

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
Mark	Douglas	Mullet

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

**State Senate – 5<sup>th</sup> District – Issaquah, Snoqualmie, North Bend, Maple Valley, Carnation, Black Diamond**

3. Are you the incumbent?                    X  Yes  No

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

**10 years**

5. How long have you resided in King County?

**Born and Raised in Tukwila. Worked away for twelve years after college and then moved back home.**

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

7. If partisan, please indicate party: Democrat.

**CAMPAIGN CONTACTS**

Campaign Name:                    Elect Mark Mullet

Address:                                2525 NE Park Drive, Suite A

City/State/Zip:                    Issaquah, WA 98029

Campaign Phone:                    425-638-9356

Campaign E-mail:                    Taemin.um16@gmail.com

Campaign Website:                    Electmarkmullet.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)
State Senate	Elected	2012 to present	Ranking member of the Financial Institutions committee, Assistant Whip, Senate ranking member of JLARC (audit committee), Back-up for Senate Democrats on the capital budget
Issaquah City Council	Elected	2009 to end of 2012	Chair of the Utilities committee

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?
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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.)

**I have loved my first four years in the Senate. Even though I have different policy views than many of the Republicans from Eastern Washington, I have found them to be very nice people and I enjoy spending time with them. Even though we have different opinions on how government should work, I honestly feel they are trying to make their own community a better place to live and that is why they are serving.**

**I have also been impressed with the staff in Olympia. The idea that we have a bunch of bumbling bureaucrats running our government is completely divorced from reality. I will leave at 5:00 pm to drive home to see my four daughters and return the next morning to discover that staff has been up until midnight to make sure the language was in proper "bill form" and ready to go.**

**I have found the job in Olympia satisfying on a level I had not experienced during my career in international finance. You are working on real issues that affect real people, and if you do your job well, you can make a positive contribution in the lives of other people.**

**I'm running for office again to continue this positive experience in my life.**

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

- 1) **I am honest.** Every elected official and staff member in Olympia knows that my word and handshake is as good as gold. When I agree with somebody's policy position, I commit to support them on the floor of the Senate. When this commitment leaks out, I often find myself coming under tremendous pressure from those within my own party to switch my vote. I have never once caved to this pressure. I also let people know up front if I will be voting against their bill. I have never taken a floor vote in the Senate that went back on a verbal promise I had made in support or opposition to legislation.
- 2) **I work hard.** Getting projects funded in your district takes a long committed effort. You have to develop and sustain a string of personal relationships with elected officials and staff members in both the Senate and the House. You then have to carve time out of your busy schedule to follow up with people and be aware of the cut-off deadlines for bills to move out of their policy committee. I put in whatever time is necessary to make sure the priority issues for the 5<sup>th</sup> District make it to the finish line.
- 3) **I fit the district.** I never have to pretend to be somebody I'm not. I am fiscally conservative and socially liberal, and openly share that info with everybody in the district. The 5<sup>th</sup> is one of a handful of legislative districts in the State where I could get elected. I would be too conservative for folks in Seattle on fiscal issues, and too liberal for Eastern Washington on social issues. I feel lucky to live in a district where my personal views on government are shared by others.

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.

- 1) **I bring people together.** Landlord and Tenant issues come before my Financial Institutions and Housing committee every session. For the first three years I was in Olympia I watched the Senate pass landlord friendly bills, and the House pass tenant friendly bills, and then both would die in the opposite chamber and nothing would become law.

In the summer of 2015 I brought these two groups together at my pizza restaurant, and we came up with an omnibus bill that had issues for both landlords and tenants. Tenants were given assurances that false evictions would not appear on their credit report. We also put in a policy to make sure more landlords accept portable screening reports (so apartment hunters don't have to pay six credit check fees in one weekend). In return we gave the landlords one extra week to return rental deposits, as the previous 14 days requirement did not give them enough time to complete the work and know the costs that were incurred. We passed this bill in March with support from both landlords and tenants.

I think there was a benefit to me growing up as a middle child with an older and younger brother. I am good at helping groups get along who normally don't like each other.

- 2) **I created the Washington Small Business Retirement Marketplace in 2015.** In 2014 I ran a bill that had the State create a low fee IRA option for small business owners so they could enroll their staff in a personal retirement savings vehicle without the business owner paying the traditional \$1,500 annual fee (I learned of this fee when I tried to set up a retirement program for my staff). This bill failed because some groups were concerned about the government being too involved.

I then worked the entire summer of 2014 to get the financial services industry to create a small

business IRA savings vehicle that removed this \$1,500 annual fee. Any company that creates a payroll deduction IRA product with low fees for the employees and no fees for the business owner is allowed to list them on the Washington Small Business Retirement Marketplace. After failing in 2014, I got this bill to the finish line in 2015 by finding a way to make incremental progress as opposed to no progress. I'm optimistic that removing this \$1,500 annual fee will incentivize more small business owners to offer their staff a retirement savings plan (even though there is no law mandating they offer one).

