

King County Democrats

2017 Candidate Questionnaire

State Level – Legislature

Candidate Name	Melissa Taylor	
Position Sought	State Representative, Position 2	
Home Legislative District	46	
Are you a Democrat? Are you known as a Democrat?	Yes	
Campaign Contact Information	Mailing address:	Phone: [REDACTED] Fax:
	Website: http://www.electmelissataylor.com Email: melissataylor.46th@gmail.com Twitter: @melissawptaylor Facebook: /melissawptaylor	
Campaign manager or point of contact	Maddy Vonhoff, maddy.vonhoff@gmail.com	
Consultant(s)		

Part I – Candidate Background

Please briefly describe your qualifications, education, employment, community and civic activity, union affiliation, and other relevant experience. Attach a resume with more complete history.

I am a working mother, seasoned technology professional, and a tireless community advocate.

My husband, 8 year old daughter and I live in Maple Leaf, two blocks from the small business my parents founded over 20 years ago (Math n' Stuff for those in the area). I am the oldest of six children and am fortunate that four of my siblings live within a couple miles so that my daughter can have quality time with grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousin. We are walking distance to Olympic View where my daughter is in 2nd grade and we actively contribute both time and money to our school community, as well as neighboring schools with less parent resources.

My career started as a software engineer in the 1990s and I have led successful technology and innovation efforts across large companies, including **Providence**, **Dell**, and **WebMD**, as well as numerous startups from concept and seed stage through IPO. While on sabbatical, I established **Peace Dividend Trust's** East Timor office and worked with the local business community, foreign companies, and the government to direct over \$20 million of procurement into the local economy.

My civic engagement includes:

- being a founding member of **Emerge Washington**, an organization that recruits and trains Democratic women to run for office,
- serving as the co-chair of the Social Justice Committee of the **League of Women Voters** Seattle King County and recently being elected to the Board,
- traveling to Olympia to serve as a parent advocate for **Washington's Paramount Duty**, a grassroots organization that advocates for full funding of public education with new, progressive revenue and

- serving on the leadership team of **Indivisible Plus Washington**, a group of 26,000 Washingtonians that supports collective advocacy and engagement both in and between communities across the state.

I graduated valedictorian from Holy Names Academy in Seattle. I hold a B.A. in Economics from Rice University and an MBA from Columbia University and London Business School through their Global Executive MBA program.

Describe your history of involvement in Washington state politics. What campaigns have you run or worked on? What specific actions have you taken as a public leader to advocate for new state revenue?

I am a founding member of Emerge Washington, an organization that recruits and trains Democratic women for office, which boasts an impressive 70% win rate nationally. I led the development and implementation of an intensive weekend Boot Camp that brought women together from across the eastern part of the state to learn and practice campaign skills. My vision is to build a network of women recruiting women across the state--all year, every year--at every level of government. I have donated and supported the 3 women running in the Senate special elections this year in the 45th, 31st and 7th.

I have been to Olympia seven times this year to testify and meet with legislators about the funding crisis in our public schools and the need to address it with new, progressive revenue. You can see my testimony here:

www.tvw.org/watch/?clientID=9375922947&eventID=2017041169&eventID=2017041169&startStreamAt=6650&autoStartStream=true

What prompted you to run for this office? What priorities are you seeking to address with your campaign?

I am a working mom with a proven track record of delivering in both professional and community leadership roles. With the public education funding crisis and McCleary deadlines, I want to bring my perspective, creativity, and energy to the fight. We need someone who will ensure that the funding will come from new, progressive revenue rather than from cuts to vital social services or further tax burdens on our lower and middle classes. I have spent the last two years working on this issue and want to ensure it is the paramount priority of our 46th delegation. I will continue to work on this issue with courage and tenacity, in session and out, until my daughter and the rest of the public school students in Washington receive the quality education promised to them in our state's constitution.

