

## 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
Tana		Senn

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

House of Representatives, 41<sup>st</sup> Legislative District

3. Are you the incumbent?                       Yes                       No

4. How long have you resided in this district/city? 11 years

5. How long have you resided in King County? 16 years

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

7. If partisan, please indicate party: Democrat

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#### CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name:                      Friends of Tana Senn

Address:                                      **PO Box 771**

City/State/Zip:                              **Mercer Island, WA 98040-0771**

Campaign Phone:                              **206-369-1253**

Campaign E-mail:                              [Electtanasenn@gmail.com](mailto:Electtanasenn@gmail.com)

Campaign Website:                              **ElectTanaSenn.org**

#### 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)
<b>State Representative</b>	<b>Both</b>	<b>2014-current</b>	<b>Vice Chair of Early Learning &amp; Human Services</b> <b>Former Vice Chair of Environment</b> <b>Former Vice Chair of General Government &amp; IT</b>
<b>Mercer Island City Council</b>	<b>Both</b>	<b>2012-2015</b>	

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 am running for the state legislature to help make life easier for families. This means ensuring they have jobs and equal pay to support their families; they have reliable transportation options to help get them to work and home to the dinner table; they don't lose sleep at night worrying about gun violence at their children's schools or in their communities; that they can send their kids to college without accumulating crushing debt; and that the public schools in their communities will be fully funded to provide all the needed services and high-quality education that our children need to grow up to be happy, successful citizens.

As I considered my initial run for office, there were numerous reasons not to. However, the challenges and difficulties that I've experienced are nothing compared to the thousands of Washingtonians who struggle to make ends meet and keep a roof over their head, who are struggling with mental illness or abuse, who do not have the education, skills or opportunities they need to make a living wage, or who do not have a family or community of support. I bring their struggles with me to Olympia as motivation and focus.

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

**I am a policy wonk.** As I look at a piece of legislation, I do not see it in a silo of a committee or a field. Instead, I look at various angles and the impact multiple approaches can have on the issue and our citizens. In addition, I believe we should match our policy priorities with our funding priorities. I remember details of bills and policies and recognize the dramatic impact just a few words can make on an issue.

**I am compassionate.** I genuinely identify with the individuals who come to testify or meet with me. I listen to their testimony, making eye contact and often connect with them afterward. I am often thanked for being the legislator they looked at during their testimony because I was paying such close attention. In addition, I want to help individuals and families in our state have a better life. I recognize that many factors can impact where someone is in life and regardless of what they are, we can help give them a leg up.

**I am energetic and diligent.** I love my job. I like talking with people, attending community events, volunteering to serve on various committees and taskforces, connecting on social media, reading a dozen newspapers a week to keep up with local and business news, running lots of bills, etc. I am often sought out to lead on an issue, a committee, a coalition, and the like, in part, because I get results.

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.

My biggest accomplishments in the legislature to date include promoting equal pay and social emotional learning.

- I introduced the **Equal Pay Opportunity Act** in 2015. Despite being in only my first full term and having just introduced the bill, I quickly built momentum and support such that it passed the House with bi-partisan support. It was a surprise to many that the bill received such quick traction, but the issue is critical, and I worked it. During the interim last year, I worked with business, labor, women's advocates and others to negotiate a compromise bill that would make it to the Governor's desk. Again we passed the bill out of the House, with greater bi-partisan support and received a hearing and a vote in the Senate. While the bill did not pass, we made great progress, built a strong coalition, generated support, publicity and momentum and inspired women across the state. I continue to speak on the issue as a keynoter, panelist and Representative and look forward to getting this important bill passed.
- **Social emotional learning** was a virtually unknown term three years ago. While the concept of school counseling may be familiar, SEL provides the skills to all children to self-regulate, develop healthy relationships, identify their emotions, build resiliency and more. As a legislator, I have worked to spread the message of how important SEL is for a strong foundation of mental health. We established a workgroup that is currently developing benchmarks for SEL in grades K-12. This year, I am proud to be serving on the Children's Mental Health workgroup that we established, which is looking at barriers in and opportunities to provide mental health to children through the health care delivery system and through schools. Next steps include how to ensure SEL is taught in all schools across our state. One of my favorite quotes was from a conservative parent who joined me in advocating for SEL in schools: "Parents should send their kids to school ready to learn," he explained. "But sometimes, life happens."

The other event of which I am the most proud is helping the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle, and the victims of a hate crime there, through the immediate issues of the shooting and the longer-term recovery. Within hours of the shooting there in 2006, I stepped in as a member of the four-person team of volunteers to help address what laid ahead. With a CEO vacancy and the communications director as one of the victims, I dealt with the press, outreach and updates to the Jewish community and other important issues as they arose. Their annual fundraising dinner was just weeks away and I reworked the event to reflect the necessary tone given the situation and to bring the community together in healing. Over the next four years, I continued working closely with the organization and the victims, helping see them through two murder trials. Given the life-changing event for so many, I am pleased I was able to lend my talents and compassion at a time of great need.

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.

State Representative, 2013-2016  
State Building Code Council, Member, 2015-2016  
Mercer Island City Councilmember, 2012-2015  
Sound Cities Association, Public Issues Committee Member, 2012-2013  
Mercer Island Youth and Family Services Foundation, Board Member, 2011  
PTA Legislative Representative for Island Park Elementary School, 2010-2012  
Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle, Board Member & Communications Director, 2004-2011  
Pyramid Communications, Consultant for nonprofits and foundations, 2000-2008  
Volunteer Campaign Manager, Debbie Bertlin for Mercer Island City Council, 2011  
Boy Scout Leader, 2010-2013  
Art Docent, Island Park Elementary, 2007-2011  
Campaign volunteer: school bond campaigns, fire station campaign, etc, Ongoing  
Hadassah, National American Affairs Domestic Policy Director, 1996-2000  
National Breast Cancer Coalition, Board Member, 1999-2000  
Coro, St. Louis Fellow 1993-1994, NY Alumni Board President, 1998-2000  
*\* Dates are approximate*

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

As a State Representative, you must be **engaged in your community to fully understand and represent your diverse constituents** in Olympia.

**Assisting constituents** who are having difficulties navigating government services is a critical role of my office, from helping clarify health coverage to solving a tax issue.

**Legislators introduce, co-sponsor, advocate and vote for or against various policies** critical to our district and to our constituents. For instance, after meeting with the president of Bellevue College and learning of their need for authorization to move ahead with their computer science baccalaureate program, I immediately began to work with them on a legislative fix and did not stop until we passed the needed language.

**We inform our constituents as well as listen to them.** Communicating with voters about new laws, changes in policy, capital projects, etc. is an important way to share information, explain the role government plays in their daily lives and generate input and feedback. This communication loop is critical.

As elected representatives, we often **serve as the face of the community.** Our actions, words and policy priorities reflect back on our community in the news, community, schools and halls of business.