

# King County Democrats

## 2016 Candidate Questionnaire

### State Level – Lieutenant Governor



<b>Candidate Name</b>	Cyrus Habib	
<b>Position Sought</b>	Lieutenant Governor	
Home Legislative District	48 <sup>th</sup> LD	
<b>Are you a Democrat?</b> Are you known as a Democrat?	Yes.	
<b>Campaign Contact Information</b>	Mailing address: 11900 NE 1 <sup>st</sup> St., Suite 300, Bellevue, WA 98005	Phone: (425) 679-9103 Fax:
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Campaign manager or point of contact	Miranda Roberts, (425) 894-1388, miranda@cyrushabib.com	
Consultant(s)	Northwest Passage Consulting	

### Part I – Candidate Background

Please briefly describe your qualifications, education, employment, community and civic activity, union affiliation, and other relevant experience. Attach a resume with more complete history.

I currently represent the 48th Legislative District in the State Senate where I serve on the Democratic Leadership team as Democratic Whip. From 2012-2014 I represented the same district in the State House of Representatives.

I am an attorney by trade, and practiced law at Perkins Coie from 2009-2013 advising technology startups. In 2013 I was name Professor and Distinguished Lawmaker in Residence at the Seattle University Law School where I teach courses on legislative procedure and on intellectual property.

I earned my undergraduate degree from Columbia University, my master's degree at Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, and my law degree at Yale Law School.

I currently sit on the boards of the 5th Avenue Theatre, the Bellevue College Foundation, and the Bellevue Downtown Association, and I previously served as a Civil Rights Commissioner for King County and as a Human Services Commissioner for the City of Bellevue.

I have been active in the Democratic Party as a former PCO, a member of the 48th Legislative District Democrats, an executive board member of the King County Young Democrats, and an alumnus and former board member of the Institute for a Democratic Future. Just recently, I was appointed by the Executive Committee of the DNC to serve on the 2016 Platform Committee and develop our party's national agenda for the next four years.

Describe your history of involvement in Washington state politics. What campaigns have you run or worked on? What specific actions have you taken as a public leader to advocate for new state revenue?

I first became active in politics as a volunteer on the Gary Locke gubernatorial campaign in 1996, and as a student member of the Peace Action Network, which organized and lobbied for Hanford cleanup and sensible firearm safety legislation. In 2001, I interned for Senator Cantwell in her D.C. office, and later went back to work for her as a legislative fellow in 2003. In 2008, I managed my mother's campaign for King County Superior Court Judge. We were unsuccessful in that race, but she was later appointed to the bench. I have doorbelled and fundraised for dozens of candidates, including Patty Murray, Suzan DelBene, Adam Smith, Denny Heck, Derek Kilmer, Jay Inslee, Bob Ferguson, Dow Constantine, Claudia Balducci, Roger Goodman, Matt Isenhower, Maureen Judge, Monica Stonier, and many more.

I have used my position as a legislator in a suburban, purple-to-blue district to champion a more progressive message than either of my predecessors on issues ranging from the need for new revenue to the importance of collective bargaining. Despite representing some of the country's most affluent communities, such as Medina and Hunts Point, I have been unafraid to advocate for progressive tax reform that would require the top 1% to play a greater and fairer role in funding government. In doing so, I believe I have made it easier for Democrats to run on the Eastside as proud progressives.

What prompted you to run for this office? What priorities are you seeking to address with your campaign?

I believe Washington State deserves a Lieutenant Governor who will use the powers of the office to ensure that the Legislature passes constitutionally sound budgets that fully fund public education for all children, to champion economic policies focused on creating high-quality and well-paying jobs throughout our state, and to fight for racial, social, and environmental justice. The position lends itself to an entrepreneurial approach, since much of its effectiveness relies on the motivation of the office-holder to develop his or her own agenda, create and take advantage of earned media opportunities, partner with the Governor, Legislative leaders and allied groups on key initiatives, and work with our party to help recruit and support our platform and candidates in all 49 legislative districts. I also believe that it is an office that is best occupied by someone who is trained in, and passionate about, the role that legislative procedure, parliamentary maneuvers, and constitutional rulings can play in the lawmaking process. Having taught a course on that topic for three years at Seattle University, I am particularly excited about that important aspect of the position as well.

List the notable endorsements you have received to date. Who are you planning to ask for an endorsement?

