

## SECTION I

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot

Parker Harris

2. Office sought

State senator, 45<sup>th</sup> district

3. Are you the incumbent?

No

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

Two years

5. How long have you resided in King County?

Six years

6. Is the office sought partisan or nonpartisan?

Partisan

7. If partisan, please indicate party

No party

## CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Friends of Parker Harris

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## POLITICAL BACKGROUND

1. List public offices you have held

None

2. List office you ran for

None

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'm concerned about the deep partisan divide. Problems in our country and our state seem to have taken on an urgency but, astonishingly, it hasn't brought us closer to solving them. If anything, the bitter divide has been getting worse. As this is happening, more and more people who aren't at one or the other end of the political spectrum have been frustrated by the lack of a centrist voice to vote for.

Everyone around me is frustrated with the way things are going, but those who are motivated to do something about it generally are firmly on one side of a particular issue or cause. There are plenty of people who would put in the effort to get involved but who aren't firmly on one side of the debate. Though they are just as frustrated as those at one end of the spectrum, it's not so obvious what they can do to help. I aim to give those people a voice.

Many people, private citizens and elected officials, on both sides of the divide largely agree on where we need to head. The vision of a prosperous, fair state where everyone's rights are upheld and our children are well-educated is not unique to one particular party or political view. The divide comes from clashing over which ideological principles should be applied to help us get there. I believe that the bitter partisanship has been deepening because we've been shifting the conversation away from what the goal is and toward the ideological divide itself.

The perception ordinary citizens have of legislators is that they are not particularly interested in making sure that legislation works toward the shared goal, but rather they aim to either secure symbolic victories for their party or to blindly fight to include certain ideology in legislation. I think the way to move us forward is to step back from ideologies, re-affirm that we do in fact agree on the goal, and then work backwards from it to design a path to get there.

I offer myself as a candidate because as a frustrated centrist it's hard to find a voice to follow. I believe I can use my analytical skills from engineering and my communication skills from teaching to work in the legislature to facilitate practical solutions that are agreeable to both parties.

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

As an engineer, I'm curious and analytical. I aim to truly understand concepts at their core level and in engineering school I was never satisfied with just being given a formula. I need to understand the "why" in everything so I can get the big picture. This will be essential as a legislator because I will put in the time to learn about the entire system that is affected by each bill.

I am deeply empathetic and I easily understand the viewpoints of others, even when I don't agree with them. In my college debate team I always sought just to win but since then I've significantly changed my attitude about arguing. It doesn't have to be a contest. In fact, debate can be a powerful tool to cooperatively uncover the truth. I am always open the possibility that I am wrong, and I approach conversations with people I disagree with as an opportunity to learn.

I am highly motivated to make progress for our state. I'm not running for office because I really want to be a legislator. I'm running because I'm frustrated that we apparently aren't getting closer to solutions for the many problems we face in our state. I care that we fully fund education, make our tax system fairer, and make meaningful progress on a host of other issues. When I care deeply about something, I pour myself into it and I will do that as a legislator.

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.

One example comes to mind from my engineering days. I was working at Electroimpact, a company in Mukilteo where we built custom machines and tools for the aircraft manufacturing industry. I was on a team building tools for Embraer. Every time we submitted a design to them we had to go through a tedious process on their website to list every single little part. Every little screw had to be entered and involved waiting for multiple screens to load. For a (relatively small) tool with 100 parts, this process could take a day. My co-workers had previously tried to automate the process, but Embraer wouldn't give us access to the back end of their site so it seemed impossible. I didn't believe it was impossible and I took the challenge on myself. I wrote a program that interacted with Embraer's website as if it were a user and was able to automatically enter a long list of parts from a spreadsheet. It saved a huge amount of time for me and my co-workers and I'm proud of that accomplishment.

I'm also proud of work I've done with difficult students as a teacher. Last Spring there was a student who had stopped putting effort into science entirely. There were about 3 weeks left in the school year, and his teacher was done trying to make the class work for him. I took on the challenge of doing science with him for the rest of the year. The skills I've learned as a teacher helped our work to be a success. I started the process by listening to him. I learned that he wasn't disinterested in science; he just wanted to learn about different topics. Together we agreed on a goal for the year and we made a plan to accomplish it. We designed two experiments and spent several days on each one. He was engaged and learning during the entire time. Since then I've taken on two other students in similar situations and it's been a pleasure to go through the process of figuring out what they really want, making a plan to get there, and then accomplishing the plan together.

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.

My experience supporting community or political causes has been very limited. I have acquired the skills I will need as a legislator largely from work. The process of collaborating on a design project as an engineer was very similar to what I believe working on a bill will be. For each project, we had a computer model, and everyone had to have a good picture of the overall function. We each had separate pieces to work on, and the central model was updated every time one of us uploaded our recent work. Sometimes one engineer's work would impact another's, and we'd have to work together to figure out the details. It was a mix of individual work and collaboration, and the most important part was that everyone's pieces functioned together.

As a teacher, I have to be able to understand the viewpoint of multiple students at once, often at the same time in the same room. Though we share a common goal, learning the lesson, each student approaches learning differently and it's important for me to get on their level before helping someone. I do much of the math teaching simply by asking questions, and I must figure out exactly how to determine a level of understanding and what specific questions to ask to help guide the student towards understanding.

Another example that comes to mind is starting a sailing team at my college. It was a long, tedious process, much harder than I anticipated. The administration, the student activities office, and the school's risk manager were all initially against it. I had to secure funding, seek out professors willing to help, draft an official plan for operations, including exhaustive safety measures, and then repeatedly revise the plan until all the parties were agreeable to it. The process took nearly a year, but looking back on it I realize that I believed in what I was doing it makes me proud to think of all the obstacles I had to overcome.

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

The duties of a state senator include listening to constituents and collaborating with other legislators to design or amend laws for our state. The senator must also vote on proposed bills. The most important part of the job is stay focused on the goal: a prosperous, free state, and ensure that legislation that passes always moves us toward that goal.