

## **Zack Hudgins – State Representative District 11, Position 1**

### **Why are you running for office?**

It is an amazing honor and privilege to serve as a State Legislator. It is a great job, and part of that means it is incredibly frustrating and unsatisfying at times. I try to channel that frustration into a stronger motivation to be a model of behavior for my peers, and to push harder for the problems I am trying to solve.

I am running for my 8<sup>th</sup> term as a State Representative because our state is facing a constitutional crisis that has been brewing for 30 years. The State Supreme Court has said the state is underfunding education and has retained jurisdiction over the McCleary case while holding the state in contempt. *I want to take my 14 years of experience, my knowledge of the process, my understanding of the complexities of state government, my record of accomplishment, and apply it to the problems we are facing.* I believe our state will need people who are committed to finding solutions that benefit us all in these difficult times.

I also would like to finish some of the work that has been hung up in the State Senate. I have three bills that made it out of the House with nearly unanimous support that didn't get off the Senate Floor Calendar. Bills that would benefit small businesses, that would strengthen our cyber security position, need just a little push. I also have some complex problems that need solving with feeding hungry children and reforming our criminal justice system with new evidence and big data models. There are many problems that need to be solved, and I think I can help solve them.

### **Describe your most important personal characteristics or traits as they relate to the office you seek?**

I am honest and straight with the people I work with. I try not to take the work too personally – while still caring passionately about the issues and process. I hope I am reliable and predictable without being too political. I try to be the model I would like to see others emulate. It helps me deal with the frustrations that are part of why this is such a great job. Collectively we are able to overcome obstacles to find agreed to solutions to common problems.

I feel an obligation to be able to explain my position to anyone who asks. I take the transparency of our government very seriously.

### **Please describe one to three accomplishments or contributions of which you are most proud.**

I am proud of a number of accomplishments.

Personally, I am proud of my almost five year old son, who seems to have inherited the best of his mother and I. He already amazes us both on a regular basis, with his insights, interest and humor. He is literally and figuratively why I want Washington to be a better place for him, and his entire cohort.

Professionally, I am proud of passing legislation each session I have been in office. And being able to run legislation at three different levels simultaneously. I believe there are the kinds of bills we should all agree to, there are bills that we might fight over, and there are bills that we will fight over. I have consistently introduced bills in each category or level and been successful at bringing people along, and not upsetting

opponents so much as to have it bleed onto other legislation. When a Republican says my bill looks like a Republican bill, and asks what my angle is – I am happy we have common ground on solving a problem. I have become a national leader on cyber security legislation. I was recently asked to join the National Conference of State Legislatures Task Force on Cyber Security based on my work here in Washington State. I would not have been successful, if I had not been able to work with and listen to many of my colleagues from across the aisle. I would not have been able to pass the Dream Act after 7 years if I was not willing to compromise with Republicans in the Senate.

I am also professionally proud that I can point to getting a lot done, without the grandstanding or bill dropping. I have found a phone call and a little education on a problem we are facing can help solve the issue. All state contracts are now online and searchable because I worked with the Department of Enterprise Services to help them understand how important it was to a number of us legislators. And then I offered that model up to two of my Republican colleagues who were looking for a way of cataloging state interactions and memorandums of understanding with local government and federal agencies that they found hard to track. I have developed a bit of a niche on issues within state government that aren't that sexy, but are very important. I know the legislative process well.

Publically, I am proud of my service to my community. I am able to showcase our state and our district through my work with organizations like the National Democratic Institute, the US State Department, or the American Council of Young Political Leaders who reach out to developing democracies around the globe and highlight what we are doing here. I am proud that the most diverse school district and zip code in the nation has given me the honor to represent them in Olympia for seven terms.

**Please list or describe current or past activities in the community in which you have acquired skills that relate to the office you seek.**

I have been involved in public service for decades. From being a neighborhood volunteer, to working with the United Way of King County and Highline Community College to hosting international delegations and serving as a legislator, I try to bring a little bit of each of my experiences to the job. In my role as a legislator I am out in the community regularly learning about challenges that face individuals and organizations. I am reminded each day I don't know as much as I would like, and that listening and learning is probably the mostly important ability in a legislator.

I was on the founding board and then was elected twice to the Board for the Puget Sound VA Fisher House (which serves veteran's families while they are in the VA). This experience and also as a board member for the Domestic Abuse Women's Network is where I first learned about non-profit budgets, that I now apply as Chair of a government oversight committee that deals with 68 agencies, and all IT projects in the state (roughly \$5 billion of general fund tax dollars). It helps me understand some of the implications of my work as a member of the House Appropriations Committee that makes decisions in the biennial budget of almost \$40 billion. As a graduation speaker, I meet parents and students who can inform my work on things like the Dream Act, or conditional scholarships. As an employee of Amazon.com and Microsoft I worked in the High Technology industry and now I bring that experience of managing people, and projects to state government where I have served on the Technology committee, the Technology

Services Board (which oversees all of the Executive branch IT), the IT projects Task Force (which oversees IT projects in development), and the LegTech Board (which oversees all Technology in the Legislative Branch). As a supporter of the Arts, I was able to bring that perspective to the State Arts Commission. Coming from a military family, and having volunteered to go to Iraq in 2004 to help them with their first elections, I brought a unique insight to the Joint Military and Veterans Affairs Committee.

I got married while in office and have a son that will start school next fall. The involvement from day care, to doctors, and soccer to swimming lessons give me the same experience as many of my constituents. It makes the education debates we have in Olympia hit much closer to home.

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

Being a State Representative has a number of duties. Among the top duties are being honest, being open to ideas, listening, learning, being willing to compromise, being present, and working to bridge differences while staying focused on solving problems.

I think you need to be present at committee meetings, and on the Floor of the House for debates and votes. I have only missed a handful of votes over the last 14 years. As a former Assistant Majority Floor Leader and Majority Floor Leader I developed a habit of listening to the Floor debates closer than many members. I can tell you who speaks well, and who makes legitimate points on the legislation being debated, and I can tell you who is full of hot air. Through this listening, I learned what was important to many members of the House. It allowed me to find the narrow ground of agreement needed on many of the issues I care about.

You need to be at the job so that you can constantly learn about the operation of state government and the problems we try to solve in the public and private sectors. Our state and economy is incredibly complex and even if you know and understand one piece of it, there is always more to learn. I think this is the most important duty – we all must try to solve problems that are brought to us. The process doesn't guarantee an outcome, it is set up as a safe space to work out issues – so our goal should be to do our best to solve problems.

In order to fulfill these duties, you need to listen to people who are trying to help you make decisions, staff, constituents, community leaders, and your opposition. Then you need to actually learn from them all. It is a duty of the job, I believe, to learn from the people in Olympia and in the district. There is no way any one person can fully represent 140,000 people – or know every detail of every complex problem we face. As elected representatives we should try. Listening and learning is a duty of the job.

Another duty is a willingness to compromise, and to reach out across the partisan divide to find agreement. This is something I have seen get harder and harder during my time in the legislature. But, I have been successful in many ways. As the ranking member of the Environmental Health Committee I was the only Democrat to serve a Republican Chair while Democrats held the majority. With Republican support I passed bills out on the Joint Administrative Rules and Review Committee, on Cyber Security, on Election accountability, while also pushing partisan bills. It was my duty to find support

for solutions where I could outside my caucus, and I did that through listening, learning, and building relationships based on trust knowledge and understanding.

I believe that if you fulfill these duties you can be successful at solving problems and helping the people that sent you to Olympia.