My great-grandparents emigrated here from the former Yugoslavia in the early 1900s. My grandmother grew up and went to school in box cars at the base of Mount Rainier. After school, she came home to teach her parents English. My grandfather taught math and driver's ed in Tacoma Public Schools. My mother was among the early women to attend UW Law School. I would not be where I am today without the public education system in Washington State and I feel honor-bound to pay that forward to our next generation.

I have really appreciated Representative Farrell's ability to provide the perspective a working mom in Olympia, including bringing her kids onto the House floor, and it is important to me that that voice continues to be represented in Olympia.

List the notable endorsements you have received to date. Who are you planning to ask for an endorsement?

- Lin Murdock, 46th PCO and public school parent
- Pat Smith, 46th PCO, small business owner, political scientist and public school grandparent
- Geoff Sakahara, 46th PCO

- Marcie Maxwell, former State Representative
- Lisa McShane, owner of McShane Strategies, a firm working for Tribes, Firefighters and others, longtime Democrat, and former statewide Field Director for Governor Gregoire*
- Pamela Eakes, Democratic activist and Board Member, Emerge America*
- Summer Stinson, public school parent, Board Member of Washington's Paramount Duty*, and Policy Director of the 36th District Democrats*
- Tali Rausch, public school parent, Board Member of New Discovery School and Washington's Paramount Duty*
- Rebecca Vaux, public school parent and Board Member, Washington's Paramount Duty*
- Robert Cruickshank, parent and Board Member of the Sierra Club* and Washington's Paramount Duty*
- Melissa Westbrook, public education advocate and writer/moderator of the Seattle Schools Community Forum blog*
- Kristina Bernhardt, public school parent and Event Coordinator for Kids and Race*

* Titles for identification purposes only

Describe the progress of your campaign and campaign goals. For instance, what earned media has your campaign received? How much money have you raised? How many doors have you knocked on?

I have sent letters, emails and made multiple calls to every PCO as well as held community events and 1:1s to meet people in person. For those that I have not connected with yet, please feel free to call me.

While money is not relevant in this race, dozens of people have volunteered in large and small ways to make this campaign successful and more have asked where they can donate.

Have you ever been a member of any other political party? If so, what party? Have you ever given money to a candidate from another party in a partisan race? If so, to whom and when?

I grew up in a Republican family that has since all moved left. When I turned 18, I became a member of the Republican National Committee. In a college economics course, I went to write a paper on why single payer healthcare did not make sense and discovered during the course of my research that it is actually the fiscally conservative option, in addition to being the morally just option. I never renewed my membership after that.

Please answer the following questions.

		Yes*	No
1	Have you ever failed to pay any taxes or court ordered judgments?		X
2	Have you ever been found in violation of a Public Disclosure Commission, Federal Election Commission or Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission regulation?		X

* If you answered "Yes" to either of the above, please explain your answer:

Part II – Local and State Issues

#	Question	Yes	No	Qualify your response
---	----------	-----	----	-----------------------

1	Do you support WAmend's I-735 (amending the U.S. Constitution to lessen the influence of money in politics, and declare that corporations do not have the rights of natural persons)?	X		
2	Do you support the right of public workers, excluding military, to bargain and strike?	X		
3	Do you support the voter-approved minimum wage increase (I-1433)?	X		
4	Do you support the Reproductive Health Act?	X		
5	Do you support amending Washington's Constitution to require a two-thirds vote to raise revenue, as demanded by Tim Eyman?		X	
6	Did you support adoption of a Sound Transit 3 regional transportation package?			I strongly support public transportation. While I understand the need to fund ST3, I am frustrated by our worst-in-the-nation regressive tax structure. I am opposed to additional, regressive sales and property taxes that disproportionately affect low-and middle-income families while we fail to close corporate tax loopholes. I would support closing sufficient tax loopholes such that we could not only replace car tab revenue but accelerate projects such as the 130 th Street Station and Bus Rapid Transit along 145 th , with requisite impact studies.
7	Do you support legislation to fix Washington's broken "three strikes" law?	X		
8	Do you support allowing coal or oil to be exported from Washington State's ports?		X	The future of Washington State's energy economy is in clean, renewable resources. We must continue to be proactive in making energy investments that support safe and healthy communities in our state and a sustainable environment for our future generations.
9	Do you support making two years of community college or technical school tuition-free?	X		
10	Do you support requiring tax exemptions to be listed as expenditures in the state budget?	X		
11	Do you support the privatization of our public worker's compensation system, which protects employees who are injured on the job?		X	
12	Do you support requiring paid vacation and sick + safe leave for Washington's workers?	X		

