**31st Legislative District Democrats Candidate Questionnaire**

1. Your name: Mitzi Johanknecht

2. Candidate for: King County Sheriff Party Affiliation: Democrat

3. Campaign information:

Manager: (hiring in process)

Phone: 206.470.9836 Fax: N/A

Address: P.O. Box 20664 Seattle, WA 98102

Website: www.mitziforsheriff.com

E-mail: info@mitziforsheriff.com

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

The residents of King County and the employees of the Sheriff’s Office deserve a law enforcement leader who models and upholds the highest standards of values and ethics within our community. The King County Sheriff should be focused on the business of public safety. After doing this work for 32 years, I am both excited and prepared to take the Sheriff’s Office in a new direction.

While I believe my opponent took office with good intentions, he has failed to deliver on most of his promises. As your King County Sheriff I will:

* **Focus on public safety** – We need to return KCSO’s focus to addressing crime and traffic issues that impact quality of life in King County. The men and women of the King County Sheriff’s Office have performed their jobs admirably, without any clear direction or conversation about crime fighting from my opponent. Further, their outstanding efforts are rarely recognized.
* **Build community trust and support** – Due to staffing cuts and reallocations, KCSO has largely withdrawn from authentic, dedicated community outreach activities. We must listen, engage and collaborate with our communities to effectively reduce crime and the fear of crime.
* **Provide progressive law enforcement leadership** – Being a progressive law enforcement leader is about more than promoting the legalization of marijuana around the country. We need to employ modern leadership and management principles to leverage the talent and resources within the department as well as our community.
* **Restore honor and integrity to the office of Sheriff** – My opponent has been plagued by lawsuits, arbitrations and personal scandal. King County deserves a Sheriff who leads by example and treats people with respect and dignity. KCSO needs a system of accountability that is fair and predictable.

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

1. Reimagine the role of law enforcement in our society and our county. Law enforcement has arrived at a unique crossroad. We need to actively engage with our communities to redefine the role of law enforcement. In recent years, law enforcement has been called upon to function in the role of social safety net, left to tackle complex issues far beyond their purview. We need to engage with our communities, advocacy groups, non-governmental organizations and businesses to develop holistic approaches to addressing the issues that impact quality of life across the county such as homelessness, drug addiction and mental illness. Public safety is a team sport.
2. Earning and maintaining the public’s trust - The Sheriff and the entire agency must be viewed as trustworthy, respected partners in addressing crime, the fear of crime and the fear of law enforcement. This begins inside the Sheriff’s Office leading by example and treating both the public and our employees with respect and dignity, even when holding them accountable.
3. Recruit and hire a workforce reflective of the communities we serve. I will create a full time Recruiting and Community Outreach Unit. People do not make the choice to serve as a law enforcement officers overnight and we need to invest the time and effort to build relationships with women and communities of color to promote diversity within our ranks.

6. Please give us an example of when you had to a 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 learned one of my deputies was accused of pepper spraying a water bottle belonging to a homeless man. He was a training officer at the time and the incident was reported by his trainee. The internal investigation had begun, however I was faced with the decision of allowing this deputy to continue working while the investigation occurred.

I believed this deputy could not continue working until the allegation was fully investigated. I made the decision to place him on administrative leave, a decision not taken lightly within the Sheriff’s Office as it has the potential to damage a deputy’s reputation, as well as limiting his earnings.

Ultimately, the deputy was fired, a decision which I support. Compassion is at the heart of service. Law enforcement officers are not robots; we expect them to assess situations and use their training and skills to find the best solution. This deputy’s choice represented the tyranny against which we should all take a stand.

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

I would begin by launching a community survey to assess what communication platforms would be of most use to our communities. We need to actively engage the public through social media. The King County Sheriff’s Office has underutilized the resources in Facebook and Twitter and has failed to use other platforms where the public seeks information. This needs to be conversational communication, not the simplistic, one-way communication currently in use. I would also invite my constituents to provide their suggestions on the best methods and platforms in which we can connect. Many King County neighborhoods utilize applications or sites like Next Door, which KCSO (with the exception of some contract cities) has ignored. These sites are valuable sources of information and allow our office and our deputies the ability to connect and converse about the current problems and crime trends impacting our neighborhoods.

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

My opponent represents yesterday’s version of law enforcement: obsolete management practices, unsophisticated recruiting and hiring tactics and outdated approaches to crime fighting. He presents himself as progressive when he is anything but. The King County Sheriff’s Office needs a new face, a forward thinking leader who can unite our communities, our employees and reimagine public safety in King County. I have been urged by people within and outside the Sheriff’s Office to run for Sheriff. I am deeply honored and humbled by their trust and am eager to partner with you as your next King County Sheriff.

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

Signed at

\_King County, WA\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_Mitzi Johanknecht\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please return to:

Mark Boswell, Chair

31st District Democrats

P.O. Box 161

Sumner, WA. 98390

Or email to: [webmaster@31stdistrictdemocrats.org](mailto:webmaster@31stdistrictdemocrats.org)