

# King County Democrats 2011 General Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name	Gerry Pollet
Position sought	46 <sup>th</sup> LD Senate
Residence Legislative, County Council and Congressional district	46, 1, 7
Are you a Democrat? Are you known as a Democrat?	<b>YES!!! I am well known as a Democrat, and have served for many years as vice chair of the 46<sup>th</sup> District Democrats.</b> Working with my wife, Janet Miller, former chair of the 46 <sup>th</sup> District Democrats, we have hosted the trainings at our house and yard for hundreds of N. Seattle volunteers for doorbelling for Barrack Obama, John Kerry and Al Gore.
Campaign Information	
Campaign Name	Gerry Pollet for State Representative
Web page	
Campaign Email address	Gerry-pollet@msn.com
Manager	
Campaign mailing address	7750-17 <sup>th</sup> Ave NE Seattle WA 98115
Campaign phone number	(206)528-0078 (home) (206)819-9015 (cell)

Candidate Background: Community service, education, employment and other relevant experience.

Describe your qualifications, education, employment, community and civic activity, Union affiliation and other relevant experience.

I have dedicated my career to be a public interest organizer and attorney, and my free time to working for our neighborhoods, our environment, and our children's schools... and electing progressive candidates. I am well known regionally and nationally as the Director of the region's leading organization (Heart of America Northwest) working for cleanup of Hanford, which is the most contaminated area in North America. I chaired and ran the statewide ballot campaign to stop the Bush Administration's and nuclear industry's plans to use Hanford as a national radioactive waste dump.

I have worked hard to build the 46<sup>th</sup> District Democrats over the past 20 years (currently vice-chair for our programs). Many of you know me as a **neighborhood and schools activist**.

*As City Council Member Nick Licata says of me in his endorsement for this seat:  
"Gerry thinks globally and acts locally."*

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*I have written and successfully organized statewide campaigns and done the lobbying to pass important legislation that protects our environment and consumers* – including our Growth Management Act, state toxic waste cleanup law, and laws protecting rate payers, whistleblowers and the health of our children and workers from exposure to toxics.

I pledge to be a Representative who works year round with our Democratic District organization and PCOs in our mission to elect Democrats who stand for Democratic values and are responsive to the grassroots of the Party and our neighborhoods in the 46<sup>th</sup>. That is my pledge to you. For over 20 years, I have worked with my wife, Janet Miller, to build our 46<sup>th</sup> District Democratic organization. When I was elected Secretary of the District, I started our tradition of distributing minutes of both Executive and full organization meetings. I have been our vice chair responsible for the District's programs for many years.

As a **neighborhood and schools organizer**, I have done the organizing and legal work to improve our neighborhoods, preserve streams, save trees in North Seattle, provide transit, and overcome overcrowding in our North Seattle public schools. I am very active on education issues, and *will be one of only 2 legislators from the entire Seattle legislative delegation who has children in, and volunteers in, our public schools – a voice and perspective needed in the House.*

I am also on the **faculty of the UW School of Public Health** – working without pay with Community Oriented Public Health students and run programs to inspire and train law students to do public interest and environmental work.

*The University of Washington School of Public Health named me as its 2010 Community Service honoree*, and I have been honored as the national grassroots activist of the year and with Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility's top annual honor (previously given to Governors Lowry and Gregoire). My work has been the basis of numerous news reports including front page stories in the Washington Post, NY Times...NPR, CNN, ABC, and every major regional newspaper.

I serve on the Executive and Legal Committees of the Washington Coalition for Open Government – our state's leading voice for legislation, advocacy and legal representation to preserve the public's rights to participate in government (e.g., we just successfully defeated the right wing's effort to prevent disclosure of the petitions that sought to overturn our state's domestic partnership law).

I am uniquely qualified to hit the ground running in Olympia to represent our District in a partnership with Phyllis Gutierrez Kenney and David Frockt, and to be a champion for progressive Democratic values coupled with the organizing and lobby experience to turn values into legislation and funding for our schools, health care, and environment.

