

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
Wesley		Irwin

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

Washington State House, position 2, District 32

3. Are you the incumbent? Yes No

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

7 months

5. How long have you resided in King County?

Since my birth in 1980

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

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

CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name: Wesley Irwin For State House

Address: PO Box 1811

City/State/Zip: Edmonds/WA/98020-1811

Campaign Phone: 206-819-3062

Campaign E-mail: wesley@wesleyirwinforstatehouse.com

Campaign Website: www.wesleyirwinforstatehouse.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)
Board- ESP Vision (Educators, Students, and Parents for a Better Vision of Seattle Public Schools)	Appointive	2008-2009	Chair of Outreach
Precinct Committee Officer	Elected	2004-2016	PCO for the 46 th and then for the 32 nd LD Dems.

2. If you ran for public office but were not elected, please list those races below:

Office Title	Year of Run
N/A	

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?
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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.)

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

I feel like my most important characteristics for the office of State Rep. are intelligence, empathy, and humility.

I am a product of both public and private education in Seattle schools. I earned a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology and a Master's in Education from Seattle University, graduating at the top of my class. I am a proud member of Alpha Sigma Nu, the National Jesuit Honors Society, as well as a recipient of the Howard Peronteau Award for Sociology and a recipient of the Warylou Wise Scholarship. Most importantly I have stayed curious through my 35 years and I believe that it's important to live a life of constant learning. Education is the key to upward mobility in life, and to sustained happiness, from my perspective. I will continue to be a life-long learner and strive to become better each day I serve in the legislature.

I am a highly empathic person and have taken and co-facilitated classes in Emotional Intelligence through Teams and Leaders at Seattle University. Empathy is lacking in my politicians today from my perspective. I do not see enough representatives asking the question, "How can I help shape society for the good of everyone?" but rather "How can I build my own political career?" This troubles me greatly. I believe strongly that it is important to craft legislation from the standpoint of what is good for society as a whole, what is best for the common good.

I don't have all the answers to the challenges facing us today, but what I do have is a strong desire to learn and the ability to be humble and curious. I am extremely conscious of the fact that as a representative I have the duty of representing the will of the people. That means being a good listener, as well as someone who can synthesize ideas and work hard to shape policy that reflects the views of my constituents. This is what I aim to do in the legislature next year.

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.

I am very proud of the work I did teaching English in South America for two years from 2009-2011. Through the United Nation's funded "English Opens Doors" program I was able to contribute something meaningful to hundreds of rural children in Chile who otherwise would not have had access to a native speaking English teacher. This was a great challenge as I was responsible for teaching an entire school in the town of Perquenco, which lacked resources and was understaffed. I succeeded in building relationships with the students though it was not easy, teaching without heat most of the winter. Five years later the students still asked about me and I am happy to say that the contribution I made there was a lasting one. I was able to communicate a skill to the Chilean children that they will be able to use for the rest of their lives. I will use these same communication skills in the legislature.

I am a strong advocate for children. In 2008-2009 when I was tutoring at my former grade school, T.T. Minor Elementary, the Seattle School Board decided to close down 5 "under performing schools" all of which were in communities of color, with most students receiving free and reduced lunch in those schools. T.T. Minor Elementary was one of them. I felt this was unjust and so I became a Chair of ESP-Vision: Educators, Students, and Parents for a Better Vision of Seattle Public Schools. We held marches, teach-ins, walk-outs, and community meetings. The environment was intense but we held our ground and showed leadership to the children. We showed that we were willing to fight for their best interest and that made me very proud of us all.

I am very proud of my relationship with my partner Julie. We found out on Mother's Day that we are going to be parents and that is one of the most important moments in my life. My love for family is strong and my sense of fighting for a future for all of our children is what drives me.

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.

Education professional:

Pre-school education- 2008-2009

English to ESL students broad- 2009-2011

College Instructor- 2012-2013

Academic Director- 2014-2015

Political Activism:

John Kerry campaign- 2004

Jim Webb campaign- 2006

Chair of ESP Vision for Better Public Schools- 2008-2009

Kshama Sawant campaigns and Fight for \$15- 2012 to present

Lobbyist for AFT (American Federation of Teachers) 2013-2014

Lobbyist for Lifelong Aids Alliance- 2014-2015

Chair of the Bernie Sanders Washington State Caucus Advisory Group and paid Field Organizer

With the Bernie Sanders campaign- 2016

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

The most important duty of mine in office this next session will be making sure that we fully fund public education in Washington State. Since the 2012 McCleary decision the legislature has failed to act in accordance with the state constitution to fully fund public education. To me this is unacceptable. I will fight to fully fund education in our state, and oppose charter schools and for-profit education.

Another important duty will be to get “dark money” out of our political system. For too long politics in America has been corrupted by corporate influence and special interests. I believe that giant corporations should not be allowed to give contributions to candidates, and that we should overturn the Supreme Court’s “Citizen’s United” decision. If that cannot happen nationally, we must continue to fight to bring about this change at the state level in Washington.

I will work hard to establish a fair playing field for small businesses, working families, and the poor. When it comes to economics it makes no sense to me that the legislature gives out more than 600 tax breaks per year, including billions of dollars in corporate welfare. We must roll back tax breaks on corporations immediately in order to fund our basic societal needs.

These are just a few of my duties. I will be an active force for the greater good in the legislature and I welcome your support. Thank you.