

Welcome

Dear Fellow 34th District Democrats,

When I heard about Erik Poulsen's decision to leave the State Senate it was quite a surprise for me. He has served the 34th District well and I have enjoyed working with Erik for over a decade on the environment, transportation and many other issues.

Erik's decision has created an interesting time for the 34th District as our precinct committee officers (PCOs) debate on future representation for our district. As I announced at the October meeting, I want to serve the 34th Legislative District in the Washington State House of Representatives. I have asked the PCOs for their consideration and hope to have the opportunity to meet individually with each of them during the upcoming weeks.

If I am granted the honor of the House appointment, I will work every day to serve the interests of all the communities of the 34th District. We have a diverse district that includes Burien, White Center, West Seattle, and Vashon and Maury Islands. Each of our communities has its unique issues. Yet, as Democrats, we share so many common interests, including improved transportation, protections for the environment, universal health care, and the best possible education for our children and grandchildren.

If you have questions, concerns, or issues you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Take care,

Sharon K. Nelson

COMMUNITY MATTERS MOST

Education

As a mother of two grown daughters, I am committed to making our state's public education system one of the best in the United States. It is the State's paramount duty to educate our children. Their future and our economic future depend upon investing in our public schools. I support reducing class sizes, investing in state-of-the-art vocational programs, early assessments for whether our elementary students have basic reading, writing and math skills, and improving the access our children have to higher education.

This past session we added 2,000 slots in early childhood programs, added \$60 million to school districts which have high enrollments of special needs students and funded 9,700 more slots in our universities and community colleges. However, we still rank 46th out of 50 states in our investment in schools.

We must do better and if I am in Olympia as the State Representative for the 34th District I will fight for additional investment in education.

Transportation

We must invest in transit and roads now. Every community in the 34th District is impacted by traffic congestion and the lack of sufficient transit alternatives. I have worked hard in my current role to protect and expand the West Seattle Water Taxi, but that is not a permanent solution to our unique mobility needs. The Regional Transit Investment Package and Sound Transit package are not perfect. However, they do provide funds for extending SR509, the Lander Street overpass, the Spokane Street offramp, and funding to study light rail options in the future to West Seattle and Burien. I believe we cannot delay further in investing in our transit and roads infrastructure.

As we continue to debate the future of the viaduct, I will be asking our State, County, City and local leaders to sit down and to develop a plan together. Before another significant earthquake rocks this region, we must work together to provide solutions – not just for the viaduct but for those communities and commuters affected by the replacement project. Waterborne transit, dedicated bus lanes, and more transit should be part of that discussion and it is what our communities want. Let's work together as Democrats to move this State forward!

The Environment

Ten years ago I organized my neighbors and founded an organization to protect Puget Sound from an multinational mining operation. I am passionate about protecting our water, air, and forests. With global warming, the listing of our beloved orcas as an endangered species, and with the information we have today about the condition of Puget Sound, we must take a stronger stand for the environment. Last year a simple bill run by

Senator Poulsen, which would have made sure our aquatic reserve program protects versus damages valuable tidelands, failed to pass the House..

The environmental community today is “allowed” four bills per year. This certainly encourages environmental organizations to collaborate on their priorities, however, it also provides an opportunity for environmental leaders in the House and Senate to fight for more environmental legislation rather than limit such valuable work. It is time for a change and with Erik Poulsen leaving the Senate, I will step in to champion environmental causes and will be a strong and persistent voice.

Public Financing of Campaigns

If I am privileged to serve in the House of Representatives, I will work to pass legislation which requires public financing of campaigns at all levels of government in our state. I firmly believe that this is critical to our democratic process and that it will provide opportunities for new citizens to enter the political arena. When special interests and well-connected political players fill campaign coffers, elected officials are less independent. It is time for public campaign financing.

Annexation

The Growth Management Act has placed White Center in a situation where the community must decide whether they will annex to Burien, Seattle or attempt to stay as part of King County. This has been a difficult situation not just for White Center, but for Burien and the City of Seattle.