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What ratings and endorsements have you received?	
Legislative District Democrats	(in 2008, the 46 <sup>th</sup> District Democrats endorsed me for the House of Representatives)
Union Endorsement	(numerous endorsements in 2008 for the House, e.g., American Federation of Teachers, Aerospace Machinists [IAM&AW District Lodge 751]; Amalgamated Transit Union Local 587 - mentioned to show my prior support, not imply they have a position on the PCOs' 2011 vote)
Municipal League	
SEAMEC	
Other Endorsements	(in 2008, NARAL PAC and numerous others mentioned to show my prior support, not imply they have a position on the PCOs' 2011 vote)

Which groups do you plan to ask for an endorsement?  
If I am appointed, I will run for election in Nov, 2012 and seek endorsements from numerous groups, unions, the 46<sup>th</sup> District Democrats...

Please answer the following questions*		Yes	No	Qualified
1	Do you support the King County Democratic Platform? <i>(For several election cycles I was responsible for preparation of the 46<sup>th</sup> District Democrats' Platform and chaired the Platform committee)</i>	Y		
2	Do you support the right of workers (excluding military) to bargain and strike?	Y		
3	Do you support government funding of Planned Parenthood and other family planning services, including abortion and contraception?	Y		
4	Do you support majority votes by state and local governments to enact taxes for revenue and to repeal tax exemptions?	Y		
5	Do you support the Affordable Health Care Act?	Y		
6	Do you support school vouchers? Do you support charter schools?		N	
7	Do you support the Davis-Bacon Act?	Y		
8	Do you support equal rights for women?	Y		
9	Do you support Federal and State regulation of greenhouse gases that are contributing to climate change?	Y		
10	Do you support a constitutional amendment to limit free speech rights to persons, not corporations?	Y		
11	Do you support public financing of campaigns?	Y		

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Please answer the following questions *		Yes*	No
1	Have you ever failed to pay any taxes or court ordered judgments?		N
2	Have you ever been found in violation of a Public Disclosure Commission, Federal Election Commission or Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission regulation?		N
3	Have you ever been convicted of a felony?		N

\* If you answered "Yes" or "Qualified" please explain your answer.

Are you a member of another political party? If so, which ones? Have you ever supported or given money to a candidate from another party in a partisan race? If so, whom and when?

HECK NO! No and No.

Are you a member of your local Democratic District Party? Have you contributed financially to any Democratic Organization? Have you been a Precinct Committee Officer? When/Where?

I have been our vice chair, Secretary, and Platform chair for the 46<sup>th</sup> District Democrats for over 12 years. I have been a PCO in the 46<sup>th</sup> District and in the old 32<sup>nd</sup> District (when it covered part of N. Seattle, prior to moving to our current home in 1990). For many years, PCO literature distribution was coordinated from our front porch. Janet (Miller, my wife) and I ran the trainings in our front yard on how to doorbell for literally hundreds of people a weekend for the Gore, Kerry, and Barrack Obama campaigns. I have folded and labeled tens of thousands of monthly 46<sup>th</sup> District Demograms, and have worked on the campaigns of numerous Democrats.

I have worked with Democratic District and County organizations (and been their key note speaker) all across Washington state, and know firsthand the obstacles that Democrats face in organizing and campaigning in Spokane, Tri-Cities, Vancouver, Bellingham...

I was chair of the District's Platform and Resolutions Committee responsible for drafting our Platform based on the extensive input from Precinct Caucuses for several election cycles and am deeply committed to our Platform. As vice-chair of the 46<sup>th</sup> Democrats responsible for our programs for the past eight years, I have strived to use our programs to hold elected officials accountable to our Platform and relevant Resolutions adopted by the membership, and to educate candidates and officials on our Platform and relevant resolutions.

My commitment to our PCOs and members is to be an active participant in the 46<sup>th</sup> District Democrats and use my role as Representative to assist our District in organizing and campaigning to increase turnout for all Democratic candidates.