I am very proud to have the endorsements of nearly 100 elected officials, party leaders, and organizations and hundreds of individuals, including the following in King County: the International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers District 751, Laborers Local 242, Seattle King County Building & Construction Trades Council, Washington Conservation Voters, the Washington Education Association, and the Washington State Council of County & City Employees (AFSCME Council 2). I also have the sole recommendation of the Martin Luther King County Labor Council, and the endorsement of Washington State Attorney General Bob Ferguson, the King County Sheriff, 2 Seattle/King County Port Commissioners, 3 members of the King County Council, 7 mayors of cities in King County, 7 of 9 Seattle City Councilmembers, and some of our most highly respected legislators. An up-to-date list is attached.

Describe the progress of your campaign and campaign goals. For instance, what earned media has your campaign received? How much money have you raised? How many doors have you knocked on?

Since launching my campaign on September 18th I have raised over \$400,000, the most that has ever been raised for the position of Lt. Governor in the history of our state. I have traveled all around Washington meeting with elected officials, as well as party, tribal, environmental, and labor leaders in every region of the state to develop my knowledge of statewide and local community issues, and to earn the support of stakeholders and residents. I intend to visit all 49 legislative districts and all 39 counties before the Primary election.

My campaign has been covered in all the state's major newspapers, on KING 5 news, in Northwest Asian Weekly, and on a number of blogs and online forums. Because I would be the first Iranian-American to hold statewide office, and only blind person to do so, my campaign has also received some national attention.

Have you ever been a member of any other political party? If so, what party? Have you ever given money to a candidate from another party in a partisan race? If so, to whom and when?

No.

**Please answer the following questions.**

		Yes*	No
1	Have you ever failed to pay any taxes or court ordered judgments?		X
2	Have you ever been found in violation of a Public Disclosure Commission, Federal Election Commission or Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission regulation?		X

\* If you answered "Yes" to either of the above, please explain your answer:

**Part II – Local and State Issues**

#	Question	Yes	No	Qualify your response
1	Do you support <a href="#">WAmend's I-735</a> (amending the U.S. Constitution to lessen the influence of money in politics, and declare that corporations do not have the rights of natural persons)?	X		
2	Do you support the right of public workers, excluding military, to bargain and strike?	X		
3	Do you support Raise Up Washington's <a href="#">new initiative to increase the minimum wage</a> ?	X		I am a strong supporter of this initiative, and recently became the first elected official or candidate, to my knowledge, to make a public commitment to collect signatures to help qualify it for the ballot. I have committed to gathering at least 500 in the coming weeks.
4	Do you support the <a href="#">Reproductive Health Act</a> ?	X		I am a co-sponsor of this bill.
5	Do you support amending Washington's Constitution to require a two-thirds vote to raise revenue, as demanded by Tim Eyman?		X	
6	Do you support adoption of a <a href="#">Sound Transit 3</a> regional transportation package?	X		
7	Do you support combating the climate crisis by implementing a cap and trade system?	X		I am the #2 sponsor of the Governor's Cap and Trade proposal, and still believe this would be the best path forward in combatting climate change in our state.
8	Do you support legislation to fix Washington's broken "three strikes" law?	X		
9	Do you support allowing coal or oil to be		X	

	exported from Washington State's ports?			
10	Do you support making two years of community college or technical school tuition-free?	X		I am a co-sponsor of the Washington's Promise Act, which would do this.
11	Do you support requiring tax exemptions to be listed as expenditures in the state budget?	X		
12	Do you support the privatization of our public worker's compensation system, which protects employees who are injured on the job?		X	
13	Do you support requiring paid vacation and sick + safe leave for Washington's workers?	X		I am the prime sponsor of this legislation in the Senate.
14	Do you support Tim Eyman's I-747, which artificially limits property tax collections?		X	
15	Do you support <a href="#">CarbonWA's I-732</a> ?	X		While I am a strong proponent of placing a price on carbon, I have serious concerns about the fiscal impact of this initiative. We should be pursuing revenue-positive proposals so we can invest in workforce training and skills building for those working in carbon-intensive industries, in expanding economic opportunities in communities adversely affected by climate change, and in cleaner and more sustainable infrastructure that will both create jobs and ensure clean air and water in our region.
16	Do you support Washington adopting a truly nonpartisan, citizen-run redistricting process that would result in more competitive districts?	X		I am interested to learn more, and would be willing to look at any specific proposal seeking to make the redistricting process more fair.
17	Do you support Washington State prepaying postage on all ballots?	X		I am the co-sponsor of legislation very similar to this.
18	Do you support automatic voter registration?	X		I am the co-sponsor of legislation that, had the Republicans allowed it to advance, would have moved us much farther in this direction.
19	Do you support the death penalty?		X	
20	Do you support <a href="#">barring employers from asking criminal history questions in job applications</a> ?	X		

### Part III – Free Response Questions

Please review the [2014 King County Democratic Platform](#), approved by the delegates to the King County Convention and available from KCDCC's website. List which planks, if any, you disagree with, and why.

