

31st Legislative District Democrats Candidate Questionnaire

1. Your name: Shelly Speir

2. Candidate for: Pierce County Superior Court Judge (Position. 5)

Party Affiliation: This is a Non-Partisan race, and judicial candidates are prohibited by the Code of Judicial Conduct from disclosing party affiliation.

3. Campaign information:

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

Judge Hogan was an experienced trial judge and gave Pierce County many years of dedicated service. She is retiring in 2016, and in running for her seat, I will ensure that there is continued diversity of perspective on the bench. I will rely on my 17 years as a trial lawyer to ensure that rules are applied fairly to all litigants and that cases are processed as efficiently as possible. I know that even though our courts face many challenges—like an aging juvenile justice facility, soldiers and veterans who need court services, an overcrowded and understaffed state mental health hospital, an increased number of citizens who cannot afford an attorney, and racial disproportionality in the criminal justice system—Pierce County citizens still expect and deserve a judge who will do what is right and fair for the community.

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

- a. There has been a significant increase in the number of property crimes in Pierce County, and I expect to see an increase in the number of prosecutions related to those crimes. Judges will have to continue working as efficiently as possible to move these cases through the system, while at the same time ensuring that all litigants receive fair hearings. Judges will also have to ensure that there is no racial disproportionality in the trial or sentencing of those charged with these crimes.
- b. There is ongoing concern about Remann Hall, which is both physically and philosophically outdated. Judges will have to work with the Pierce County Council and the community to ensure that our youth continue to receive crucial court services wherever possible, but at the same time find ways to work around the limitations of an inadequate building located “off campus.”
- c. Recent studies show that even though our poorest citizens experience an average of nine legal issues a year, about half of all Washingtonians cannot afford a lawyer. A great many citizens fall into that difficult legal crevasse when they do not qualify for Legal Aid

but certainly cannot afford to hire a private attorney. As a judge, I would expect to see many litigants appearing before me without the assistance of an attorney. It would be my job to ensure that these litigants were treated fairly and that all Pierce County citizens had full access to the courts.

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.

I was recently appointed as the sole arbitrator in a medical malpractice case. The claimant did not have an attorney and was clearly not as experienced with the civil rules as the attorney on the opposite side. The claimant asked me to change the arbitration hearing date because she was going on a vacation. However, the claimant had missed several deadlines in the case and had not complied with rules that required her to appear for a deposition. The claimant's failure to follow the rules had unfairly impacted the other side. I decided to deny the claimant's request to change the arbitration date because I did not want to reward her for repeatedly breaking the court rules.

Even though I could not give the claimant what she wanted, I added a condition to my ruling that allowed her to renew her request for a different arbitration date if she found an attorney to represent her. I believed that both sides would have benefitted from the claimant retaining an attorney.

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

Judges are frequently asked to speak to students, professional associations, and other groups. I believe these speaking opportunities are not only educational for all involved, but also an excellent way to forge ties with the community and to encourage diversity in the legal profession. If elected, I would welcome the chance to continue outreach efforts through public speaking. The 31st Dems would certainly be on my list of groups to visit regularly.

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

For the last two years, I have served on the executive committee of the Litigation Section of the Washington State Bar Association. This committee is in the process of reviewing the "Escalating Cost of Civil Litigation" report that was published by the WSBA this year, and is preparing comments on the proposed changes to the civil system that are described in the report. The committee's comments will be submitted to the Board of Governors of the WSBA. Based on the comments submitted, the Board will revise the report and forward it to the Washington Supreme Court for review. The Washington Supreme Court will then determine if it will adopt any of the recommended changes to our civil system.

If I am elected, I will be on the bench at the time that the Washington Supreme Court's changes are implemented by the Pierce County Superior Court. My 17 years as a civil litigator makes me uniquely qualified to assist the court with this task, as I am intimately familiar with the civil rules, the reasons for the proposed changes, and the effects these changes will have on litigants. I would provide a fresh perspective that is currently underrepresented on the Pierce County

Superior Court.

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

Signed at Lakewood, Washington.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Shelly K. Spier".

Signature

Please return to:

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

Or email to: webmaster@31stdistrictdemocrats.org