13	Do you support repeal of Tim Eyman’s I-747, which artificially limits property tax collections?	X		
14	Do you support Washington adopting a truly nonpartisan, citizen-run redistricting process that would result in more competitive districts?	X		
15	Do you support Washington State prepaying postage on all ballots?	X		
16	Do you support automatic voter registration?	X		Washington has delayed implementing AVR for drivers licenses because of its impact on non-citizens. We need a way to ensure that our immigrant population can receive the documentation they need to live and work without fear of discrimination based on citizenship status.
17	Do you support the death penalty?		X	
18	Do you support barring employers from asking criminal history questions in job applications?	X		
19	In the law regarding police use of lethal force (RCW 9A.16.040), do you support removing the requirement that officers act “without malice”?	X		
20	Do you support Healthcare for All-Washington (HB 1026 and SB 5701)?	X		

Part III – Free Response Questions

Please review the 2016 King County Democratic Platform, approved by the delegates to the King County Convention and available from KCDCC’s website. List which planks, if any, you disagree with, and why.

I agree with all planks.

How do you propose fully complying with the Supreme Court’s McCleary decision? In your eyes, what does full compliance look like? Please be as specific as possible.

Full compliance with McCleary means providing ample revenue to fund HB 2261 and HB 2776. We also need to fund Initiative 1351 to reduce class sizes. The legislature knows what basic education looks like. The challenge with compliance is the funding mechanism. I am fully committed to fixing our regressive tax system rather than cutting vital social services or doing a levy swap that provides a tax break to large property-holding companies.

What policies would you promote to address the climate change crisis? What ways would you propose combating the climate crisis by implementing control of carbon emission?

We must act now on climate change. The longer we wait to cut fossil fuels, the more we have to cut per year in the future to achieve a survivable amount of CO2 concentration in the atmosphere.

I support joining California and Hawaii with a plan to move to 100% renewable energy sources by 2050, which would create thousands of jobs. Nuclear is not part of a responsible, renewable plan. I support requiring companies to pay to address the costs their production imposes on our communities.

When I consider policies to address climate change, I want to know who is paying and who is benefiting. It is critical to me that the individuals, families and communities that are most impacted are at the table. I would approach any policy to address climate change through a racial and social justice lens, so that those communities most impacted by climate change receive a greater share of the benefits.

We need to address point source pollution. Right now, families and tax payers bear the burden of massive air pollution and an unsustainable future. Displacement of dirty technologies is an important part of the conversion process. We need to create training programs and jobs in these industries.

I support requiring companies operating in Washington to disclose sustainability status in their SEC filings using the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board's guidelines.

Describe your vision for tax reform and fairness. How do we fully fund our public schools while making our tax code more progressive? Would you support sunseting all tax exemptions, and voting to renew only those that demonstrably benefit the public interest?

Our tax system is the most regressive in the country and must be substantially adjusted to reflect our progressive values.

This session, we need to close tax exemptions in order to make the budget work. Next session we need to re-introduce a capital gains tax. I support re-introducing capital gains every year until it passes. Washington is one of only 7 states without a capital gains tax and we're overdue. We have more tax exemptions than any state other than NY and we give away more money than we bring in. I fully support Representative Pollet's Tax Exemption Transparency and Accountability Act and would support sunseting all exemptions other than those that demonstrably benefit the public interest. Specifically, I support adding accountability measures to tax exemptions like the one granted to Boeing, after which they eliminated 12,000 jobs in Washington.