I support all planks of the KCDCC platform. The one item I would soften is the following: "Our government

should not engage in covert efforts to destabilize other nations' governments." I think this is an appropriate and important foreign policy, but I think there are times when doing so is called for either to prevent or curtail ethnic cleansing, when there is a clear and present danger to the U.S. homeland, or when it is the "least bad option." That said, those should certainly be the very rare exceptions, never the rule.

During his final term in office, Brad Owen struck down an unconstitutional rule imposed by Senate Republicans that attempted to require a two-thirds vote to advance certain revenue bills. If elected, would you uphold this ruling, and work to defend majority rule from the likes of Tim Eyman and Pam Roach?

I would absolutely continue to oppose any such rule, and I would also strike down the rule, which the Lt. Governor upheld over my and other Senators' objections, that requires 60% approval for passage of an amendment to an operating budget. Not only is this rule undemocratic; it is my belief that it has been used to allow vulnerable Senators to vote with Democrats while allowing the remaining Republicans to defeat the amendment.

Describe your vision for tax reform and fairness. How do we fully fund our public schools while making our tax code more progressive? Would you support sunseting all tax exemptions, and voting to renew only those that demonstrably benefit the public interest?

We all know that Washington has one of the most regressive tax systems in the country. In the short term I support the Governor's proposal to generate revenue by taxing carbon emissions. It is logical, progressive and popular. I am also open to other sorts of tax reform such as taxing capital gains. Tax preferences and exemptions should be reviewed regularly for effectiveness, and, whenever practicable, should contain claw-back provisions that would allow the state to recoup the cost of the tax exemption if certain job targets were not met.

As Lieutenant Governor, it will be your job to preside over the Washington State Senate when not acting as the state's chief executive. Please explain how you will approach this responsibility.

As presiding officer in the senate the Lt. Governor rules on the constitutionality of bills and casts tie-breaking votes on legislation. Drawing upon my legal background, I will use the parliamentary and procedural powers of the office, affirmed in *Brown v. Owen*, to ensure that our values are reflected in the legislation we pass. In the past office holders have treated the position of Lt. Governor as virtually nonpartisan. While I respect the judicial element of the duties of the presiding officer, I also recognize the opportunity the Lt. Governor has, if he or she is trained in and has a passion for parliamentary procedure and constitutional law. I intend to use the full extent of my legal knowledge and the power of the office to fight for budgets that meet our constitutional obligations, and to block moves by Senate Republicans that aim to undermine our legislative priorities or politicize the work of the executive branch.

By law, the Lieutenant Governor is the Chair of the Legislative Committee on Economic Development and International Relations (LCEDIR). What ideas can you offer to improve LCEDIR's effectiveness?

Washington is arguably our country's most trade-dependent state. It is therefore appropriate that there be a statewide elected official who can dedicate time and resources to strengthening our relations abroad and with members of the Consular Association of Washington. I would use my position to champion fair trade principles, and advocate for trade relationships that raise labor and environmental standards, and that have a net positive affect on Washington jobs in all sectors. This past year I joined a group of fellow Legislators on a trip to Denmark to study what strategies have been employed there to combat climate change, and in 2014 I was selected as one of 8 elected officials from around the country to travel to China to learn about how the two countries can partner on environmental and national security issues. My leadership of the LCEDIR would place an emphasis on how we can ensure that our trade agenda creates a race to the top not to the bottom, how we can enhance apprenticeship and workforce training programs to put people back to work, and how we could better support our small businesses, particularly those that are women or minority

owned.

Do you support current Democratic Lieutenant Governor Brad Owen's decision to ban firearms from the Senate gallery? If elected, will you continue this policy?

Yes, and I would even advocate for the entire Legislative building to be a gun-free zone. Every day during the legislative session there are hundreds of students visiting us, and there is no reason why we cannot go further in ensuring safety in this important public space.