This public/private solution to our retirement savings crisis has since been endorsed by other States. New Jersey was the first State to copy the language in our Washington bill. The New Jersey Legislature was frustrated when Governor Christie vetoed their bill in January of 2016 that required a state mandated savings plan, but pleased to learn that Governor Christie agreed to support the Washington language that had the State work with the private sector to expand access to retirement savings. Utah is also expected to pass our bill language within the next year.

This highlights one of the things I love about working at the State Government level. You are given the flexibility to come up with creative policy solutions to complicated issues. At the same time, if you come up with something that works, the idea is quickly copied by other states so you end up having a positive impact on the lives of people throughout the country.

- 3) *Healthcare Transparency to lower costs.* My first year in Olympia I ran a bill requiring that all doctors would post their prices so we would all know how much things cost in advance. This bill was opposed by hospitals, doctors, and insurance companies, and it failed.

I then worked the entire summer of 2013 with all three groups on an idea that would work. The end result was a law requiring that every insurance company in Washington would create a web based tool that would enable people to look up pricing in advance based on their personal insurance coverage. It includes both quality and price so you can shop for both. If you are not currently seeing this tool on your own insurance company website, then please call the Office of the Insurance commissioner because it should be there. This bill passed in 2014 with both the doctors and insurance companies supporting the measure.

I learned my first month in Olympia that healthcare and lack of retirement savings were driving up costs for the State. Healthcare eats up the majority of our discretionary budget outside of education. The lack of personal retirement savings makes people reliant on the social safety net. I have focused my energies during my first four years on macro changes that will help lower the cost of running government so we will have more money to investment in education.

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.

- 1) Board of the Issaquah Food and Clothing Bank (2008 to 2013). I joined this Board in 2008, and encountered an organization that was growing rapidly as a result of the worst recession in 80 years. Unfortunately, our Executive Director did not have a skill set to deal with the new demands being put on the Food bank by our local community.

I made the tough decision that the Food Bank needed new leadership if we wanted to fulfill our mission of serving the Issaquah community for those who need the most help. Cori Kauk was recruited from Bellingham to lead the Food Bank and we now have an organization that does lunches for students in the summer (they lose access to free and reduced lunch at school during this time), and has created a "grocery store environment" for people to come in and pick out the food they need to get their family through tough times. These types of changes have doubled the amount of people the Food Bank has been able to serve.

This lesson taught me that if you want to complete the mission of your organization, you often have to make tough decisions that could have a difficult impact on one individual, but a very large positive impact on your community.

- 2) College Scholarship committee for the Issaquah Rotary Club (2008 to 2013). I was one of three Rotary members who would interview high school students to help determine our annual scholarship winners. This experience made me realize that all the talk that today's youth will lead America down a bad path is a bunch of nonsense. Today's youth is amazing, and anybody who thinks they are lazy needs to sit down with our Rotary Scholarship committee and learn about the amazing things that students today are doing with their lives both inside and outside of school.

- 2) Mullet Brother's Scholarship at Foster High School in Tukwila. After moving home in 2006, I partnered with my older and younger brothers to provide a \$5,000 scholarship for a graduate of the high school we all attended in Tukwila.

The past eight years this scholarship has helped connect me with the community where I was born and raised. Tukwila is very different than Issaquah, and this scholarship is a life changing award for many of our winners. It has been a joy to follow these scholarship winners through life. Many of them are the first in their families to ever attend college. We have already seen many scholarship winners graduate from college, find great jobs, and then start to give back to the Tukwila community.

This program has taught me the importance of investing in college education for all residents in Washington. The size of your parent's bank account should not determine whether you earn a four year degree.

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

The number one duty of any State Senator is to listen. Nobody wants to have a Senator who tells them how the world works. Our job is to listen to the voices of our local community, and after listening to those voices, we can find a policy that reflects the concerns of our constituents.

The second duty is to be able to get along with other elected officials in the Legislature, and the staff members from the partisan and non-partisan offices in Olympia. I'm a big believer in the phrase that "you can disagree with someone without being disagreeable". In the Senate cafeteria at lunch I go out of my way to sit at the Republican table and talk about things not related to politics. The more you remind people that we all have children and jobs outside of the Legislature, the more you see and appreciate the things you have in common.

This same theory applies to staff members in Olympia. You have to respect that even though they are not elected officials, they are still devoting their life to making Washington a better place to live by working in public service. Verbal abuse or condescending remarks towards staff does not retain our most talented public servants, they need to know that their hard work is appreciated.

The third most important duty is to stay out of the partisan bickering and name calling you see at the national level. When voters come into my pizza restaurant in Issaquah they feel like kids in a divorced family who are always watching their parents argue. The average voter is tired of the name calling and just wants the two parties to figure out how to get along. At the end of the day, both the Republicans and Democrats have good ideas about how to make government work better, and both parties have bad ideas. My job is to pick the ideas that represent my legislative district, not the ideas that represent my political party.