new resources in evidence based practices to improve outcomes for children and families, and to reform our child welfare reform system to performance based contracts. Each of these steps is designed to improve the outcomes for children involved with child abuse and neglect, and strengthen the accountability of our child welfare system. This reform effort is in mid-stream; I want to provide the guidance, oversight and the resources to assure that it is implemented effectively.

Over the past several years, the legislature has made tremendous progress in the area of early learning, establishing a separate Department of Early Learning, a public-private partnership (Thrive by Five), creating an entitlement for pre-school for low-income children, and creating a home visiting program for very high risk families. A primary reason I am running for re-election is to keep this progress moving forward, and to work to maintain the strong foundation we have built for early learning in Washington.

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

Energy, determination, focus and optimism. I truly believe that you cannot be an effective legislator unless you are an optimist. The barriers to effecting meaningful change are immense.

During my years in the legislature, I have worked extensively with stakeholders, citizens, legislators and a skilled staff to develop legislation that will be supported and will pass. I spent two years developing a major drug sentencing reform bill with prosecutors, defense attorneys, treatment providers, judges and law enforcement to craft a bill that lowered sentences for non-violent drug offenders and put the savings into drug courts and drug treatment. As a result of this law, the number of non-violent drug offenders in prison has fallen from 20% to 12% in the last eight years. It was a difficult policy change to get passed, but working with a broad range of stakeholders to build a strong base of support, and keeping an unrelenting focus on moving the bill forward, resulted in passage of this major bill.

My knowledge of public policy has helped me develop strategies and solutions that are practical and effective. I rely heavily on research, and carefully analyze policy options and implications before moving forward. I am respectful of other people's opinions and try hard to reach consensus and have a sense of humor.

My belief in the ability of people to work together to create positive change has perhaps been my strongest asset in the legislature. It is a belief that is challenged frequently.

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.

Several years ago, a good friend and community leader died in a tragic and preventable logging truck accident. Working with his widow, the trucking industry and the State Patrol, I developed legislation to address a major gap in our safety laws: we had no system for keeping track of truck safety for intra-state trucking, and no safety compliance system. It took two years, but the stakeholders came to agreement on a strong, comprehensive truck safety compliance system for intra-state trucking that would be supported by increased trucking fees. The bill, which was supported by the trucking industry, instituted major changes in state transportation safety policy that has resulted in unsafe trucks being taken off of our highways. My ability to bring people together, find common ground, a fashion a practical and effective strategy to address the problem resulted in strong legislation. My ability to work with other legislators to address their concerns and explain the importance of this policy change resulted in passage of this bill.

My work on drug sentencing reform, which is described in response to the first question, provides another example of my ability to work with a broad range of stakeholders on legislation, and move it through the legislature.

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.

Being a parent, and all the activities related to parenting, taught me the importance of community, and of support for parents and children. My experience in a pre-school co-op, in parent education classes and then PTA, made me appreciate how important community is to the healthy development of children – and the strength of their families.

In the legislature, I have used that knowledge and experience to focus on early learning. Washington has become a national leader in early learning, and I am proud of the role I have been able to play in making early learning a priority. Over many years, I invited researchers and experts in infant brain development, the impact of adversity on child development, and others to present to the legislature. Over time, a broad base of understanding and support has developed that has provided the foundation for strong early learning policies. House Bill 2964, which I sponsored, created the Department of Early Learning and outlined a comprehensive policy in support of quality early learning in Washington.

Over the past ten years, I have been a persistent advocate for quality child care and parent education and support, and have worked with business, philanthropy and stakeholders to develop strategies and programs to support early learning. As vice chair of Thrive by Five, the public-private early learning partnership, I have worked to assure that private resources are available to support research and demonstration efforts so that we can learn what works, and then replicate that in the public arena.

My experience with PTA, and children in school, helped focus my attention on the tragedy of school drop-outs, and the lack of options these youth have when they leave school. Working with students, school administrators and community organizations, this past session I passed a drop-out re-engagement bill that will provide the statutory framework for programs that will provide opportunities for drop-outs to complete their high school education and move on with their lives to be successful adults.

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

The two most important responsibilities of a legislator are to represent their constituents and district, and to develop and enact public policies that serve the public interest and use the public dollar wisely. This latter responsibility is perhaps the most daunting as we face diminishing resources at the same time that demand for services is increasing.

As a member of the Ways and Means Committee and of Education Appropriations, I devote a great deal of time and energy to understanding the budget and strategizing about how to structure program delivery so that it is effective and efficient. Understanding how services are currently delivered is key to proposing thoughtful changes, so I spend a lot of time visiting programs, talking with clients and analyzing data. This past session, because of concerns over the effectiveness of the TANF (welfare) program, the House and Senate will be working with the Sub-Cabinet to redesign the program in response to legislation that I sponsored and passed.