What are the main messages of your campaign? What is your campaign plan? How many doors have you knocked on to date, pieces of mail planned, budgeting, staffing? What is the fundraising goal for your campaign? How much have you raised to date? Why will you win?

Like you I was stunned by the sudden death of Senator Scott White, who had his focus on the future. As we fill the vacancy Scott left we must maintain that focus. The challenges our state will face are huge. Education, the environment, health care for our citizens, transportation, care and services for the disabled and children. – all endangered by our state's money problems.

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All of them must be faced – while at the same time we resist the conservative far right wing pressures coming from the national arena.

There will be several Democrats asking for your vote to be the person to fill that vacancy.

But make no mistake; this is a contest about our state's future.

I share that focus on the future. And I have the commitment and the experience we need to meet the challenges that future will bring.

***I am the only candidate who has drafted legislation, and developed the lobbying and statewide organizing campaigns and coalitions to successfully pass legislation to protect the environment, protect children's' and workers' health, protect whistleblowers, protect consumers...; and, I am the only candidate who has stood up to powerful special interests and won.***

As State Representative I will sponsor legislation and organize to have every existing tax exemption that costs our budget over \$100 million put to a vote this coming year – in time to save our schools and essential service from unconscionable cuts. We can out Eyman the Republicans by putting the tax exemptions up for a vote as to whether they are kept or repealed (do you believe that the public will keep exemptions for banks or other special interests in this economy and time?).

**I will be a champion in Olympia for the environment, our schools (K-12 and higher ed) open government and opposing special interests.**

We need, and deserve, **a state legislator who is active with our public schools**, and can advocate from direct current experience in caucus and committees about conditions in the classroom – both in public schools and at our state colleges and UW (I teach – for free – at the UW in the School of Public Health and in undergraduate classes).

Hundreds of 46<sup>th</sup> District voters had yard signs in front of their homes or in their windows for me in 2008. I am the only candidate who has scores of people who are willing to volunteer for my campaign to win the seat in the November 2012 election after being appointed.

The 46<sup>th</sup> District Democrats have a strong stake in having our Representatives continue to have strong ties to the Democratic Party, rather than someone who has funding to run a campaign against our appointee. Whoever is appointed will not be able to raise money to run in November 2012 until after a lengthy legislative session, while it is likely that a nominal Democrat will be raising funds and running from early in 2012. I am the candidate with the grassroots network, known to school and neighborhood activists who is best positioned to hold the seat after being appointed by vote of our PCOs.

What are the single most pressing issues facing your jurisdiction? What actions would you take if elected?
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Our children's' futures are being robbed by our state's and nation's choices during this great recession. Parents are unable to provide the basics of security and education for their children and our state is failing our disabled, our children, our parents, our environment.

We can restore their future. We must restore their future.

I am an advocate that our Legislature is required to pay fully for all the elements of basic education and am embarrassed by officials who were elected as Democrats saying that we can remove key elements from that definition, whether it is the busses needed to get children of working parents to school, full day kindergarten, classrooms that aren't overcrowded... I am an advocate for restoring, not just avoiding entirely eliminating, our state's basic health plan and services for disabled adults and their prescription medicines.

We can pay for these essentials.

I will offer legislation to have a public vote on whether the state's voters want to retain each existing tax break that cost us over \$100 million in revenue. Are our state's voters going to preserve the tax breaks for banks:? We must organize now for changing our state's tax structure to include an income tax. Ironically, in this economic climate, if we lead, it will actually be easier, starting with a corporate income tax (many businesses will rejoice at an income tax instead of the B&O tax on their gross revenues when they have little or no profit).

To restore our children's' futures, we need advocates in the caucus and committee rooms who know what conditions are like in our children's' classrooms. I will be one of only 2 Seattle legislators with children in Seattle's public schools and who are active as a volunteer and advocate for our schools.

