

King County Democrats

2017 Candidate Questionnaire

Municipal Level

Candidate Name	Charlene Strong	
Position Sought	Seattle City Council Position 8	
Home Legislative District		
Are you a Democrat? Are you known as a Democrat?	Yes	
Campaign Name	Elect Charlene Strong	
Campaign Contact Information	Mailing address: PO Box 9100, Seattle WA 98109	Phone: 206-819-9626 Fax:
	Website: electcharlenestrong.org Email: info@electcharlenestrong.com Twitter: @ Facebook:	
Campaign manager or point of contact	Jason Bennett, Jason@argostrategies.com	
Consultant(s)	Raven McShane, Fundraising Consultant	

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.

(Resume attached)

I lost my first wife to a horrific flood in 2006 in Seattle. My spouse's death would have seemed awful enough, however the laws in our state did not provide legal recognition of our 10 year relationship. I testified one month after her passing and as a result, laws were changed in Washington to provide families much needed legal protections through the state domestic partnership registry. I have spent the last 10 years traveling, speaking and educating about the collateral damage of inequality. In 2008 I was appointed by Governor Gregoire and re-appointed by Governor Inslee to the Washington State Human Rights Commission. I am currently a small business owner with my wife and I have more than 20 years of experience in business management. My steadfast belief in equality is at the core of my work and outreach, and is the guiding principle that not only restored my life, but continues to be my mission as a Commissioner, mother and business owner.

Describe your history of involvement in Washington state politics. What offices have you previously sought election or appointment to? What campaigns have you worked on?

In 2008 I was appointed to the Washington State Human Rights Commission and was reappointed by Governor Inslee and am currently chair of the commission. This is the first time I have sought election for public office.

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

As a progressive, the election of Donald Trump as President was a motivation and a revelation. I am a long time Seattle resident and it became abundantly clear to me that we do live in a bubble of progressiveness. I believe that as a city and state we need to be sure that we are including all voices, especially constituents that feel unheard, disconnected, or underrepresented. It is when we listen to those we may not agree with that we learn best how to legislate and represent. My top priorities that I am seeking to address with my campaign are homelessness, affordability, and advocating for small businesses. As a mother it pains me deeply to see that anyone in our city cannot find adequate shelter and relief.

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

I was recently endorsed by the National Women's Political Caucus. I am planning to ask for as many third party endorsements as possible to demonstrate my wide range of support and recognition.

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

We are in the midst of mapping out our grassroots voter contact plan and will be launching that in May. I have been featured in articles from the Seattle Times, KIRO Seattle, Capitol Hill Blog and Ville Magazine. Our primary budget goal is \$150,000, our general election goal is \$200,000 and we have raised \$24,865 to date.

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?

No.

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 any of the above, please explain your answer:

Part II – Local and State Issues

#	Question	Yes	No	Qualify your response
1	Do you support 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		When the Supreme Court ruled in Citizens United v. FEC in 2010, the floodgates were opened for unprecedented amounts of dark money flowing into elections. Amending the U.S. Constitution to lessen the influence of money in politics would put a halt to the corporations dominating the conversation with their money and corrupting the political process.
2	Do you support the right of public workers, excluding military, to bargain and strike?	x		
3	Do you support increasing the minimum wage in your jurisdiction to \$15/hr or higher?	x		I support a minimum wage of \$15 per hour. The cost of living in this city is increasing in ways that are straining budgets and it appears there is no relief in site. I strongly believe that education is paramount for employees, and with the help of the Seattle Office of Civil Rights it would be possible to implement an educational program to make sure workers are fully informed of their rights to help ensure their employer's compliance with the higher wage.
4	Do you support legislation at the local and state level to require equal pay for women and people of color?	x		No longer can our city and state ignore pay inequity. I will work to see that all companies provide transparency in income and hiring practices so that women will be afforded the same pay for equal work. Along with companies, I propose we work on publishing the salaries of city employees. This transparency within the City of Seattle will shed further light on the inequity of pay. It is crucial that we ensure that women are truly equal in their careers and I would plan on following up on the initial Workforce Pay Equity and Utilization Study to track improvements in the Seattle Police Department, Seattle Fire Department, and Seattle Light. Women clearly need more representation in these higher-wage positions in our city and I plan to make sure that is not forgotten. I would also strive to work with the Seattle Office for Civil Rights to craft legislation to pass ordinances in the city to truly bring pay equity to our city.
5	Are you willing to undergo and ask your staff and peers to undergo training to understand and combat institutional racism and implicit bias?	x		Equality is always at the forefront of my mind and I will always be a proponent for participating in and advocating for anything that will help educate and improve equality in our institutions and community. While implicit bias is not as obvious as institutional racism, it is out there and I believe recognizing that simple fact and having an open dialogue is imperative to fight against it.
6	Do you support raising revenue at the city level to expand transit service?	x		Yes, however I would want to be very sure of how the money is being allocated and what metrics and measures will be implemented to track how the money is being spent with the intent to manage contractor delays and overages and costly law suits.

