

2016 Candidate Questionnaire

SECTION I

BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot

First Name	Middle Initial or Nickname	Last Name
Scott		Forbes

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

State Representative, 43rd Legislative District, Position 1

3. Are you the incumbent? Yes No

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

About 10 years

5. How long have you resided in King County?

About 10 years

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

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

CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name: Friends of Scott Forbes

Address: P.O. Box 20825

City/State/Zip: Seattle, WA 98112

Campaign Phone: 206-369-0284

Campaign E-mail: info@forbesforseattle.com

Campaign Website: forbesforseattle.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)
43rd District Democrats	Elective	2008-present	Chair (2011-2015) Vice-Chair for Recruiting (2010) Precinct Committee Officer (2008-present)
Montlake Community Council	Elective	2010-2013	Board Member
Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois	Elective	1990-1991	Student Member of the Board

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 believe that, over the past few decades, the Republican Party has devolved from a party of limited government to an extremist right-wing movement that now routinely threatens to destroy our economy, shut down our government, enact policies to enrich the already wealthy at the expense of the poor and the middle class, and increasingly is openly racist and sexist. This is playing out dramatically in this year's presidential race but has been happening all along at the state level, including in our state legislature.

In response I've been working for years to build up the Democratic Party, and to make it a more effective organization. As Chair of the 43rd District Democrats I turned my district into the best-run and most effective local party organization in the state, and worked hand-in-hand with unions, campaigns, candidates, and elected officials to raise the minimum wage, enact marriage equality, pass drug law reform and gun safety initiatives, and work on issues ranging from education to affordable housing to transit. I'm running for the state legislature to continue that work at the next level, and to be an *effective* champion for progressive issues. Any candidate in this race can go to Olympia, make passionate speeches, write beautiful bills that die in the State Senate, and not really make a meaningful difference when it comes to actually getting things done. I've demonstrated that I can do more, and am running to achieve better coordination between our elected officials, our party leaders, and the activists who write progressive ballot initiatives.

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

I think my most important personal traits, as they relate to being a State Representative, are my abilities to work well with others, communicate effectively and persuasively, and plan for the long term. Politics is a group activity, and a legislator who burns bridges and alienates potential allies isn't going to be effective no matter how passionate and progressive they may be. An effective legislator also needs to be able to lay the groundwork for enacting progressive policies: too often progressives think that having the "right" policy is enough, and if voters aren't convinced by facts then there must be something the matter with Kansas. On policies like passing a progressive state income tax and "housing first", we need elected officials who can persuade and change minds, rather than just getting buy-in from people who are already on your side. Politics is also about more than just winning one election or achieving one goal: it's about building organizations and coalitions that last, and about working toward goals that will take more than one election cycle to reach. I both understand that and live that in my service. In my professional and volunteer work I've demonstrated that I have the personal traits of an effective state legislator, and I look forward to putting those abilities to use in Olympia.

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.

The achievement of which I'm proudest, in my career and in my volunteer activities, is that the organizations I've led have continued to thrive even after I've handed them off to the next leader. It's easy to fall into the trap of co-dependency between organizer and organization, and having a good succession plan is a critical part of building a sustainable movement. Democrats Abroad Australia is now in its 12th year since I co-founded it, the 43rd District Democrats continued thriving after I stepped down as Chair, and professionally I can consistently point to teams I managed that I left in stronger shape than when I arrived.

I'm also proud of the work I've done to contribute to the successes of others. There are plenty of people out there who can only be effective if they're in charge, or if they're the one getting the credit—which is not the most desirable quality to have in a legislator. As a volunteer and even as Chair of the 43rd Democrats, I worked quietly behind the scenes as needed and gave others credit for events and volunteer activities. For example, during the campaign to enact Referendum 74 and pass marriage equality in our state, the 43rd Dems worked with Washington United for Marriage to organize a voter registration drive in our district. As we were planning, though, it became apparent that WUM didn't want the Democratic Party associated with the event, because they wanted to present themselves as bipartisan. So at my direction we became a "silent" co-host, and quietly supplied organizers, volunteers, and invited members to attend, because we cared more about the outcome of registering voters than we cared about whose name was on the event. I also contributed to the successes of other volunteers by setting clear direction and encouraging them to lead and show initiative. My paramount concern is effectiveness.

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 years I've been working to build a better Democratic Party from the ground up, and I've acquired the skills to lead and organize Democrats to work together effectively. I lived overseas from 2000 to 2005, and in 2003-04 was the chair of Dean for America's efforts to get Americans living in Australia to register and vote absentee for Howard Dean in the U.S. primaries. Under my leadership the Dean campaign in Australia became larger than the Democratic Party itself, which had been struggling for years to establish a branch of Democrats Abroad in Australia. So, when the Dean campaign folded its tent, I led DFA-Australia members to change hats and become founding members and officers of Democrats Abroad Australia. DA-Australia is now in its twelfth year of registering expat Americans to vote and making sure that our votes are counted no matter where they are mailed from.

In 2007 I began volunteering with Seattle's 43rd District Democrats, and quickly rose through the ranks to become Chair in 2011. As an organization, the 43rd District Democrats had been struggling since 2006, when a six-way race for an open State House seat divided the membership and caused the departure of several key volunteers. As Chair I recruited new volunteers into leadership roles, united the various factions of the party, set clear goals for recruiting and fundraising, and built up the 43rd LD's Democratic Party infrastructure into a powerhouse. Under my leadership the 43rd District Democrats drove up turnout in the state's bluest legislative district and worked hand-in-hand with great progressive organizations like Washington United for Marriage, Washington Alliance for Gun Responsibility, New Approach Washington, and others to enact marriage equality, gun safety laws, drug law reform, and to elect great candidates into offices from the Seattle School Board to the White House.

I also went back to school and earned a law degree from the University of Washington in 2014, after spending several years in the corporate world and rising from software developer to executive to co-founder of a startup. I've acquired technical, leadership, and legal skills through my education and my work experience, and these skills will further contribute to my effectiveness as a state legislator.

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

My most important duty will be to break through the gridlock in Olympia and get legislation passed that makes a real difference in the lives of my constituents. People are frustrated with a legislature that can crank out billions in tax breaks for Boeing in a weekend, but has failed for years to adequately fund public education, transit, affordable housing, and other critical Seattle needs. As a legislator, I'll be working to clear the roadblocks and get legislators working together more effectively.

As a State Representative, I have the duty to listen to my constituents and learn about their issues. No one can be a subject matter expert on every issue that comes before the legislature, so it's essential that I reach out to those with first-hand knowledge and learn from their experiences. This is a vitally important duty on issues ranging from social justice to tax policy to the environment to urban planning, and there is nothing more frustrating than an elected official who just doesn't listen and relies only on their own expertise.

As a representative of the most progressive district in the state, my duty is to be a champion for progressive causes and to build up momentum and support for them. Anyone can go to Olympia and make passionate speeches, or write beautiful bills that die in the Senate: what we need is someone who can whip votes for progressive legislation and lay the groundwork for moving the entire legislature to the left.