Our state has made a college education, and even retraining in our community colleges, unaffordable for many. I am an advocate for low tuition and ensuring that slots are increased for residents, not decreased in order to charge more tuition. I teach college and graduate students (including as a Lecturer in the UW School of Public Health), and my own daughter is in college at Western Washington University. I see and hear every day how the Legislature's assumptions about availability of financial aid to offset the outrageous increases in tuition are false and destroying the dream of a college education for many.

It's time for our State to lead in making affordable health care for everyone a fundamental right. I will sponsor and organize to amend our State's Constitution to recognize that everyone has a fundamental right to health care. To reduce the costs of health care, I will sponsor legislation to replace the scores of separate insurance administrative programs with one uniform set of claims – lowering the 30% of health care costs from insurance administration to come closer to Medicare's 5% in Washington State.

I already am **a champion for the environment and fighting global warming**, and will be a leader in the Legislature, as Heather Trimm, Policy Director of People for Puget Sound (for ID purposes only) said in her endorsement of me for your appointment:

*"Gerry will be a champion for Puget Sound and protecting the environment in Olympia"*

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To cleanup Puget Sound and fight global warming, I proposed increasing the hazardous waste and oil import; and, to defeat proposed coal export terminals, I propose that we enact a stiff coal import and export fee.

I believe your legislators should be more accessible to you in the District during the Session than to the lobbyists in Olympia. Therefore, I commit to holding regular evening and weekend open office hours and coffees to meet with 46<sup>th</sup> District residents during the Session.

If you are a candidate in a contested primary race, what record of performance, ability, experience, personal qualities, and positions on issues distinguish you from your opponent(s)? If you do not receive the nomination, is there any reason you could not support your Democratic opponent in the general election? Please explain.

***I am the only candidate who has drafted legislation, and developed the lobbying and statewide organizing campaigns and coalitions to successfully pass legislation to protect the environment, protect children's' and workers' health, protect whistleblowers, protect consumers...***

I am the only candidate who has stood up to powerful special interests and won.

We need a legislator who makes our schools a top year round priority, who has a track record of advocating for schools and funding, who understands curriculum issues and is active in Seattle Public Schools.

With the major role of the UW in our District, and the importance of access to community colleges and other state colleges to all of us, my role teaching students provides an essential voice for affordable quality education (and firsthand accounts of how the claims made by legislators and the Governor over the past two years that financial aid would make up for the huge increases in tuition were false). My work with students in Public Health and for our State's environment was recognized with the University of Washington School of Public Health's Community Service honoree for 2010.

I am the only candidate who has run organizations, met payrolls and reined in the costs of multinational government contractors to save taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

As a neighborhood activist and organizer, and as a public interest attorney addressing neighborhood and environmental issues, I will bring an unique perspective and role in drafting legislation to protect and advance our quality of life... such as requiring transit and school capacity to be available or increased before major developments are approved.

I am already recognized statewide as a champion for environmental and open government legislation in Olympia, and for our state to fight global warming. Twice I have been recognized as the national grassroots activist of the year, and my organization and I were chosen as the "region's best environmental group" by the Spokane Peace and Environmental Community.

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I will support the King County Council appointing the choice of the PCOs to this seat.

Do you believe the current structure of taxes and/or fees that generate funds in your area are fair? If not, how would you change it?

Absolutely NOT!

I believe we need a state income tax and should reduce the role of regressive, and less reliable, taxes. Ironically, the recession's impact on businesses provides an opportunity to move to a corporate income tax to replace the B&O tax, which taxes gross revenue even when businesses don't make a profit. I have the organizing and messaging skills to move us forward for changing our tax structure.

I will offer and organize the support for legislation to have the voters choose this coming year to eliminate or keep every existing business tax exemption that reduces our revenues by over \$100 million. I believe the voters will choose schools and basic health care over tax exemptions for banks and financial transactions.

I will sponsor legislation to require automatic loss of tax exemptions enacted to create jobs if the recipient business cannot certify that they meet clear criteria for creating family wage jobs with benefits. This is important to turn around a system where legislators say they support reviewing tax exemptions, but they never really go away. I will also sponsor legislation requiring that state service contracts meet similar criteria with certification that the contractors pay wages equal to prevailing wages and benefits paid to state employees – to avoid a Walmart strategy of “outsourcing” and off-shoring” of state services.