Are you cognizant of -- and how do you plan on addressing -- the inequitable incarceration of minorities?

This is an issue that I am keenly aware of, as an attorney, a person of color, the son of a trial court judge, and a member of the Sentencing Guidelines Commission. As Lt. Governor, I would make appointments to the SGC that would reflect my belief that our criminal justice system should be focused on restorative justice rather than retributive punishment. I intend to have a full-time Outreach Director for the purpose of connecting with communities of color and the tribes, and I will work with these and other communities that are disproportionately affected by racial injustice in our courts and prisons in order to find opportunities to be a champion for reform. Certainly we as Democrats should continue to advocate for drug reform, a bail system that is fairer to those without significant financial means, a better funded public defense system, changes to our LFO system so that defendants are spared exorbitant interest fees, and a correctional system that creates opportunities for higher education and work placement upon release. I pioneered a program throughout the 2013 biennial budget that provides exiting prisoners a standard-issue ID card, such as the one I myself have, so that they do not need to rely on DOC identification when seeking housing or a job.

What policies would you promote to address the climate change crisis?

Last year I became the first State Senator to introduce legislative language recognizing that climate change is real, that human behavior is a significant contributing cause, and that it is an urgent issue that our state must face. Senate Republicans challenged this language on constitutional grounds, but the Lt. Governor sided with me and we learned that nearly all Republicans are not fully convinced that human behavior contributes to climate change.

We should place a price on carbon, extend and expand the solar tax incentive, invest in clean energy research programs at the UW, develop and pass the next generation of renewable energy standards to build on the success of I-937, close the tax loophole enjoyed by the oil industry, approve Sound Transit 3 and make further investments in transit, bike and pedestrian infrastructure, update our building codes to enhance energy conservation efforts, and work collaboratively with other states and British Columbia to coordinate our efforts for maximum impact.

If the Democratic Party is successful in retaking the Senate this year, our majority for 2017-2018 may be a narrow one. Would you be willing to vote to break a tie, should one occur, in Leader Nelson's favor?

Frankly, this is even more important if we were to pick up a single seat and remain in the minority. Once we have 24 Democratic Senators, the Republican majority would need all 25 Senators present and voting to retain control of the floor. But whether we have 24 or 25 seats, I will of course be willing to break ties in favor of the progressive policies that Leader Nelson and I both care about.

Many Washingtonians are unaware that the Lieutenant Governor has the power to make appointments to over forty boards and commissions. What kind of attributes will you look for when making appointments?

I am proud to have highlighted this aspect of the office by mentioning it as one of the three ways I think the office can be used more strategically. Our boards and commissions are the best way to build a farm

team of smart, diverse public servants. I hope to use my appointment powers to recruit talented and driven residents from all over the state, particularly from communities that often lack access to public service opportunities. Our boards and commissions, particularly substantive ones like the Washington State Gambling Commission and the Sentencing Guidelines Commission, should reflect the geographic and demographic diversity of our state, and I will do my part to ensure that they do. I will be hiring an Outreach Director to help me identify talented candidates from throughout our state.

What important state and local issues have you worked on (or taken an interest in) that you feel aren't getting enough attention from elected leaders and the media?

As a 3-time cancer survivor, I am very interested in the ways in which, even after the passage of the Affordable Care Act, Washingtonians experiencing serious illnesses are often driven into poverty. I first became aware of the outrageous cost of certain prescription drugs a few years ago, when I was approached by a constituent whose son had a condition known as Eosinophilic Gastrointestinal Disorder (EGID), for which the treatment costs over \$1,000 a month. I introduced legislation to require insurance companies to cover the treatment, but, in doing so, I became increasingly aware of the spiraling copay requirements for so-called "specialty drugs" like the one my constituent needed to purchase or many chemotherapies. That is why, earlier this year, I introduced "cap the copay" legislation for the first time in Washington State to limit the amount that an insurance company can require its policyholders to pay per month in the form of copays. It is my hope that, in the coming years, this and other proposals will lead to concrete action to curb out-of-pocket mandates on people with serious illnesses, and I would love to see increased attention paid to this important issue, since drug costs can often drive people into poverty, the emergency room, or both.

**I affirm that all the information provided in response to this questionnaire is true, complete and correct, to the best of my ability, and that no relevant matter has been omitted.**

Signature		Date: March 4, 2015
Printed Name	Cyrus Habib	