As the annexation debate is being driven by the State’s Growth Management Act, I will pursue providing funding to assist whichever jurisdiction is selected to annex the unincorporated areas of White Center. The state created the mandate to annex and, therefore, needs to assist impacted citizens and cities.

More about Sharon's Background

- **Environmental Leader**
- **Advocate for Consumer Protection**
- **Experienced in Finance and Public Policy**
- **A Strong Voice for the 34th District**

Sharon Nelson has been involved in her community and in working for citizens in the 34th Legislative District for over a decade. She is a proven leader in efforts to protect and restore Puget Sound, and at the County Council she has fought to improve our quality of life, protect open space, and provide funding for projects which help homeless and low income citizens.

For the past five years, Sharon has worked on a broad range of public policy, including complex land use legislation, Working on the County's \$4 billion budget, she has advocated to improve public safety, invest in transit, protect the environment, and provide funding for important 34th District projects such as the West Seattle Food Bank, the Southwest Boys & Girls Club in White Center, the Environmental Science Center in Burien, and the Vashon-Maury Island Youth and Family Services and Senior Center. Sharon understands our communities' needs and, in Olympia, will be a strong voice for the 34th District.

Sharon is also the founding president of Preserve Our Islands, a group that has led the fight against Glacier Northwest's effort to expand a massive mine on Maury Island. Under her leadership the Maury Island Aquatic Reserve was established by Commissioner of Public Lands Jennifer Belcher – protecting valuable shorelines on Vashon and Maury Islands. Due to Sharon's leadership, People for Puget Sound and Washington Environmental Council joined in the efforts to stop the Maury Island gravel mine.

Sharon grew up as a "military brat". Her father was a Chief Yeoman in the Navy and was stationed primarily at Pearl Harbor. Sharon's first lesson in politics was a heated debate at the dinner table with her father supporting John Kennedy and her mother supporting Richard Nixon. Today, like Sharon, her mother is a Democrat.

In 1973 Sharon graduated from Whitman College with a B.A. in Psychology. Even with having worked summers and throughout the school year, Sharon graduated summa cum laude. She knows how important work study and scholarship programs are to our college students. Sharon strongly believes that our state's future depends upon our investment in education.

From 1973 to 1984, Sharon was employed in the world of finance. From her original job as a night data entry clerk, she worked her way up to become a Vice-President at Seafirst Bank. She was with Seafirst when the bank's energy portfolio brought the bank to the

brink of collapse. Senior managers who approved the disastrous loan policies were rewarded with golden parachutes -- while the average laid-off worker left hoping to find another job. Sharon hasn't forgotten this "corporate lesson".

On January 1, 1984, Sharon married John Nelson and in September of that year their first daughter, Amy, was born. Lyssa Ann joined her older sister three years later. For the next ten years Sharon focused on her children and community service. She knows the value of community and family.

In 1995 Sharon and John built a home on Maury Island and nine months later their front yard was soaked in sewage from an improperly designed septic system. Frustrated by the lack of accountability, Sharon decided to "fix the law" and joined a state committee examining the septic industry. In 1997, due to her work as a consumer protection advocate, new State legislation was enacted to protect future consumers.

This past year, Sharon spent the Legislative session in Olympia working hand in hand with Senator Erik Poulsen on a law that would have stopped the gravel mine and protected Maury Island. She saw, during the session, that our super majority of Democrats were not always progressive on the Maury Island issue and other issues.

Today, Sharon seeks to return to Olympia as the State Representative for our District. Her core values are those of the 34th District Democrat's Platform which she pledges to promote if she serves in the State House of Representatives:

- ✓ Economic justice for America's working families.
- ✓ Education is the paramount duty of the State and we must invest in our schools.
- ✓ We must have a commitment to civil, equal and human rights.
- ✓ Health care should be available to every citizen.
- ✓ Protection and restoration of our environment is critical to our future.
- ✓ Each citizen has a right to privacy and individual freedom.
- ✓ Our foreign policies must reflect the values of the American people not an administration.
- ✓ A progressive tax system must be instituted by our state and the federal government.
- ✓ Elections must be open and honest and public financing is critical to our democracy.