King County has a ten year plan to end homelessness. What ideas do you have to increase low income and affordable housing/?

Here in Seattle, we have seen large tax breaks and height variances going to developers who claim to set aside housing units which are affordable – but, which they actually rent at market rates. We need legislation to require that such development commitments are enforced. We need to adopt and extend property recording and commercial lease fees that support low income housing and shelter services (and not accept claims that the capital budget for housing cannot be restored).

Washington State needs to be a leader in moving the federal government to reestablish its role in providing construction and long term costs for affordable housing units – which is a great jobs program during this recession.

Affordable low income housing is needed across Washington State, not just in Seattle and King County. Coalition building in Olympia requires organizing and mobilizing constituents and local government service providers statewide, including showing the efficacy of providing housing for reducing other social service costs.

What role should government play in the healthcare system?

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*State government needs to guarantee that every child and every adult in Washington has access to quality health care. I will introduce legislation to recognize that access to quality health care is a fundamental right in Washington State under our state constitution.*

This will be hard for opponents of real health care reform to object to. As criteria for health care, this will require us to make fundamental changes which are now blocked by insurers, large businesses or other special interests. If access to health care is a right, then those special interests will lose much of their ability to block reform. If every Washington resident has a fundamental right to access quality health care, the debate over which of the competing proposals for health care reform is fundamentally changed. We can transform the health care debate with this constitutional referendum.

We should use the opportunities from federal law to start moving to a single payer system in Washington.

One third of our health care dollars go to pay for insurance administration! That's estimated to cost over \$5 billion in Washington State, which could pay for every uninsured person to be covered in a well organized system. The State will need to provide either a pooled coverage or single payer system for catastrophic care to prevent catastrophic care from bankrupting families or making the costs of insurance under proposals such as the Healthy Wisconsin type plans unaffordable.

What is your position on civil rights for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered people? What is your position on equal rights for same-sex couples when it comes to benefits, civil unions, marriage and parental rights?

I will be a leader for recognizing same sex marriage and parental rights as a fundamental right and matter of equal protection. I objected to the notion of going slow over the past three years, because I believe that denying of equal rights to marriage is a denial of civil rights. No one should be told to wait for equality!

What creative solutions can you offer to address the problems of the economically disadvantaged?

As a Representative from the 46<sup>th</sup> District, I will work for our state government to:

- Provide health care as a right to every resident – including those who are at the very bottom rung of our economic ladder, whether they be migrant workers, single mothers in the city, etc...
  - We need to recognize that barriers such as language and requirements to reapply for SCHIP or Medicaid every year prevent children from having access to the health care our state already attempts to provide.
  - I will sponsor amending our State Constitution to recognize access to health care is a fundamental right.
  - I will sponsor legislation to eliminate the use of different insurance claim forms and replace them with one set of claim forms.

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- Improve education and opportunity for every child. Our state's education system fails large portions of our lowest income and minority communities. Our dropout rate is abysmal. Education is the key to opportunity. Provide access to early learning and tutoring. Restore funding and expand the wonderful promise that every free lunch eligible child can go to college. I oppose the model of high tuition, which relies on claims that financial aid will provide for access.
- Create new jobs in Washington by investing our licensing fees for patents and intellectual property developed at state universities and tobacco settlement funds in the creation of in-state jobs that will have economic growth for additional jobs.
- Require that state service contracts pay equivalent full time family wages with benefits, and include such provisions in collective bargaining for our low income home health care, child care and other state supported service providers.
- Change our tax system from being so regressive as discussed above. Recognize that family tax credits, while nice, are an after the fact band aid when our poorest residents have to pay disproportionately high amounts of their income for sales taxes.
- Provide low income housing as discussed earlier.

I have read this questionnaire and understand and approve the content and all provided information.		
Printed Name	Gerry Pollet	Date 11-4-2011
Signature		