7	Do you support development impact fees to pay for schools, roads, and parks, as allowed under the Growth Management Act?	x		
8	Do you support building a municipally owned and operated broadband system in your city?	x		Yes, if the goal is to provide “affordable” services for all communities.
9	Do you agree that municipal government should use its borrowing capacity to fund additional units of affordable housing?			I would like to look more deeply at how we are currently funding our housing and homeless issue in our city so that we can figure out how to best provide relief for families. I would not be opposed, but I would like to ensure that we can allocate the funds appropriately.
10	Do you support protecting what is left of our urban tree canopy with strong tree ordinances that require property owners to consult with city government prior to cutting down trees?	x		Yes, we absolutely need to protect what is left of our urban tree canopy. Cutting down trees to improve someone’s view is simply not a reason to cut down a tree in my opinion. We need to take bigger strides to protect our environment and the trees that make up that environment.
11	Do you support infrastructure to make it easier to walk and bike on your city’s streets?	x		This is a public safety issue and I believe that every neighborhood needs sidewalks with curb cuts.
12	Do you support allowing coal or oil to be exported from Washington State’s ports?		x	
13	Do you support requiring police officers in your jurisdiction to wear body cameras?	x		I believe that if we want accountability and responsibility of our officers the cameras can provide a level of accountability that we currently do not have.
14	Do you support repealing Tim Eyman’s I-747, which artificially limits property tax increases to 1% per year, regardless of population growth, inflation, and need?	x		I am not a fan of this mans politics and will always stand against his initiatives.
15	Once elected, will you work to get diverse candidates elected to office?	x		Seattle’s diversity is what makes this city such a vibrant and dynamic place to live. We need to have people in office that are representative of our diversified population. When more voices are properly represented, we are able to solve problems that matter to our constituents.
16	Do you support women's right to reproductive freedom?	x		
17	Do you support all municipalities in King County implementing a “Ban the Box” program as is already in place in Seattle and Spokane?	x		

18	Will you form a task force to gather input from disabled persons to identify and remedy hazards for pedestrians, and will you work to have these suggestions implemented?	x		
19	Do you support "Gender Neutral" bathrooms throughout the city?	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 have read over the platform and DO NOT disagree with any of the KC Democratic Platform issues.

As an elected leader, what will you do to promote increased awareness of the climate crisis, and what public policy would you endorse to reduce emissions and penalize producers of pollutants?

I would promote use of solar and wind energy and reduce our reliance on hydroelectric power, oil and gas. That state of our climate is critical and we do not have time to waste. As our city continues to grow I would push for green construction in our permitting process, all with the goal of continuing to push for zero greenhouse gasses. I would also propose that as our cities fleet vehicles are replaced, the city should be converting to full battery operated vehicles.

Describe your vision for tax reform and tax fairness. What changes to the state's tax system would you ask the Legislature to make? If you were in charge of putting together a budget proposal for your city or district, what would it look like? Would you be willing to raise revenue to avoid harmful cuts to public services?

Our state has one of the most regressive tax structures in the nation. We need only look to Oregon on how to do it right. Our state traditionally has been very reluctant to even address an income tax. I do know that as a city we are looking at proposing an income tax. I would want to be very careful that we see how we can find tax relief such as sales and property taxes and business taxes prior to implementation of the income tax. Ideally if it could be done with some expediency and not drag on for years, a state income tax would be ideal. Having our economy rest so heavily on sales taxes (78%) hurts the poorest in our city and state and is vulnerable to fluctuations in the economy which harm public funding to agencies that rely on resources to help the most in need. Raising the sales tax rate again to fund homelessness is hurting the very people we are intending to help. We are facing a budget shortfall in 2018 and this seems ludicrous considering how prosperous our city is. Before I can give a proposal for our cities budget, I would need to look at what agencies and programs the city funds, what can be done to streamline services, and what is the best practice to mitigate cuts to social services that many rely upon in our city. I would not be opposed to raising revenue, if necessary.

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?

In a city that is growing as rapidly and as diverse as Seattle, there are indeed issues that are still pressing that need to be addressed with stronger outcomes and relief. Some issues that I believe could receive more attention are homelessness, affordability, regressive taxation, public safety, transportation, and emergency preparedness.

What would you do to address social justice issues?

I am the currently the chair of the Washington State Human Rights Commission. As a commissioner I took it upon myself to insure that the rules pertaining to sexual orientation as a protected class under RCW 49.60 were established and implemented. It is and will always be my life's mission to uphold not only laws that support equity and it is without a doubt my dedicated belief that the rights of the most vulnerable must be at the forefront of my work as an elected official.

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

Charlene Strong

Date: 4/11/17