Once we are able to hold those at the top accountable for paying their fair share, I would also like to see us cut the sales tax. Washington is one of the wealthiest states in the country. We need to lighten the tax burden we have placed on our lower and middle classes. The wealthy individuals and corporations who have benefited from our state's infrastructure and economy need to pay a more equitable share of the taxes so that we can continue to thrive. This is a moral imperative. Every additional increase in sales tax and property tax hurts our poorest kids disproportionately.

If elected, will you vote to uphold the Supreme Court's decision in *League of Women Voters*, which found charter schools to be unconstitutional? Do you support or oppose charter schools?

Yes. Public dollars should have public oversight. I oppose charter schools.

Since the Great Recession, the Department of Natural Resources' Geology and Earth Resources Division has been limping along with inadequate funding. DNR recently asked the Legislature for funding to make three

badly needed hires: an earthquake hazards geologist, a tsunami hazards geologist, and a GIS information technology specialist. If elected or reelected, would you help ensure DNR gets the funding it is asking for?

Yes.

Do you agree parents should have the right to opt their kids out of state standardized tests like the SBAC?

Yes. The standardized testing industry has built a business out of compelling our teachers and students into spending precious teaching time and education dollars on tests with unclear benefits. The number, frequency and duration of the tests is excessive and takes time away that would be better spent focusing on more appropriate educational opportunities for kids. While tests have a place in assessing student learning, they should not be used to penalize students, teachers or schools. The current testing system only benefits the executives and shareholders of the testing companies.

Washington has historically been a nationwide leader in encouraging teachers to become National Board certified. Do you support continuing to pay bonuses to teachers who undergo the certification process?

Yes.

Are you cognizant of -- and how do you plan on addressing -- the inequitable incarceration of minorities?

Incarceration ruins lives and should be a last resort. The fact that we disproportionately incarcerate people of color, people with disabilities, LGBTQ people and poor people – groups already at a disadvantage in our society – reflects how badly broken our justice system is.

In my capacity as co-chair of the Social Justice Committee of the League of Women Voters Seattle-King County, I have studied the detention facilities in the new Children and Family Justice Center and volunteered at the existing facility. The fact that 75% of the kids detained are kids of color, which is so disproportionate to our population, is wrong. Numerous issues impact this -- higher poverty, generational trauma, disparities in school discipline, unfair policing. Each factor requires different approaches at each level of government. A state level approach to decrease inequitable school discipline is to provide funding and guidelines to ensure that we have a diverse teaching and administrative staff that reflects the student population of our schools.

I support policy changes that increase police accountability, decriminalize poverty and reduce the financial burden of interacting with our criminal justice system.

What important state and local issues have you worked on (or taken an interest in) that you feel aren't getting enough attention from elected leaders and the media?

While receiving substantial attention, education funding and tax reform need more still until we have met our constitutional obligation with new, progressive revenues.

Juvenile justice reform, particularly in terms of the Becca Bill, needs immediate attention as it is negatively impacting kids across the state who need social supports not incarceration.

Affordable housing is at crisis levels in our communities. Low-income affordable housing is still vastly underfunded, and clearly, HUD will not be helping. With \$300 million of good projects in the pipeline and an expected \$100 million in State Housing Trust Fund for the next biennium, we will still fall far short of the need in King County. I would be a strong voice for additional capital funds for building low-income buildings, especially for families and our neighbors with mental health challenges who are living on the streets. Affordable homeownership is a separate challenge and I support a task force to rewrite the condo liability law and encourage this missing rung of entry-level homeownership.

I affirm that all the information provided in response to this questionnaire is true, complete and correct, to the best of my ability, and that no relevant matter has been omitted.

Signature

(insert scanned signature or sign electronically)

Printed Name

Melissa Taylor

Date: June 7, 2017