

31st Legislative District Democrats Candidate Questionnaire

1. Your name: Nicole A. Gaines-Phelps

2. Candidate for: King County Superior Court, Pos. #14
partisan

Party Affiliation: non-

3. Campaign information:

Manager: Sanjay Walvekar

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4. If elected, what positive changes will you champion that will benefit the 31st LD?

Affordable legal representation is a significant and serious barrier to our justice system. In my role as an Administrative Law Judge, I begin every proceeding with the declaration, “you are entitled to the assistance of legal representation at your own expense.” This statement invariably invokes the same response, “I know your Honor but I can’t afford an attorney.” This reality is not unique to the administrative law setting. This same response is echoed through our civil legal system—all too often in legal proceedings which have substantial ramifications on the party’s life. If elected I would like to work with members of the legal community to establish programs and resources which can provide affordable and realistic access to the legal system.

5. What are the three most critical issues you expect to encounter in the office you are seeking?

I think the three most critical issues facing the Superior Court System are: (1) funding; (2) access to justice issues; and (3) the increasing number of “baby boomers” who are retiring from the bench: thereby decreasing the breadth of experience on the bench.

6. Please give us an example of when you had to make a critical decision that, due to its impact on others, was difficult. Tell us why you made your decision and what, if any, actions you took to mitigate any negative results.

As an Administrative Law Judge, I make critical decisions every day which impact others. My approach is always to try to explain that although they may not agree with my decision or assessment of the situation, in my opinion, it is the correct legal decision based upon the information before me at this moment in time.

7. What methods will you employ to communicate with your constituency on a regular basis?

As a judicial officer, I will not have a “constituency” in the tradition sense. That said, as an elected judicial official, I view my “constituency” as the People of King County. To stay connected I will work with other judges creating community programs for educating the community of their legal rights and to address community needs which are critical. For example, in 2009, the financial crisis significantly increased the number of home foreclosures in the African-American community. Under my presidency, the Loren Miller Bar Association (LMBA) partnered with several community organizations in the presentation of a free all- day workshop for homeowners facing foreclosure. Participants received free legal and financial advice about ways to save their homes from foreclosure. Along with hourly seminars, homeowners had the opportunity to privately discuss their own situations during a one-on-one legal consultation.

8. What other information would you like us to consider?

Please visit my website: www.electnicolegainesphelps.com for more information about my candidacy and a list of my current endorsements.

I declare under penalty of perjury the foregoing is true and correct.

Signed at : Seattle, Washington

Signature: signed electronically Nicole A. Gaines-Phelps

Please return to:

Mark Boswell, Chair
31st District Democrats
P.O. Box 161
Sumner, WA. 98390

Or email to: webmaster@31stdistrictdemocrats.org